

# Walker and baldwin

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



Alice Walker and James Baldwin both use their literature characters to bring social problems to light. A few of the social concerns that can be seen in their work consists of race, class, gender and society; the outside forces, Although both of these authors use characters to describe social issues, their attempts vary in their work. The following will compare and contrast how Baldwin and Walker's characters use this connection as a means to sort through their "despair". Every Day use by Alice Walker is a story narrated by a mother that has a very appropriate title.

This title refers to the character, Maggie, whose sister says will use the heirloom quilts made by their grandmother every day when they should be hung Like she would do with such priceless items. Maggie sorrowfully says It's okay; her sister can have the quilts. The mother sees such a selfless daughter, who in fact feels worthless in comparison with her sister and most likely several people, considering her poor self-image. She abruptly rips the quilts from her more dominant daughters' hands, Dee, and hands them over to Maggie.

The way Alice Walker uses these characters to portray race, class, gender and society is shrewdly done. The mother who is possibly a farmer when reading the description: "I am a big boned woman with man working hands" can represent class (1334 Charter). She is a low class citizen who lives in a small home that Dee, her daughter, doesn't approve of. Her daughter, who goes to college and has broken out of the lower class ranks, can also represent class. In addition, they represent race. They are of African American ethnicity and living during the oppressed times, according to "whoever can imagine me looking a white man in the eye? Spoken by the mother (1334 Charter). Dee <https://assignbuster.com/walker-and-baldwin/>

does mention the fact that her sister Maggie can make something of herself " It's really a new day for us but from the way you and Ama still live, you'd never know it" (1340 Charter). This sentence can represent the gender and race issues within those times. Dee was a black female a double burden because both were discriminated against at this time which brings us to society. Although this references the views of society, Walker does not use the mentioning of outside characters to portray society like Baldwin does.

She manages this with only the main characters of the story. Society is for the reader to assume when peering into the torn relationship of the sisters... TLS relationship has been molded by outside factors that frown on the weak (Maggie has scars and uneducated) and glorify the beautiful (Dee is attractive and educated). Baldwin, on the other hand, makes great use of society in his story Sonny Blues, which is also suitably titled. This story is narrated by a brother who is asked to take care of his younger brother Sonny by his passing mother.

Sadly, Sonny is a heroin addict, hence the title, and always in trouble. His brother doesn't want to deal with it, for obvious reasons: one being that it's too hurtful to go through but in the end he was able to find the strength after the loss of his little girl to make amends with Sonny and take him under his wing. The characters that represent society in this story are many. They are all inner city poor residents. There is the druggie that tells the narrator about Sonny " I see you got the papers so you know about it? " he asks him of Sonny (59 Charters).

The barmaid dancing on page 60 and the children who are playing in the oppressed residents off poor and uneducated area. Very similar to Walker, he uses the main characters to reveal issues of class, race and gender. The narrator, who can represent class, has broken away from poverty by receiving a college degree and becoming a high school math teacher. The brother, can be made to represent race of the inner city. He has not broken free from the black oppressed lifestyle that his neighborhood has to offer. The fact that Baldwin uses males as main characters eaves the reader to assume gender roles.

It is a silent assumption that men are able to be strong and should not need the help of others. This type of thinking tears the brothers apart when the older brother assumes his little brother can " get life on his own" keeping him from taking care of his little brother like his mother asked of him. " I sensed myself in the presence of something I really didn't know how to handle" says the narrator of his role in Sonny's life (67 Charters). Both authors use the characters to expose social issues within their times.