

# F alice walker's poem "be nobody's darling" essay sample

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## **f Alice Walker's poem " Be Nobody's Darling" Essay Sample**

Individuality is the great catalyst of progress; without it there is a stagnant state of mind where no revolutions in thought would occur. Yet, individuality comes at the price of isolation, thus it is long sought after but hard to truly achieve. Breaking from societal reigns upon ideas comes difficultly, but to remain docile in the face of conformity is a far worse fate. Alice Walker's poem " Be Nobody's Darling for Lester Julius" is an order directed towards the individual to break free of societal molds, but only by its use of extensive imagery and an assertive tone is her poem able to convey its meaning to its full extent.

Walker's fervent belief in the value of individuality is reflected in her use of images that draw out a deeper meaning in her work. By using her extensive imagery, the ideas she presents become vividly depicted and are easy to relate to. In order to express the need to embrace our differences with one another, she paints a " shawl" (6) of " contradictions" (3) to values and paradigms held by the conformist whole. The shawl she uses not only visualizes her point, but its connotation of safety offers a desire to embrace contradictions to fend off the boorish beliefs of the masses.

She later compares the masses to the individual with her use of a river of conformity, where the whole of society is pushed along the " river bed" (18) where is driven forward to a predetermined destination as opposed to the individual who " makes a merry gathering on the bank" (21-22) free to choose their own destiny. The use of the river of conformity to herd a mass

of people is a frightful image that shows the true path of those who do not make their own decisions, once again using the emotion of the image to fully express the theme. It is only with the connotation and emotion in the images walker presents that her point is ultimately made clear. But with the problem of society clearly presented, she must then show how to express individuality with the tone of the poem.

To fully be able to break from society's values, there must be an individual pride and self-esteem that is assertive in its independence, Walker delivers this assertive tone throughout her poem to lead individuals by example. Her use of a commanding voice demonstrates her confidence in her own contradictions to society as well offers inspiration to follow instincts rather than previously held thoughts. Her repetition of the word " Be" at various points in the poem delivers an imperative tone that creates a motivation to become an individual. The poem then commands to let the society " look askance" (12) at the individual, and the individual " askance reply," (13) shunning the masses, and not taking note of its views. Once again, Walker displays that the self-esteem and pride in the individual can combat the malicious stares of the public. The drive to embrace the independence from others' beliefs that Walker has achieved then becomes infectious so that the poem is not only giving advice but seeing to it that the advice is heeded.

" Be Nobody's Darling for Lester Julius" is a powerful work that is not only able to convey its message to the world but make sure that the world sees, understands, and ultimately follows its meaning. The idea of being an individual, while preached in various texts, becomes a rote concept that is

shrugged off from its constant repetition, but Walker's ability to create straightforward images that are easy to relate to are powerful metaphors that rediscover the wonder of creativity. She then is able to take her poem one step further by leading the masses with her own individuality that she expresses in her tone. The theme of individuality then becomes a life goal to strive for, and not a remote idea that is over expressed.