

# Beauty when the other dancer is the self symbolism analysis



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A person's perception of anything is always influenced by their experiences. Alice Walker, the writer of "Beauty: When the Other Dancer is the Self", is no different in regards to her perception of beauty. Walker uses various stylistic elements throughout her writing to convey her shifting outlook toward her own beauty. She also employs various rhetorical strategies in order to deliver a clear and luring story that keeps the reader engaged as she describes her life as a flashback.

Walker uses the accident that happens during her childhood to prove that one's mindset can be altered because of a profound experience and how her attitude completely transforms from a conceited and arrogant child into a newly reborn woman who sees a new kind of beauty within her life. She uses different points of her life to develop this very idea in separate comprehensible stages. She begins the story with a very smug outlook on life where she knows she's beautiful. "I'm the prettiest!" (442), a young walker decrees as she abuses her beauty for her father's approval. This attitude is further encouraged by the society of which she is a product.

She is always used to hearing praise from people such as "Oh, isn't she the cutest thing!" (442). In a culture like this, Walker begins shaping into a commodity more than an actual person. Walker herself even views her younger form with disdain because of this snobbish attitude, because she writes in a tone that shows her as such an unpleasantly shallow child through her perspective as an adult. Using proclamations such as "It was great fun being cute. But then, one day, it ended. (442) Walker shows her contempt for her former self by demonstrating the mere temporary happiness that ones own exploitation can provide.

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Because of this early depiction, Walker can then use the drastic change which occurs later to express her drastic attitude change with greater effect. Walker's use of different stages makes a more profound impact on the reader's thoughts about Walker's development as a person. Walker constantly jumps from different points in her life to show how she was affected by the accident at specific points. This kind of story development gives the reader a lot of freedom to interpret the meaning of the character's progression as she learns to cope with the accident. Walker also carefully chooses which phases of her life to express in ways that show her attitude toward her eye injury reflecting her general self perception.

For example, after she gets into the accident, she jumps to another stage of her life where she is being tormented at a new school, "one-eyed bitch." (445) they call her, which clearly exhibits the anguish she has to go through because she loses her outer beauty which is seemingly all she had to depend on. Then she jumps to a point where she has made peace with her accident and now she "raises her head" (446) to become the person that she thought she could never be after the accident. These changes of emotion in a sudden fashion signify her outlook on beauty shifting as time passes. This strategy gives the reader a real sense of evolution of character in the story without becoming too slowly paced.

Also the imagery and detail that Walker use to describe each of these short phases really immerses the reader into the author's main purpose of expressing her change in attitude. Walker makes use of many rhetorical strategies to convey her message to the reader in a very efficient manner, where the reader gets more and more drawn into the story that she is

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telling. She uses a vague style of expressing her attitude so that she keeps a sense of ambiguity between herself and the reader. Since she is writing as an adult about her childhood, she effectively makes use of perspective to put her current point of view as an adult on her childhood experiences. She shows herself as cowardly when she was reeling after the accident, " For six years I do not stare at anyone, because I do not raise my head.

"(444), she says, portraying her disgust for herself. Walker utilizes the tone of her writing to manipulate the progression of her attitude shift. For instance, in the stages soon after the accident she uses a very morbid and pessimistic tone to describe the events that are transpiring at that juncture of her life. Stating, " I do not pray for sight. I pray for beauty. (445), proving that even though this accident has occurred she has still remained very resistant to a change in attitude.

She also couples detail to multiply the effect that these strategies have on the reader because when she describes these events, the details she uses reflects the tone, so it visibly transmits the idea of her attitude at that phase, which would be much harder to achieve without these rhetorical techniques used appropriately. The dialogue also plays into this idea as well as it also reflects the current mood of the stage. For example, when she was still very young she used very flattering words as dialogue to complement the tone where she thought beauty was everything and being most beautiful was most important. " That girl's a little mess. "(442), " And got so much sense! "(442), people bombard her with these comments which only inflate her ego during a time where her mind is still developing.

These rhetorical strategies can really add a whole new dimension to a piece of writing just as it did for Walker. In conclusion, Walker uses many elements such as various rhetorical strategies to express her changing attitude toward her own beauty. She proves that an unusual organization style such as her flashing back to different stages in her life can keep the reader very involved with the story and make the reader feel as if he is maturing along with the author. She uses these techniques to illustrate how an experience can really alter one's view of an aspect of life. When a BB blinds her in one eye and turns her " ugly", Walker learns that beauty can be found on the inside as well.

Walker uses this premise to take the reader on the same journey she faced when she was growing up against such adversities. Source is an Anthology of Essays called " 50 Essays"