ENG 104 Spring 2010
Week Two readings and writing

Read:
• “Everyday Use,” pp.1306-1312 (notecard due Tuesday, April 6)
• “The Importance of the Single Effect in a Prose Tale,” pp. 1661-1663
• “The Worn Path,” pp.1326-1332 (notecard due Thursday, April 8)
• “Is Phoenix Jackson Really Dead?” p.1564 (read by Thursday–no notecard)

Weekly Write (due Thursday, April 9): Choose two questions from the following. Please write about two different stories, and don’t choose more than one creative option. For each question, develop your response in a focused paragraph. (It should be quite clear from reading your paragraph which question you are responding to.) Use details, specific examples, and quotes from the story to help develop your response. Please word-process with 12 point font, single-space, and write about ½ page for each response.

“Everyday Use”
1. At the end of the story, Dee tells her mother, “You just don’t understand . . . your heritage.” Do you agree? What does Dee mean by “heritage”? How would the other women in the story define heritage? How would Alice Walker define it? Analyze how by telling the story through the eyes of Mama, Alice Walker subtly encourages us to agree with Mama’s side of the underlying argument about cultural heritage.

2. In “Everyday Use,” why does the family conflict focus on who will possess the quilts? Why are the quilts important? What do they symbolize?

3. Think about the names in “Everyday Use.” According to some critics, the names that Dee and her boyfriend choose are incorrect imitations of African names. What might that tell you about their ties to their African roots? What is the significance of Dee’s and Maggie’s birth names? Why does Walker choose not to give the narrator a name?

4. (Creative Option) Argue with Mrs. Johnson, and try to convince her that Dee/Wangero deserves the quilts.

“A Worn Path”
1. Discuss the birds mentioned in this story and what they may symbolize.

2. Analyze the effect of imagery in “A Worn Path.” Use specific examples from the story to support your response.

3. In her comments reprinted in Part Two (p. 1564), Welty remarks that Phoenix’s victory comes when she sees the doctor’s diploma “nailed up on the wall.” In what sense is this moment the climax of the story? What is different about the action that follows from the action that leads up to this moment? Are there any similarities?

4. (Creative option) In “Is Phoenix Jackson’s Grandson Really Dead?”, read Welty’s account of how she came to write “A Worn Path.” Following her example, write an account of what you imagine to be the day’s experience of someone you catch a glimpse of who strikes your fancy. Use a similar point-of-view that Welty employs for Phoenix Jackson.