

**08. Alice Walker’s “The Flowers”: A Comprehensive Text-Linguistic Analysis <sup>1</sup>****Barış GÖRÜNÜŞ<sup>2</sup> & Gülşen TORUSDAĞ<sup>3</sup>**

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**Abstract**

Alice Walker’s iconic short story “The Flowers” stands as a clear example of flash fiction’s unique potential to compress immense thematic, emotional, and historical weight into minimal narrative space. In less than six hundred words, Walker skillfully navigates the reader through a striking tonal transformation, beginning with a child’s pastoral exploration and ending abruptly in her harsh confrontation with America’s brutal legacy of racial violence. Narrated through the innocent perspective of Myop, a young African American girl, the story offers a multi-layered semantic structure and a coherent narrative rich with emotional and historical imagery. The primary purpose of this study is to analyze Walker’s “The Flowers”, a foundational work within both flash fiction and African-American literary traditions, through a comprehensive text-linguistic framework. This analysis aims to demonstrate how the author’s deceptively simple narrative is meticulously shaped by complex relationships between universal themes such as collective memory, trauma, and the sudden loss of innocence. Furthermore, it provides an in-depth text-linguistic analysis of Walker’s “The Flowers” by examining the writer’s specific stylistic features such as manipulating grammatical structures, using abrupt semantic shifts, deliberate transitions from liveliness to decay, and displaying the intricate interaction between nature and historical memory to significantly increase the overall thematic depth and impact of the story.

**Keywords:** African-American literature, Text linguistics, “The Flowers”, Alice Walker

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## Alice Walker'ın "The Flowers" Öyküsü Üzerine Metindilbilimsel Bir Analiz <sup>4</sup>

### Öz

Alice Walker'ın ikonik kısa öyküsü "The Flowers", muazzam tematik, duygusal ve tarihsel bir ağırlığı asgari anlatı alanına sığdırma becerisiyle, kısa-kısa öykü (flash fiction) türünün sunduğu eşsiz ve çarpıcı potansiyelin en somut örneklerinden biri olarak kabul edilmektedir. Toplamda altı yüz kelimeden daha az bir hacme sahip olan bu eserde Walker, okuyucuyu usta işi bir anlatımla sarsıcı bir dönüşümün içerisinde geçirir. Anlatı, bir çocuğun pastoral ve huzur dolu doğa keşfiyle başlayıp Amerika'nın ırksal şiddet içeren acımasız ve karanlık mirasıyla gerçekleşen sert bir yüzleşmeyle aniden sonlanır. Genç bir Afrikalı-Amerikalı kız olan Myop'un masum ve çocuksu bakış açısıyla aktarılan öykü, duygusal ve tarihsel imgelerle harmanlanmış, çok katmanlı bir yapı ile son derece tutarlı bir anlatı düzlemi sunmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın temel odağı, hem kısa-kısa öykü türünün hem de Afrikalı-Amerikan edebiyat geleneklerinin temel taşlarından biri sayılan "The Flowers" eserini, kapsamlı bir metindilbilimsel çerçevede dahilinde derinlemesine analiz etmektir. Yürütülen bu çözümleme, yazarın başlangıçta aldatıcı derecede basit ve yalın görünen anlatısının, toplumsal hafıza, travma ve masumiyetin sarsıcı bir şekilde aniden kaybedilmesi gibi evrensel temalar arasındaki karmaşık ve girift ilişkilerle nasıl titizlikle inşa edildiğini kanıtlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca bu inceleme; yazarın dilbilgisel yapıları manipüle etmesi, ani anlamsal kaymalara başvurusu, canlılıktan cürümeğe doğru bilinçli geçişler kurgulaması ve öykünün genel tematik derinliğini ve okur üzerindeki etkisini artırmak adına doğa ile tarihsel hafıza arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi sergilemesi gibi spesifik üslup özelliklerini metindilbilimsel veriler ışığında ele alarak bütüncül bir perspektif ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Afrika kökenli Amerikan Edebiyatı, Metindilbilim, "The Flowers", Alice Walker

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## Introduction

Textual analysis is a practical activity based on theoretical foundation. Text linguistics considers the text as a whole, evaluates it in its structural integrity, determines how texts are constructed in terms of grammar and content, determines their communication functions and presents these with practical examples.<sup>5</sup> It represents a field of linguistics which studies texts as unified structures instead of analyzing them through individual words or sentences. The field investigates how linguistic components unite to generate meaning in textual forms which include written and spoken interactions. Text linguistics goes beyond traditional grammar by studying how individual sentences combine to form meaningful written or spoken texts. The framework depends heavily on two essential concepts: cohesion and coherence. The linguistic elements which form cohesive bonds between sentences create a unified whole through lexical and grammatical devices. The logical flow and overall sense which make a text understandable and purposeful to its readers or listeners define coherence (Betti, 2021, p. 9).

Text linguistic analysis of short stories helps readers observe how authors use micro and macro-level linguistic choices to engage with their audience. The analysis reveals both the text's structural framework and its thematic connections which together create a deeper understanding of literary works. Text linguistics offers both theoretical and practical methods to study storytelling complexities and any written or spoken content that needs detailed interpretation. Through text linguistic principles analysts gain the ability to recognize the profound complexity which exists in every text so they can view stories as more than sentence sequences but as language networks that express deeper meanings (Östman & Virtanen, 2022, pp. 1376-1393).

It will be useful to briefly mention the author of the text in order to understand the contextual background that will contribute to the text-linguistic analysis of this short story. Alice Malsenior Walker entered the world on February 9, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia. She was the youngest of eight children in a family of sharecroppers. An accident during her childhood resulted in permanent vision loss in one of her eyes (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.-a). The accident led her to books and writing and she developed a deep love for language and storytelling, which she observed from a quiet distance. Walker started her academic journey at Spelman College before moving to Sarah Lawrence College to study under the feminist poet Muriel Rukeyser. Walker launched her literary career through poetry before gaining widespread recognition with her debut novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* in 1970. Through her short story collection *In Love and Trouble: Stories of Black Women* (1973) she expanded minimal storytelling by creating "The Flowers". *The Color Purple* (1982) earned Walker both the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award which established her as a prominent figure in American literature (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.-a).

Walker's literary accomplishments represent only a part of her total impact. Through *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* in 1983, Walker introduced womanism as a concept which exposed the boundaries of traditional feminism while establishing a framework based on Black women's experiences (Walker, 1983, pp. xi-xii). Womanism emerged as a vital framework to address the gaps within mainstream feminism especially concerning Black women's experiences (Leslie, 2014, pp. 3890-3895). Womanism expanded the scope of critique through its examination of racial and class issues that white feminist movements typically ignored (Encyclopædia Britannica, n.d.-b). The womanist

<sup>5</sup> For detailed information about textlinguistics see also Torusdağ, G. (2018). Textlinguistic Analysis of The Short Stories And Language Teaching Sample of Eveline By Joyce. *Dil ve Edebiyat Arařtırmaları*, 18(18), 127-167. <https://doi.org/10.30767/diledeara.472562>; Torusdağ, G. & Aydın, İ., (2024). *Metindilbilim ve Örnek Metin Çözümlemeleri*, Pegem Yay. Ankara.

perspective in Walker's writing style combines elements of nature and body with historical and collective memory to create a personal and political framework.

With her literary writing Walker displays both powerful and refined techniques when depicting natural settings. The pastoral images in Walker's works show no pure scenes of beauty. Nature functions as a witness to human violence and social injustice in Walker's works. "The Flowers" presents a contrast between natural beauty and the Jim Crow era's horrific legacy through its narrative. The Jim Crow South was not only a set of laws but a 'racial caste system' that operated through state-sanctioned violence and social control (Woodward, 1955, p. 7). These laws, enacted between the late 19th century and 1965, enforced de jure segregation by requiring separate public facilities for Black and white citizens, effectively relegating African Americans to a subordinate legal and social status (Woodward, 1955, p. 13). In "The Flowers", the 'rotted noose' represents this era's racial terror, a term defined as the systemic use of violence and lynching to enforce white supremacy and instill communal fear, often with the complicity of the legal system (Equal Justice Initiative, 2015, p. 5).

The story of a young African American girl named 'Myop' unfolds in "The Flowers" as Alice Walker describes her summer exploration of fields and woods surrounding her home. The story begins by showing Myop's joyful exploration of nature through its vivid descriptions of wildflowers and sunny days and her carefree walking. The story takes a sudden dark turn when Myop walks deeper into unknown territory to find the corpse of a lynched man concealed in the woods. The discovery of the lynched man forces Myop to face the violent racial history which expands her surrounding environment. The story concludes with an effective declaration which marks the end of her innocence: "*And the summer was over*" (Walker, 1973, p. 120). Through its brief yet forceful storytelling "The Flowers" reveals a child's first encounter with historical trauma while delivering a complex exploration of racial memory, historical violence, and the end of childhood.

"The Flowers" demonstrates exceptional commitment to Halliday and Hasan's (1976, p. 4) cohesion principles and Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981, pp. 3-11) textuality standards. The seven essential criteria for textuality which include cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality function together in Walker's story to create a meaningful narrative whole. The narrative achieves a smooth transition between its pastoral setting and historical tragedy through the strong connection between surface connections (cohesion) and semantic integrity (coherence).

This study presents a multifaceted analysis of "The Flowers" by examining its surface structure, cohesion mechanisms, stylistic features, organization, motifs, and themes, all while linking these elements to Walker's life experiences and her womanist philosophy.

### **Text linguistic analysis of "The Flowers"**

Literary texts are not easily deciphered on first reading; they possess a rich semantic depth, require careful reading, and offer the reader a unique reading pleasure. The analysis of a literary text, created for specific purposes, is an applied activity based on a theoretical foundation. Contemporary text linguistics is a method of text analysis. This method requires texts to be 'cohesive' in their surface structure and 'coherent' in their deep structure, to be produced for a specific 'purpose', and to possess the characteristics of 'informativeness', 'acceptability', 'situationality', and 'intertextuality'. As literary texts, short stories require a special reading method and they are better understood through text

linguistic analysis and the intended meaning of the text producer is more easily accessed. Short stories are powerful literary works that require deep reading due to their multilayered semantic structures. Reading short stories requires moving from their surface structure to their deep structure, reaching hidden semantic structures from the apparent ones. The linguistic structures, visible on the surface of these texts, such as recurring words, motifs, themes, topic sentences, concluding sentence, implicit expressions, and literary arts serve as clues to accessing the deeper, invisible layers of meaning.

“The Flowers” by Alice Walker is structured around a central character, Myop, whose recurring actions and internal perceptions function as the primary cohesive thread that binds the pastoral surface of the narrative to its tragic, historical depths. The opening of the story presents a peaceful childhood setting in a Southern rural environment through lexical connections that unite rural imagery. The sentence *“It seemed to Myop as she skipped lightly from hen house to pigpen to smokehouse that the days had never been as beautiful as these”* (Walker, 1973, p. 119) employs asyndeton to connect “hen house”, “pigpen” and “smokehouse” without conjunctions which produces a flowing rhythm that matches Myop's free movement. The text achieves cohesion through asyndeton which links related ideas closely while establishing a rhythmic pattern that matches the main story person's innocent and vibrant nature.

The description of the setting uses recognizable pastoral elements to create both a particular and universal atmosphere. Georgia farmlands from Walker's childhood create a genuine atmosphere for Myop's story. Walker's connection to nature which stems from her personal background appears throughout her work as nature serves as a silent observer to historical violence. The rustic opening in “The Flowers” serves as more than a setting description because it creates a semantic field of life and abundance which will be violently interrupted.

Walker's imagery creates sensory experiences that include the olfactory perception of “The air held a keenness that made her nose twitch” and visual brightness from “silver ferns and wildflowers” and aural stimulation from “tat-de-ta-ta-ta of accompaniment” (Walker, 1973, p. 119). Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 293) explain that cohesion is a semantic relation that enables textual units to connect beyond simple structural sequences, thereby creating 'texture.' While their original framework focuses on verbal cohesion, applying this principle to the story's sensory elements such as visual and auditory imagery reveals an immersive, multimodal coherence that guides the reader's experience

The perspective is depicted through free indirect discourse; a technique Walker employs to blend Myop's internal perceptions with the narrator's voice without explicit narrative attribution. The line *“She felt light and good in the warm sun”* (Walker, 1973, p. 119) places us firmly within Myop's emotional state without requiring an intrusive “she thought”. This technique enhances coherence by allowing readers to experience the pastoral world as Myop does, without narrative distance (Iser, 1972, p. 279).

However, even within this joyful depiction, Walker plants early seeds of disruption. The phrase *“strange blue flowers with velvety ridges”* (Walker, 1973, p. 119) introduces semantic deviation within the established field of familiar rural imagery. The adjective “strange” disrupts the smooth flow of cohesive natural imagery and foreshadows the encounter to come. The text is deliberately guiding the reader toward a transformation required by the schematic structure of narrative texts, which are fictional reflections of real life with a tonal shift, though softly at first.

As Myop wanders farther from her home, “a mile or more”, the atmosphere darkens: *“It seemed gloomy in the little cove in which she found herself. The air was damp, the silence close and deep”* (Walker,

1973, p. 119). The words "gloomy", "damp" and "deep" disrupt the lexical field of brightness and vitality, creating coherence-breaking tension and shifting the optimistic tone of the text. The contrast between "tiny white bubbles" of earlier and "deep silence" here functions as a transformation signaling a disruption of Myop's previous experience.

Walker's manipulation of referential cohesion intensifies in the second paragraph. The critical sentence, "*It was then she stepped smack into his eyes*" (Walker, 1973, p. 120), deliberately hides the referent's identity, using the pronoun "his" before introducing the noun "head". This creates a moment of referential ambiguity, maintaining surface cohesion while temporarily withholding full coherence (Beaugrande & Dressler, 1981, p. 60).

The use of onomatopoeia "smack" highlights the sudden rupture. Stylistically, the narrative shifts from complex and flowing sentences to brief, abrupt expressions: "*Her heel became lodged in the broken ridge between brow and nose*" (Walker, 1973, p. 120). "*It was only when she saw his naked grin that she gave a little yelp of surprise*" (Walker, 1973, p. 120). These lines reflect Myop's shock, offering no transition but confronting the horror directly.

A transformation occurs from natural beauty to death and decay. "Rotting remains of a noose" and "threads of blue denim" (Walker, 1973, p. 120) shift the narrative dramatically. Denim, the typical clothing of African American laborers in the South, becomes a symbol of historical oppression, while "rotted noose" ties the scene explicitly to the terror of lynching.

Notably, Walker does not name the act as lynching, nor does she specify race or history openly. This implicit style demands the reader's intertextual engagement, drawing on collective memory and cultural knowledge to supply the unsaid. Thus, here, intertextuality operates not by quotation but by activating reader familiarity with historical realities.

The motif of the "flowers", once a symbol of exploration and joy, becomes entwined with death. Myop "*laid down her flowers*" (Walker, 1973, p. 120), an action that suggests not only an end to her day's adventure but a relinquishment of innocence. The natural world, once benign and beautiful, is now a graveyard. Furthermore, the motif of the journey, a staple of Bildungsroman narratives, appears here in miniature. Myop's movement away from her home symbolizes a transition, but a brutal one. In Walker's work, journeys often expose characters not to personal enlightenment but to the painful consciousness of collective trauma. Myop's casual drift "*a mile or more from home*" (Walker, 1973, p. 119) mirrors the historical wandering of African Americans through spaces full of ignored violence. Her journey, though spatially short, is temporally and historically deep. The flower motif further underlines this duality. Initially, flowers are symbols of beauty and life, aligning with traditional symbolic systems where flora signify innocence, femininity, or fertility. However, when Myop "*laid down her flowers*" (Walker, 1973, p. 120), the act signifies mourning and a recognition that the pastoral beauty she delighted in is contaminated by a violent history. This ironic inversion of floral symbolism is a hallmark of Walker's critical style, where culturally coded images are deconstructed to reveal submerged historical truths.

Finally, the concluding sentence, "*And the summer was over*" (Walker, 1973, p. 120) summarizes the narrative's tonal descent. The summer, the symbol of childhood and untroubled life, is now irreversibly lost. The line achieves maximum informativity in minimal language, fulfilling Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981, p. 139) view that a text's effectiveness lies in its ability to generate significance beyond its immediate lexical form.

Beyond its immediate surface, “The Flowers” operates on multiple thematic layers that interweave personal loss, communal memory, historical violence, and ecological witness. Alice Walker’s personal history, growing up in the deeply segregated South in the midst of racial terror, fills the story’s underlying moral. By embedding Myop’s confrontation with death into a lush landscape, Walker emphasizes that history is not something external to nature, on the contrary, it is inscribed in the land itself. The themes in “The Flowers” emerge through Walker’s linguistic and symbolic strategies, addressing both universal and racially specific experiences. The loss of innocence is central, as Myop’s journey from carefree exploration to the discovery of a lynched man’s body peaks in the final sentence, “*And the summer was over,*” (Walker, 1973, p. 120) where the shift from lyrical prose to harsh brevity mirrors her emotional transformation. Racial violence, another key theme, is highlighted by the lynched man’s body and the noose, with descriptions like “large white teeth, all of them cracked or broken” grounding the narrative in the brutal realities of the Jim Crow South, impacting even the youngest members of the African American community (Walker, 1973, p. 119). The theme of coming-of-age frames Myop’s encounter with death as a transition to adult awareness, a bildungsroman narrative reinforced by the decreasing use of her name, which reflects her evolving identity. Through imagery, symbolism, and repetition, these themes intertwine to create a narrative that resonates on personal and societal levels, rooted in the historical context of African American experiences.

The transformation of the landscape from nurturing to menacing reflects Walker’s broader womanist ethic, wherein beauty and terror coexist, refusing simplistic binaries (Walker, 1983, pp. xi-xii). Nature is neither wholly redemptive nor entirely corrupt but a field where past and present intertwine. In this context, the semantic shift from “silver ferns and wildflowers” to “rotted remains of a noose” functions not merely as a narrative twist but as a symbolic mapping of America’s racial history onto its topography.

Repetition in “The Flowers” is a key linguistic device that Walker uses to emphasize Myop’s initial innocence and the gradual erosion of her naivety, reinforcing the story’s thematic elements. The frequent use of Myop’s name, particularly in early paragraphs like “*Myop skipped lightly*” and “*Myop felt light*” (Walker, 1973, p. 120), centers her perspective and underscores her individuality, creating a rhythmic quality that mirrors her carefree movements. As the narrative progresses, the reduced use of her name reflects her loss of a sheltered identity. Similarly, nature imagery, with recurring words like “flowers”, “woods”, and “spring” initially evokes beauty, as in “silver ferns and wildflowers grew” but later contrasts with the grim discovery of the lynched man’s body, highlighting the disruption of Myop’s very clean world (Walker, 1973, p. 120). The verb “to turn” appearing in phrases such as “*Turning her back on the rusty boards*” and “*she turned away*” suggests Myop’s physical and emotional movements away from safety and marks transitions in her journey (Walker, 1973, p. 120). Through these repeated elements, Walker creates a narrative that underscores the shift from joy to awareness, enhancing the story’s emotional resonance.

Walker’s choice to focus the narrative on a child, and particularly a Black girl-child, is not a coincidence. In the tradition of African American literature, the figure of the child often serves as an epistemological agent whose innocence is destroyed by an encounter with the realities of racism (Morrison, 1987, p. 9). Myop’s confrontation with death is thus not merely personal. It allegorizes the communal experience of African Americans, whose history is loaded with “stepping into” the unacknowledged horrors buried within the American landscape.

The symbolism of vision is especially powerful. Myop “*stepped smack into his eyes*” (Walker, 1973, p. 120), suggesting not just physical closeness but forced visual acknowledgment. The uncovered “naked

grin" and "cracked or broken teeth" introduce grotesque imagery that denies any comforting mask over the corpse's humanity (Walker, 1973, p. 120). In Walker's womanist philosophy, seeing, truly seeing, historical trauma is the first step toward ethical responsibility (Walker, 1983, pp. xi-xii).

The corpse's unnamed identity serves a dual purpose. It universalizes the victim (making him an archetype of lynching victims across the American South) and emphasizes collective, rather than individual, memory. This emphasis on collective memory aligns with Maurice Halbwachs' (1992, p. 38) foundational theory that memory is a social construct, where individual experiences are framed within the group's historical consciousness. Within African American literary traditions, this often manifests as a 'counter-memory' that seeks to reclaim the 'silences' and 'absences' in official historical records (Fabre & O'Meally, 1994, p. 7). In Walker's narrative, the unnamed victim becomes a site where personal discovery and communal trauma intersect, illustrating what Ron Eyerman (2001, p. 2) defines as 'cultural trauma', a memory that is collectively shared and essential to the formation of a group identity rooted in the struggle for justice. By refusing to name the victim, Walker ensures that the body represents not just one man, but the entire historical weight of racial erasure. Myop's discovery functions as an encounter with what Pierre Nora calls 'lieux de mémoire' (sites of memory), where the landscape itself stores the traumatic history of a marginalized group (Nora, 1989, p. 7). Her 'stepping into his eyes' symbolizes the inevitable moment when African American children are forced to inherit a communal memory of displacement and violence, transforming the land from a private playground into a public archive of trauma (Fabre & O'Meally, 1994, p. 7). Walker's refusal to individuate the victim echoes the strategies of earlier African American writers like Zora Neale Hurston and Ralph Ellison, who depicted social anonymity as a mechanism of racial erasure (Ellison, 1952, p. 3; Hurston, 1937, p. 1). Here, referential ambiguity, the temporary suspension of the referent's identity, becomes a political act.

The story's closing sentence, "*And the summer was over*" (Walker, 1973, p. 120) works on multiple levels. On a literal level, it signals the seasonal transition from summer to autumn. On a psychological level, it signifies the end of Myop's childhood innocence. On a historical level, it evokes the broader end of an era of perceived pastoral safety, a safety always already compromised by the racial terror lying beneath its surface

From a text-linguistic perspective, the abruptness of this final sentence represents a coherence-breaking device that reconfigures all preceding sentences. The entire pastoral world constructed in the first paragraph functions as the anaphoric referent, which is retroactively reconfigured by the final sentence. It is no longer a world of unseen beauty but one of horror. Thus, Walker achieves not only surface cohesion but deep coherence, wherein every word choice retroactively contributes to the story's ethical revelation.

Moreover, the historical intertextuality of "The Flowers" cannot be overstated. The lynching allusions in Walker's narrative, "rotting remains of a noose" and the victim's "broken or cracked teeth", are not independent of their context; they recall the 'red record' of systemic terror documented by Ida B. Wells (1895, p. 15), who exposed lynching as a tool of political and social control. Furthermore, as Myop stumbles upon 'threads of blue denim' and a 'naked grin' in the damp woods, her discovery functions as what Toni Morrison (1987, p. 43) describes as 'rememory', a process where historical trauma is encountered as a physical presence in the landscape. This brutal encounter with reality shatters the 'American innocence' captured in the finality of the phrase "*And the summer was over*" (Walker, 1973, p. 120), which James Baldwin (1963, pp. 5-6) critiques as a willful and dangerous ignorance of the nation's racial reality. By situating Myop's private grief within this public history, Walker constructs a

text that participates in a vast, ongoing dialogue about memory, trauma, and race. Walker's technique resonates strongly with ecocriticism, a field fundamentally defined as 'the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment' (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xviii). In this framework, the natural landscape is not a passive backdrop but an active witness that functions as what Lawrence Buell (1995, p. 7) identifies as a 'participant' in the narrative rather than mere scenery. The 'rotted noose' found amidst the 'silver ferns' suggests that the environment itself absorbs and archives human violence, representing what Glen Love (1996, p. 230) describes as the 'interconnectedness' between social injustice and the physical world. By presenting nature as a 'co-victim' of racial brutality, Walker anticipates an 'eco-womanist' perspective where the desecration of Black bodies and the degradation of the land are treated as inseparable wounds within the American landscape (Harris, 2017, p. 12).

## Conclusion

Through "The Flowers" Alice Walker demonstrates how flash fiction enables the intensification of historical, psychological and social meanings into minimal narrative space. Walker uses text linguistic strategies to create a natural yet powerful shift from innocent pastoral scenes to historical awareness. The surface depiction of pastoral happiness conceals an underlying historical reality of violence. The narrative breaks its cohesion at specific points which create more than just plot surprises because they represent deep semantic shifts. Walker uses cohesion and coherence techniques to recreate the experience of historical discovery as readers encounter the hidden pain that exists within familiar settings. Walker avoids specifying the act and victim to create a universal experience which connects to African American historical memory from Ida B. Wells's (1895) antilynching campaigns to Morrison's *Beloved* (1987). Walker uses intertextuality to create a resonant effect which requires readers to engage actively with both the text and their historical understanding.

Moreover, Walker's eco-womanist sensibility pervades the text. The landscape, initially a space of beauty and freedom, becomes a silent witness to brutality. The story implies that nature itself contains overtones of racial violence. This integration of ecological imagery and historical memory anticipates later ecocritical approaches that view the environment not as neutral but as a witness (Glotfelty & Fromm, 1996, pp. xv–xxxii).

The final line, "And the summer was over" (Walker, 1973, p. 120), has a deep meaning. It signals not only the end of a season but the irreversible loss of innocence, both personal and collective. The textual economy of this sentence fulfills Beaugrande and Dressler's (1981, p. 139) emphasis on informativity and intentionality: in a few words, Walker transforms the entire narrative into a retrospective elegy.

"The Flowers" is a master class in economic language use and ethical density. Through cohesion mechanisms, Walker's style demands readers move from passive reception to active ethical engagement. Each structural choice, whether the joyful asyndeton of Myop's wandering or the expression of her horror, works toward the revelation that history, beauty, and violence are intertwined. The story offers a concentrated staging of Alice Walker's lifelong thematic concerns: the tension between nature and history, the fragility of innocence in a world scarred by systemic violence, the importance of witnessing, and the ethical obligation to remember. Through meticulous attention to text linguistic construction, Walker ensures that the story's brevity does not diminish its impact; rather, it heightens it. Every linguistic, syntactic, and semantic choice serves a unified ethical and aesthetic vision in the effective narrative art. "The Flowers" stands not only as a landmark of flash fiction but as a foundational text in womanist literature, eco-womanist thought, and African American narrative traditions. It invites

readers not merely to read but to see and to confront the buried history and silenced memories that shape collective existence. In so doing, Alice Walker affirms the enduring power of literature to witness, to resist forgetting, and to insist on the moral imperatives of remembrance and justice.

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