The short story “The Lottery” by Shirley Jackson discusses several issues affecting people in the modern society. It talks about a small village of about three hundred people who gathers in a town to participate in a lottery exercise. Residents in some towns have already abandoned this democratic process, but in this village, it was done annually. Mr. Summers is the official of lottery assisted by Mr. Graves the postman. The exercise began at 10 am in the morning and the winner, Mrs. Hutchinson feels that she did not deserve to win. As a result, she fails to take the accolade. Mrs. Hutchinson ends up being stoned by her own son little Davy Hutchinson while protesting that the exercise was not conducted fairly. This story has some of the following elements of literature;

Symbolism is defined as “the use of symbols to signify ideas and qualities by giving them symbolic meanings that are different from their literal sense” (Langer 9). The author uses symbolism in various instances. The lottery is an example of symbolism. The lottery represents ideas from various people in the society with diverse opinions. Residents are involved in prior talks before the democratic process begins. Men are having talks about rains and tractors, and women are gossiping while children are involved in gathering stones. This shows how the residents have divergent interests. Stones gathered by children symbolizes of something wrong that is likely to happen, and we see Mrs. Hutchinson stoned by people at the end of the lottery exercise. This shows that a community is a protagonist as a whole, not an individual.

Imagery is defined as “the use of figurative language to represent objects, actions, and ideas in such a way that it appeals to our physical senses” (Richardson 21). A picture is built in mind when the author describes the black box that was to hold voting papers Its said the black box faded on sides and wood below the black
color could easily be seen. This indicates it’s been serving a similar role for several years. We are told about the climate on the voting day. It was a sunny and bright day, and the land was covered with green grass. This is an instance of imagery.

Cosmic irony occurs when an event that is thought to have a positive influence on something ends up having a negative outcome. Mrs. Hutchinson is stoned by own son Davey Hutchinson on the head. This is the least that was expected since her son could have been the one to help her in times of need. It is ironical for Mrs. Hutchinson to decline to accept to be a winner in the presence of the people after being declared by an officer in charge Mr. Summers.

Allusion involves a brief and an indirect reference to a place, thing or person that is of historical, cultural, political or literary importance. The author uses it when we are given a brief on the black box that has been used for a long time now to the extent of fading. The black box is crucial to the history of the people as it has been used long before Old Man Warner was born. Any attempts by Mr. Summers to replace it with a new one ends in vain.


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In the contemporary society, many people undergo challenges depending on the nature of their environment or sometimes due to uncertain circumstances for which they have no control. Yet amidst the challenges, often they hold onto the hope that at one time, they will obtain the peace they desire. In his free-verse poem Pomegranate, Bruce Bond reminisces about the various phases of life and fulfills the essence of personal experience bonded by a nurturing yet bold and passionate fruit. While composing his piece, the poet uses a combination of various literary devices with the aim of communicating a solid message to his audience. On reading, one is able to associate with the presented message through visualizing the narrator’s life evoking feelings of sadness, yet a deeper longing for peace. In essence, the aim of this paper is to analyze the manner of use of the diverse literary devices in the poem with the purpose of enabling the reader to understand it better.

An allegory, as a literary device, serves the purpose of bringing to light hidden meanings in pieces of literature with regard to everyday lifestyle. Bond titles his piece Pomegranates, which is a sweet yet bold and passionate fruit. The fruit symbolizes the valiant hurdles that one can get to face in their daily lives. Additionally, he makes mention of some challenges that the reader can well identify with such as hunger depicted by the constant craving mentioned in the poem. The lines ‘…bracing the hard fruit in your mere hand…’ (4), along with ‘…the shallow fissure splits and reddens…’ (7), explains the sense of hopelessness in which the narrator exists at this time, making it even possible for the reader to understand the situation at hand better. Probing the narration further, the lines ‘…its honeycomb filled with dead sweet bees…’ (9) and ‘…your hunger is a straight line, pinned, and singing…’ (10) indicate that the persona has swung too deep into frustration to the point that it is difficult to return. Towards the end of the poem, the writer mentions a few points that introduce the expectation of a better day in spite of the problems.

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These are ‘…now wherever you leave, it’s winter.’ (19) and ‘Even in March as you return to your name’s sake…’ (22). These statements both aim at demonstrating the experience of winter and snow as wiping out the existing burdens to introduce a new beginning. With this, Bond illustrates that one can overcome any challenges and that even better days can replace the worst ones.

When writing any piece of literature, the author presents various subjects of discussion, also known as themes, which the readers can easily identify with from the text. In defining hardship, declarations such as ‘…brushing a fly from a bruise in the already blushed, misshapen surface…’ (2) or ‘…a knife and a narrow gaze to guide it…’ (5) are profound, motioning the reader to recognize the condition of many people across the globe. Further, he mentions that for a person to overcome the situation, they must take a righteous path. From this, it is clear that an individual can overcome hardship when they use the guidance learned in their difficult moments to define their future. Knowing ahead of time wherein consequences can occur from taking the wrong path is as ‘…All those times you slipped your tongue into the bright tomb the way a moth enters a jar of lamplight.’ (15-17). The allusion of winter coming each year, allowing the Earth to reinvent and reconvert itself and start anew in spring also presents to the reader the fact that one can always start over. This renewal comes the same time each year and is unlike the senses, feelings or actions in which individuals take. ‘You go to the window and wait, stare, turn away, and the long night trails you like a gown.’ (20-21). The burden for the actions taken throughout the experiences bear an enormous weight on the conscience and heart but day by day hope prevails; the hope that everything will turn out alright.

One can thus conclude that both the afore-mentioned literary devices from Bonds’ Pomegranate offer the reader a chance to visualize and personalize the various hardships the narrator faced in his life. The devices provide a correlation through which the reader can easily differentiate the moments of hopelessness from the glimmer of hope that keeps hanging that at some point, he will overcome the problems. While reflecting on the composition as a whole, one can gain insight into
the hardships, hurdles, and the daunting tasks faced in everyday life. In every hardship, a person should try to identify anything positive that can enable them to grow and overcome the encounters no matter how haunting. We all should learn lessons from our actions each day and throughout our lives; how we choose to overcome and teach them can be our greatest accomplishments or the worst hindrances.

Bond, Bruce. Pomegranate. Professor Treines. Print.

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Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" is a narrative of a rural African American family struggling to understand their heritage. The Johnson family epitomizes the conflicts and struggles of African American culture and values. The story involves Dee, an educated girl who goes to visit her mother, Mrs. Johnson, and sister, Maggie. Dee is accompanied by Hakim, her boyfriend. The aim of this paper is to discuss Walker's uses of character conflict and symbols to illustrate the importance of heritage.

Walker uses symbolism to show Mrs. Johnson and Dee's different views of heritage. Even though both are from the same socio-cultural background, their motives and understanding of heritage are different. In one scenario, Dee admires a churn top and asks her mother if she can have it. She says, "I can use the churn top as a centerpiece for the alcove table…and I'll think of something artistic to do with the dasher." (p.31). It is clear that Dee cherishes the tool and identifies it as part of her heritage, but her plan to use it as a centerpiece for her alcove table is contrary to Mrs. Johnson's views, who uses it as a tool to churn butter. The churn top is a symbol of Mrs. Johnson's and Dee's differing perceptions of heritage.

Walker's use of symbolism is evident when Dee goes through her mother's truck and emerges with two quilts. These quilts are made of different parchments worn by their relatives since the Civil War. Dee borrows the quilts, but Mrs. Johnson reveals to her of her promise to leave them to Maggie and instead offers her others. Dee is incensed and says, "Maggie can't appreciate these quilts…She'd probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use." (p.130). Dee tells Mrs. Johnson that she plans on hanging the quilts on the wall. This shows that Dee's perception of heritage is that it is artistic and tangible. Maggie tells Mrs. Johnson to give Dee the...
quilts stating that she can "remember Grandma Dee without the quilts" (p.131). It becomes apparent to Mrs. Johnson that Maggie truly values their heritage, and her knowledge of knowing how to quilt affirms that she understands that heritage is made up of knowledge and memories, not tangible objects.

Finally, Walker uses character conflict to show the differences how Mrs. Johnson and Maggie understand heritage, and how Dee perceives it. Mrs. Johnson is described as "a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands" (p.11). She is a hard working woman and proud of her efforts in the homestead. Similarly, Maggie works hard, having learned how to quilt from Grandma Dee's teaching. Mrs. Johnson remarks that Maggie's eyes "seem stretched open, blazed open by the flames" (p. 25) in reference to the burns that affected her early in her childhood. Mrs. Johnson understands that Maggie's heritage is connected with the burning house, and her scars are part of it. It is evident that both Mrs. Johnson and Maggie are self-sufficient and are in touch with their traditions. Dee, on the other hand, is out of touch with her heritage completely. She changes her name in her attempt to identify with her African origins, which she knows nothing about. Furthermore, the fact that Dee just looked at the house as it burned to the ground is an indication that she does not identify the house as part of her heritage.

In conclusion, Walker uses character conflict and symbolism to show the importance of heritage in "Everyday Use." Mrs. Johnson and Maggie's illustrations as down to earth, hardworking people, reveals that they identify with their heritage and where they come from, unlike Dee's attempt to change her appearance and name. Additionally, Dee's efforts to turn valuable house tools and items to artifacts make it clear that her understanding of heritage is different from her mother and sister's understanding. Walker employs literal devices to show how heritage can be viewed and perceived so differently.