



DEPICTION OF FEMALE STRENGTH IN EUDORA WELTY'S STORIES "A WORN PATH" AND "LIVVIE"

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Annotation: *This article analyzes the strong and determined character of female figures in Eudora Welty's short stories "A Worn Path" and "Livvie." In both works, the author portrays the strength of the human spirit, as well as feminine resilience and endurance, through the images of women who come from different backgrounds in terms of age, experience, and social status. Phoenix Jackson symbolizes a hardworking mother who tirelessly moves forward in the name of love and sacrifice, while Livvie represents a young woman striving for inner awakening and freedom. Through these stories, Welty sheds light not only on the physical but also the spiritual and moral strength of women. Her works continue to resonate with contemporary readers and remain relevant today.*

Keywords: *female strength, endurance, freedom, spiritual power, devotion, female characters, Southern literature, short story, regionalism.*

Eudora Welty, one of the prominent figures in 20th-century American literature, was born in 1909 in Jackson, Mississippi. She gained widespread recognition for her work in the short story genre, often focusing on the social life, inner experiences, and spiritual struggles of people in the American South. Welty paid special attention to the portrayal of women in her works, deeply exploring their roles, determination, and independence in life.

Her literary style is distinguished by poetic language, psychological analysis, vivid imagery, and rich regional details. Through stories and novels like "The Optimist's Daughter," "The Golden Apples," "A Worn Path," "Livvie," and "Why I Live at the P.O.," she depicted the heroism within ordinary people, their fight against social inequality, and the strength of women with unique artistic expression.¹² It is precisely this deep humanity and focus on women's strength that continue to attract readers to Welty's work today.

¹² Welty, E. (1941). Livvie. In *A Curtain of Green and Other Stories*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.



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Eudora Welty's place in literature has been acknowledged by many contemporaries and critics. Nobel laureate Toni Morrison praised her character development as 'deeply human and poetic,' while Flannery O'Connor recognized her as a powerful female voice in Southern literature. Literary scholar Noel Polk described Welty's "A Worn Path" as a unique work showcasing human dignity through the figure of an African-American woman, and Barbara Harrell Carson viewed "Livvie" as a symbol of a woman's inner strength and self-realization. These perspectives highlight the central role of women's lives, their spiritual and physical resilience, in Welty's creative output.

Eudora Welty's work is a shining example of American Southern literature, where she masterfully portrays human psychology, female protagonists, and regional realism. Her stories "A Worn Path" and "Livvie," both written in 1941 and included in the collection "A Curtain of Green and Other Stories," depict various aspects of female strength.

In "A Worn Path," the central character is Phoenix Jackson, an elderly African-American woman. She embarks on a perilous journey through forests, rivers, and obstacles to obtain medicine for her disabled grandson. Phoenix's courage, devotion, and willpower symbolize not only her love for her grandson but also her struggle against societal injustice and racial discrimination. Despite being alone, she never retreats each step she takes embodies the strength and patience of a woman.

"Livvie," on the other hand, portrays a different aspect of strength. Livvie is a young woman dissatisfied with her life, isolated by her husband, yearning for freedom and a new beginning. The arrival of a new character, Cash, into her life marks Livvie's journey toward inner awakening, self-awareness, and courageous decision-making.¹³ The spring season in the story symbolizes new life, renewal, and spiritual awakening. Livvie's transformation demonstrates the profound inner world and spiritual courage a woman can possess.

Both stories illuminate different facets of female strength: Phoenix through physical endurance, devotion, and love; Livvie through spiritual growth, the pursuit of independence, and the courage to start anew. Welty portrays these characters as ordinary individuals with deep life experiences, allowing readers to feel their determination and internal struggles.

The author's deep understanding of Southern American life lends authenticity and credibility to the stories. Through local dialects, culture, and lifestyle, she brings her characters to life within their environment. Therefore, these stories reflect not only

¹³ Welty, E. (1941). Livvie. In *A Curtain of Green and Other Stories*. Harcourt, Brace and Company.



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femininity but also broader themes such as social inequality, loneliness, and the struggle for freedom.¹⁴

Through these two stories, Eudora Welty portrays female characters not as victims of trials but as individuals who overcome challenges, make decisions, and possess the power to change their lives. This has made her one of the most profound and humane writers of her time.

Conclusion:

Eudora Welty's "A Worn Path" and "Livvie" are beautiful artistic examples of women's strength, inner power, and ability to confront life's trials. Both stories depict women of different ages and social backgrounds: one—a resilient and devoted mother; the other—a young woman striving for freedom and self-awareness. Through the characters of Phoenix Jackson and Livvie, Welty vividly portrays women's physical and spiritual strength, their determination to overcome social barriers. The author's deep psychological approach, elements of regionalism, and attention to life details make the stories more vivid and impactful. For these reasons, Eudora Welty's work remains significant for today's readers, serving as an important source for understanding the profound essence of womanhood.

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