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NEH Landmarks: Welty & the Secret Sharer
Millsaps College, July 2008

Lesson Plan: Infusing the Natural and Imaginative World
of Eudora Welty through The Optimist's Daughter

Essential Questions:

- ❖ How does Welty's passion for flowers and gardening create a specific place and vantage point in her narrative?
- ❖ How can we relate individual and regional experiences to that of the natural world?

Objectives:

- ❖ Observe and identify the anatomy of the flower
- ❖ Utilize modern technology to conduct research and compose a conclusive power point presentation
- ❖ Develop a speaking presence for oral presentations
- ❖ Identify the main idea of the passage
- ❖ Interpret floral images through their literal and metaphorical meanings
- ❖ Compose an informal writing response with synthetic focus between the research and the content

Strategies:

- 1 – Introduce the camellia and allow students to observe and frame questions to better understand the flower's anatomy and environmental climate
- 2 – Analyze passage from The Optimist's Daughter (pg 89-90) with reference to the camellia
- 3 – Choose another flower discussed in Welty's novel and independently research its literal and metaphoric meaning in context
- 4 – Create a power point presentation of ones findings
- 5 – Extend the lesson with a critical commentary by Mae Miller Claxton, "'Untamable Texts': The Art of Georgia O'Keeffe and Eudora Welty" from the *Mississippi Quarterly*

Assessment: Students will be assessed by their oral presentation to the class as well as the information gathered for the power point, which will include:

- ❖ Images of the flower, plant, seed, and leaf
- ❖ The flower's Latin name
- ❖ The plant's environmental climate
- ❖ Approximate size, shape, and color description
- ❖ List of varieties or hybrids
- ❖ Paragraph explaining conclusions and relating the research to the text

Useful Websites:

http://mdah.state.ms.us/welty/garden_tour8.html
<http://www.lingingartsoriginals.com/infofowersymbolism.htm>