

Kelley Smith

NEH Landmarks Workshops

Eudora Welty

Proposal

The Ballad of Cassandra: Finding a Voice in the South in Female Characters from
Welty's Short Fiction

Just as Cassandra, the cursed prophetess has a voice that no one hears, Eudora Welty creates characters trapped in their patriarchal systems, understanding the truths of their lives and their worlds, filled with longing to be understood, but dismissed by their societies. In my essay, I will discuss the role of Cassandra figure in the Southern culture, specifically in short stories by Welty. I will use characters from each of the short story collections: Sister from "Why I Live at the P.O." and Phoenix Jackson from "A Worn Path," Clytie from "Clytie," Hazel from "The Wide Net," and Miss Eckhart from "June Recital," and Circe from "Circe," explaining how each of these female characters must find a voice that possesses strength, confidence, and truth within their communities, who resist the virtues of these women and deafen themselves against the prophetess' wisdom.