

CFP for ALA 2024

Eudora Welty, Madness, and Violence

We are seeking papers offering theoretical and critical approaches to Welty's representations of "madness" and violence. These topics may be examined separately or as connected. Welty's fiction teems with characters who are "mad" in the sense of being physically or mentally impaired; unreasonable or foolish; angry or violently explosive. The asylum is an integral part of Welty's social landscapes and so is the eruption of violence in her fiction. From the earliest stories to her late work, female characters are "slapped" as in "A Piece of News" and later in "Music from Spain"; they are threatened or prodded with a gun, stabbed with a knife ("Flowers for Marjorie") and killed every day ("The Purple Hat"); they hide their bruises ("No Place for You, My Love"); they suffer rape and abandonment in "At the Landing," and "June Recital." Violence is also directed against men ("The Hitchhikers") or against the self ("Clytie" and "The Burning") and it involves gender, race, and class in its complex physical and psychological manifestations. Racially motivated and black-involved violence occurs throughout her canon, think for example of *Delta Wedding*, "The Demonstrators," and "Where is the Voice Coming from?" What insights are gained when we examine the appearance of "madness" and violence in Welty's fiction? It has been more than 40 years since Gilbert and Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic*. What might we see today through the new lenses directed at gender, sexuality, race, trauma, disability, ecology, and history?