
Crossing Space and Time Borders in Overcoming Black Women's Fears of Aging in Alice Walker's *Now is the Time to Open Your Heart*

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Abstract

Carol Boyce Davies notes in her book, *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*, that because women of color "were/are products of separations and dislocations and dis-memberings, people of African descent in the Americas historically have sought reconnection" (17). Not limiting the Americas to the US, Davies recognizes connections and remembering among and between Black women in the Caribbean, South America, and Canada. Similarly, Alice Walker's 2004 novel, *Now is the Time to Open Your Heart*, explores the possibility of tracing one's heritage through Amerindian roots, using the geographical place of the Amazon as a site for remembering and Buddhist meditation techniques as an integral part of self-healing for her aging Black protagonist. Crossing geographical and temporal boundaries in her novel, Walker's protagonist travels to South America. On a retreat, she remembers and connects with her Amerindian spiritual guide, Grandmother, as well as some of her African American ancestors in order to overcome her fear of aging and find renewed purpose in her life, as an upper-class, Black woman in the US. De-familiarizing her protagonist within the setting of the Amazon jungle, Walker subverts Western notions of decline associated with women and aging through her character's awareness of alternative religious practices, environmental consciousness, and remembering her African and Amerindian ancestors.

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