From Womanism to Eco-spirituality: Ancestral Healing in Alice Walker’s *Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart*

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Abstract
The present paper sought to address Alice Walker’s 2005 novel, *Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart*, in terms of two basic critical concepts: womanism and eco-spirituality. Her womanist stance is a universal, non-separatist approach which explores the importance of community, wholeness and female restoration. But womanism is just the preliminary point of departure. She carried on her female empowering project and introduced eco-spirituality as an embodiment of dynamic energy, separate from the physical body, which is essential for the individual’s well-being. Her celebration of the inherent connectedness of African heritage to Native American culture and her focus on the spiritual affinity between all elements of life is characteristic of the second phase in Alice Walker’s writing career. *Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart* is symptomatic of her rise to this new plateau characterized by a celebration of both holiness and wholeness achieved through the ultimate marriage of Man and the whole Universe. Nowhere else has she ever elaborated on the importance of true communion with nature and the surrounding environment as the pre-requisite for physical and emotional integrity. The argument presented in this paper is to address the excruciating process of the protagonist’s journey of self-discovery aimed at physical and spiritual healing. It is the character’s voluntary retreat to nature that has paved the way for the final self-reconstruction. The newly-acquired independence promoted the characters to destabilize the symbolic, oppressive order, survive trauma and revive the transformative energy to work against fragmentation.

Keywords: Eco-spirituality, Fragmentation, Walker, Wholeness, Womanism

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