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# Granny Midwives and Black Women Writers: Double-Dutched Readings

*Valerie Lee*

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**Granny Midwives and Black Women Writers: Double-Dutched Readings** Valerie Lee
Midwives, women healers and root workers have been central figures in the African American folk traditions. Particularly in Black communities in the rural south, these women served vital social, cultural and political functions. It was believed that they possessed magical powers: they negotiated the barrier between life and death and were often regarded as the "knower" in a community. Today even as medical science has discredited or superseded their power, granny midwives have resurfaced as pivotal characters in the narratives of contemporary African American literature.

***Granny Midwives and Black Women Writers*** examines the lives of *real* granny midwives and other healers--through oral narratives, ethnographic research and documentation--and considers them in tandem with their fictional counterparts in the work of Toni Morrison, Gloria Naylor, Alice Walker and others.

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