

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Kindred Inquiry & Discussion

Fishbowl Socratic Seminar | English 10H

Directions: You do NOT have to write these out. These will be discussed verbally. You will be expected to elaborate on answering these. They are also fair game for the assessment.

Race as a Social Construct.

How does Kindred demonstrate race and positions of race as a social construct of society?

Trauma and Historical Memory.

Historical trauma is an emotional and psychological wound that extends over an individual's lifetime and across generations. How does this text exhibit historical trauma? How are there traces of historical trauma today in contemporary society for women and Black individuals?

American Myopia.

When we did the activity with the photograph identification, the majority only correctly identified the first two slides of individuals, recognizing individuals within the last century. Myopia refers to nearsightedness. This can be in the form of time or one's own culture. How does Octavia Butler's Kindred work against American myopia and ethnocentrism? In other words, how does her novel challenge the reader to move beyond racial comfort zones and historical awareness?

Power Dynamics.

Analyze the relationship between Kevin and Dana. Then, analyze the relationship between Tom and Margaret. How do those relationships differ? What are other constituents that influence their relationships?

Consider the relationship between Dana and Rufus. While it could be argued either way, who holds more power in their relationship?

Slave narratives typically explore the dynamics of the slave and master relationship. Given your knowledge of plantation owners, overseers, patrollers, etc. from prior years of study, what kind of "master" is Tom Weylin. Describe the slave/master relationship between Tom Weylin, Sarah, and Luke.

Education as a Subversive Act.

In order to maintain a society built on the foundation of white privilege and racial discrimination, literacy and education was prohibited from slaves. Teaching slaves to read and write was seen as divergent and subversive. It supposedly gave the individuals too much independence and led to a higher number of runaways or "disrespectful" conduct. Even after slavery was illegal, many Blacks were only provided with vocational training (technical training) as opposed to an academically-oriented education. How is education portrayed as a subversive act in Kindred? Give a specific example. What were the consequences? Furthermore, did education lead to more runaways?

Sex and Gender Inequality.

Examine the female characters in the novel and their relationships to male figures in the text. How is Margaret Weylin discriminated against? Or is she? How is Dana, Alice, Sarah, and Carrie discriminated against? What are their expected roles during this time frame? How are those roles similar? How are they different?

Slavery Now Versus Then.

Slavery in a broad sense is enslavement that involves hard labor (physical or emotional) and restricted freedom and choice. When Dana meets Kevin, she is working for a temp. agency that offers menial work for low pay. How does that form of enslavement compare to historical slavery? While the differences are blatant, how are these forms of enslavement similar?

Patriarchy.

When we read “The Yellow Wallpaper,” we very briefly discussed “rape culture.” Much like the concept of white privilege, how does the concept of patriarchy feed into rape culture? In what ways is rape symbolic of other problems in society in Kindred during that time frame? How does this objectify women and complicate the essence of a “relationship?”

White Supremacy & Privilege.

Give three examples of white supremacy in the novel so far. How do the “benefits” of white privilege pervade into the slave community on the Weylin plantation? How does association change statues or views?

Black Community.

Within the text, the slave community on the Weylin plantation represents a small scale indication of relationships and interpersonal matters reflected in any close-knit society. Explore those dynamics. Think about how Sarah is viewed on the plantation. Think about the differentiation between the “house slaves” and the “field slaves.” What connotations surround each?

Survival.

Kindred challenges the reader to decipher what survival truly means? Does survival mean adaptability and perseverance? Or does survival mean debunking the system and escape despite punishments that ensue along the way? Explain your reasoning thoroughly.

Normalization.

Think about your childhood. How many of you mimicked adult life? Played house, Barbies, or pretended to be a pro-basketball player. When Kevin and Dana try to get some alone time, they see the children re-enacting a slave sale. How does this level of normalization occur? In what ways today is racism manifested in normalized conversations, viewpoints, and/or behaviors? Think about racism beyond black and white boundaries. Think about racism against all races aside from the white race.

Redemption.

Redemption in a sense is clearing a debt. How is the theme of redemption present in this text? How is Dana’s involvement in her ancestor’s lives in some way a form of “redemption” or is it? How is Kevin spending five years in that world a form of “redemption” or is it?

Concept of “Home.”

Even though Dana is in more danger on the plantation, it becomes a sort of home to her. Consider the qualifications that make a place a home? Why is it significant or symbolic that Dana and Kevin have just moved into a new home in the contemporary setting of the novel? How/why does the Weylin plantation feel more like a home to Dana? Think beyond general observance. Think about the living conditions and the people involved in each setting- the 1800s and 1976.