

# Good book review on anthropology

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



## **OCTAVIA BUTLER'S KINDRED**

Kindred is a 1976 novel by Octavia Butler. The novel is a combination of African American literature and science fiction. This is because the book tells the story of slavery from the perspective of a 1976 woman. The novel also entails elements of fantasy as it involves time travel and of course acts of heroism by the time traveler.

Dana is a young African American woman who has just moved into her new apartment with her husband Kevin in California. On the ninth of June 1976 as Dana is busy unpacking in their new apartment she suddenly gets dizzy. Her vision gets blurry and all of a sudden her environment seems to slowly fade away. She wakes up in Maryland but there is a twist. It is now in the nineteenth century. She notices a young boy called Rufus struggling to get his footing in the river. She quickly dashes in and saves him but he is unconscious by the time she does so. Tom Weylin, the father of Rufus arrives at the scene and almost on instinct alone points his gun at Dana leaving her terrified to say the least. She gets dizzy once again and wakes up home in her apartment in 1976.

She manages to time travel again to 1815 where she finds the bedroom of Rufus burning. She manages to put out the fire and comfort the boy. She leaves the residence and heads to the residence of Alice Greenwood who she suspects may be her direct ancestor. A group of young men attack the residence and beat up the mother of Alice and her husband. One man tries to rape Dana and frightened she gets dizzy and suddenly it is 1976 again. Dana continues a series of time travels even at a point travelling back with her boyfriend Kevin. Apparently she can only travel back when Rufus is in a

crisis or when his life is in danger. Her only way to travel back home is for her to get very scared for her life. On her last time travel Rufus attempts to rape her. She stabs him twice in self-defense and manages to travel back home immediately.

The main characters in the novel are Dana and Rufus. Dana is a very kind and forgiving lady. This is evident since despite all the bad that Rufus does to her she still helps him when she is in crisis. Rufus even drives Alice to suicide but Dana manages to look past this and still help him when he is undergoing depression. " I would have all I could do to look after myself. But I would help him as best I could. And I would try to keep friendship with him, maybe plant a few ideas in his mind that would help both me and the people who would be his slaves in the years to come," says Dana (Butler, p. 68).

Rufus on the other hand is manipulative sadistic and plainly just forgetful. He manipulates Alice by lying to her that he had sold her children. This lie takes its toll on Alice until she finally kills herself. Despite all that Dana has done for him throughout his life he still has her beaten and even attempts to rape her.

The novel is very strong in its depiction of slavery. This is evident from the graphic description of how slaves were treated. " I could feel the knife in my hand, still slippery with perspiration. A slave was a slave. Anything could be done to her," Says Dana as Rufus attempts to rape her (Butler, p. 260). The novel is weak in portraying the slaves as rebellious. They get ideas but never act on them. " I would never be to him what Tess had been to his father—a thing passed around like the whiskey jug at a husking. He wouldn't do that to me or sell me or . . ." says Dana (Butler, p. 260)

In my opinion the novel is very entertaining. It is a classic fusion of the past and the present or so to speak. I would recommend it because it is the portrayal of history in an entertaining way. It fuses history with time travel.

### **Works Cited**

Butler, Octavia E.. *Kindred*. 25th anniversary ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 2003. Print.