

# Kindred: gender and class notes

Sociology



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Kindred Assignment Society has always been fascinated with the concept of race and gender and how these two identifications have constructed peoples' lives. From the beginning of modern society, racial inequalities and gender inequalities have consumed American culture. Women who are white and of color have been oppressed for hundreds of years in America. On a structural level, women make less money, are abused more often, and receive less privilege than men (class notes). It has been known that men hold positions of power over women more often than women holding power over men. This is the concept of patriarchy (class notes). Women of color have faced this oppression not only due to their gender but also because of their race. Scientist have studied in the past the genetic make-up and anatomy in African Americans in order to prove that there are differences between whites and blacks. The Tuskegee Syphilis Study is an excellent example of these types of studies. This study manipulated black males to think that they were receiving treatment, when actually they were used to study the development of syphilis. This disgusting experiment lasted for fifty years before it was stopped (class notes 2-6-07). This proves that at the time of this study (1932-1972) African Americans were looked toward as disposable people and treated with disrespect. This study would have never happened to white males or females. The two time periods that control this story are significantly different. Not only are they about a Hundred and Fifty years apart but the people in each of these time periods are shaped by their social constructs. Dana is a struggling black author in 1976 and has traveled to 1815 during the slavery period. She spends a total of almost one year during the 1800's while she has barley been gone a few hours during 1976. Dana experiences significant differences in these two time periods not only

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due to her color but her gender as well. In 1976, women were allowed to join the workforce at their own will and had rights that women in the past were withheld from. They were also oppressed and driven into jobs that were socially acceptable for women. In the book, Dana tells Kevin that her aunt and uncle would have preferred her to be a nurse, secretary or a teacher. These jobs are typically gendered jobs favoring women domination in these positions. Kevin answers back that he was supposed to be an engineer (a male dominant profession). The jobs of women during slavery consisted of washing laundry, cooking the meals and cleaning the house. These tasks are completed by women in 1976 but more men are able and willing to do their own laundry and cook their own meals. The men in the 1800's were in charge of controlling and watching over the slaves or handling tasks that required heavy lifting or pulling. Men oppressed women more back then than now. Men were seen as power holding figures while women were barely allowed to read and write. These constructs were affected by their gender but even more so by their race which will be discussed later.