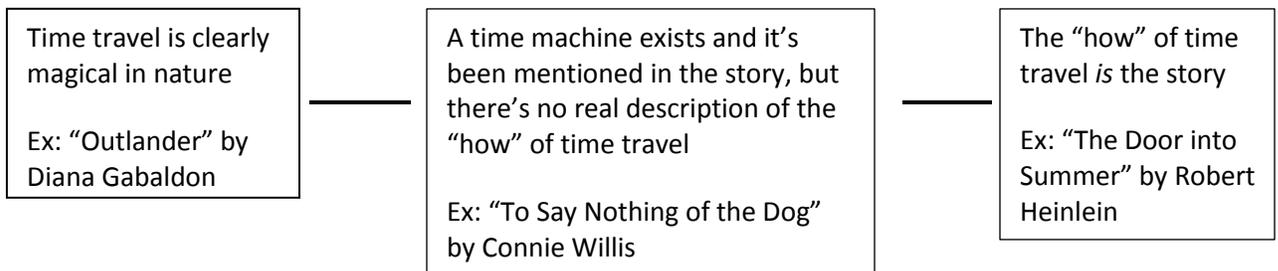


Metrowest Readers' Advisory Roundtable
Science Fiction – Time Travel subgenre
Benchmark title: "Kindred" by Octavia Butler
Monday, January 9, 2017 @ 9:45 am
Medway Public Library

Attendees: Liz Reed (Norwood, Morrill Memorial), Pam Aghababian (Bedford), Christine Muir (Bedford), Stefanie Claydon (Needham), Karen Perkins (Natick, Morse Institute), Carole Pozmanter (Natick, Morse Institute), Sarah Breen (Needham), Susan Allison (Medway), Laura Bernheim (Waltham)

Topic Discussion

- Time travel SF can have strong appeal to fans of historical fiction
- Time travel in fiction exists on a spectrum:



- "Time Travel: a history" by James Gleick is a good nonfiction work exploring the development of the theory of time travel, and how time travel literature has influence the science of time travel
- In some cases, such as "Kindred," mind control seems to be the cause for time travel
- Some time travel SF really draws out the paradoxes of time travel and treats it like a logic puzzle – some of these can make the reader's head start to ache!
- Does all of time already exist and you can't change it? Or can you influence the past to change the future?
- What does time look like? Is it a linear stream only travelling in one direction? Is it a plane? A sphere?
- Time travel is a hot topic right now in television
- Particle science: particles have already been demonstrated to jump in time and in space....the future is now!

Benchmark Title – "Kindred"

- A work of "soft" SF, deals with social science
- Will appeal to fans of historical fiction, so can be a good gateway book into SF
- Book has a more narrative, flowing style than other SF books
- Octavia Butler is a prominent SF writer
- Written in 1979, this book has some progressive content
- The dialog is fairly timeless, there's not a lot that "dates" this story
- Although race is a major topic in the book, readers don't actually know the race of characters immediately

- A graphic novel of “Kindred” has just come out, which ruins the surprise of Dana and Kevin’s interracial marriage
- Race relations in this book are still very timely today
- Often considered a YA novel because it’s required reading at many schools, though this is definitely more of an “older YA” novel
- Descriptions of slavery are intense, with heavy use of the N-word
 - This could all be a bit strong for some readers
- Kevin’s time spent in the past was a little thin and could have been more fleshed out
 - His story could be a good spin-off book
- Plot-driven novel; characters not as well fleshed-out as in literary fiction
 - This makes sense given all the time travel observations made by Dana
 - Book strikes a complicated balance between handling day-to-day descriptions of this historical setting and the plot points of a time travel story
- Good companion novel to “Copper Sun” by Sharon Draper
- Book didn’t really deal with the paradoxes or the knitty-gritty logistics of time travel
 - Did Dana’s house have anything to do with it?
 - Story does subtly bring up the paradox of time travel: Dana has to go back to save Rufus so that she’ll be born one day
 - What happens if she fails?
 - However, though the book acknowledges this paradox, it doesn’t spend time trying to tease it out or explain it

Next Meeting: Monday March 13th at 9:45 am in Bedford

SF subgenre: Futuristic

Benchmark: “Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?” by Philip K. Dick