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Indelible Race Memories and Subliminal Epigenetics in Octavia Butler's *Kindred*

Keywords: Epigenetics, transgenerational, scientific racism, post-racial trauma, race memories

Abstract: Octavia E. Butler's *Kindred* highlights complexities beyond those related to a tale of time-travel and a painful slave narrative. It allows us to reimagine definitions of "race memory" and "trauma" along the lines of genetic ancestry that is explored through the real and numinous lives of Dana and Kevin from the Maryland of the 1770s to 1976 California. The inescapable web of power, racial and gender disparities disturb Dana and make her undergo the agonizing process of transcending the limits of the present world to enter the past. The legacy of antebellum slavery that Butler records through this repeated transcendence is transhistorical and can be studied as scientific racism. This essay offers ways of reading Dana's time-travel as the recuperation of biological memories caused due to epigenetics or trauma transmitted transgenerationally. Through several epistemic moments that validate the anguish and abuse endured in the past, this essay opens avenues for lived transhistorical trauma to demand both literary and medical attention.