

Caitlyn, James, Connor, **Monique**, **Patrick**, Garron, Ivy, **Jack**, **Lillian**, Makensie, Nicole,

Rethinking Early American Literature

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Circle 2 discussion questions:

Historically, the North is portrayed as innocent bystanders in the midst of slavery. How is this factually incorrect? What actions, if any, did the North take that contributed to the prevalence of slavery?

During the discussion, take notes about anything that sticks out to you and who said it. Afterward, you will pick out one quote or note to answer each question. Be prepared to share your responses with the class.

Discussion 1:

- White individuals in the south used religion as a way to validate slavery- Mike
- Bible used to oppress slaves when it came to slave owners/ slaves used religion as strength (don't like that word...)
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It's all about power in the end- Mike

Community is powerful- Mike

Slaves are always told to work harder and faster because God "sees their laziness."

"If you are a true Christian, you have to follow God's word."- Ina

You don't see it until it's in your own backyard- Mike

Once you get a taste, you want it all- Mike

It gives no voice to the oppressed- Mike

Why make people work for free?- Goode

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- *Bible/ religion used to manipulate slaves? "Used as a tactic to keep everyone in line and keep the hierarchy"- Ina*
- *"People still use religion as a leverage today." -Mike*
- *Religion enabled the community to come together more; backfired on the slave owners.*
- *Using religion against slave owners. "You better do this IF you're a good christian." -Ina*
- *"Temptation of power."- Mike*

- *“As long as you’re able to stay afloat, then who cares about the other people you’re crushing over.” - Ina*

“Religion is being used to instill fear.” - mike

What was one point someone made that you felt really impacted the discussion?

Religion used the “proper way” -- what *is* this proper way??

“They were able to justify slavery by dehumanizing slaves”

- *Religion being used as a form of power for slaves rather than fear.*

At what point do you feel the discussion was brought to a deeper level?

“It’s all about power” -- in response to Imani’s question about how religion was a tool for oppression; this is counterintuitive.

Community and division; how community enables division and power (Mike)

- *The idea of religion being reversed against the slave owners; Slaves using religion as a form of power instead of fear like the slave owners wanted. If that makes sense...*
- *Capitalism and greed enabling slavery and having white people to a blind eye away from the brutality.*

What was one thing you wish would have been said or talked about more?

- *How religion is still used as a front for power today.*
 - *It was briefly mentioned but not really talked about.*
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*According to *Incidents,* what role did Southern white women play during this time period?*

From what I have read, it looks like Southern white women try to treat slaves differently, but when they are with their husbands, they are treated horribly. And their anger from how they're treated by their husbands builds up and eats away at them. When they are with the slaves, they let their anger out on the slaves and they can be just as cruel as their husbands if not worse than them.

Mrs. Flint plays as devils' advocate as there is no truer follower of Satan than the Christian slaveholder. She has these motherly instincts towards the young slaves but knows of their true profit for increasing the slave population, or chattel.