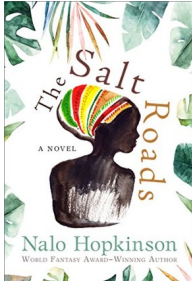




Lambda Sci-Fi

DC Area Gaylaxians



The Salt Roads
By Nalo Hopkinson
Discussed April 2005

Discussion Questions

1. *The Salt Roads* uses fantastical elements throughout the story: Makandal's shape-changing; Mer's visitation from Ezili; Meritet's super-real sensory abilities in the desert. Is this enough to make it "genre"? Do you see *The Salt Roads* as a "fantasy" novel? Does Jules Verne's presence in the novel increase its validity as a genre novel?
2. The author incorporates real people and events in her novel (e.g. Charles Baudelaire, Jeanne Duval, Makandal and the revolution in Haiti), but imagines a possible scenario for how these people lived and how those events took place. How does the presence of these historical elements affect your reading of the novel? So, is this an "alternate history" scifi novel? Or, historical fiction?
3. From Jeanne Duval's relationship with Baudelaire to Mer's relationship with Tipingee to Meritet's relationship with Judah, there are many kinds of love and friendship in *The Salt Roads*. What is the novel's ultimate view of love between men and women? Between women and women? What place does sex hold in the various relationships in the novel? Does this book treat the same-sex and opposite-sex relationships equally?
4. One reviewer said, "The essential beauty of *The Salt Roads*: history and folklore work together to provide a destiny for its characters, yet personal choice remains." How much choice do the characters of the novel have? How do their choices affect them?
5. Author Tananarive Due said that "*The Salt Roads* is part novel, part poem, part song." What does the structure add (or subtract) from your enjoyment of the novel?
6. Again from Tananarive Due, do you think your race or ethnic background influences your ability to appreciate the narrative?
7. Did this novel deserve the Gaylactic Spectrum Award for the Best Novel of 2003? How does it compare to *Troll* or *Lust*?