

Black English and Internalized Oppression: Socratic Prep

After reading an excerpt from “Nobody Mean More to Me and You Than the Future Life of Willie Jordan,” by June Jordan, “The Case for Black English” by Vinson Cunningham, “Breaking the Chains,” from *Essence* magazine, and “On Internalized Racism: 4 Lessons I Learned as an Undercover Asian” by Amy Sun, please prepare for our Socratic Seminar by answering the following questions and writing three more discussion questions of your own to contribute.

1. What biases do people bring to their perceptions of language (e.g., ‘a language where nobody knows how to conjugate the verbs’)

2. Cunningham characterizes McWhorter’s view as “Black English is perfectly legitimate as language, but its use in schools wouldn’t help black students, he wrote in 1997, because, among other problems, ‘inner city backgrounds do not prepare many children to be receptive to education in school.’” Agree or disagree with your rationale.

3. What connection can be made between Cunningham’s discussion of the “n-word(s)” and “Whites Invade Harlem”?

5. What is “post traumatic slave syndrome”? Do you think there is a connection to be made between historical trauma and current day trauma? Why or why not?

6. Based on the readings taken together, how do you define internalized oppression?

Your discussion questions: