

So, What are you Anyway?

A. Answer these questions.

1) "What are you, anyway?"

a) What did the Nortons want to know about Carole?

A) The Nortons were curious about Carole's ethnic origin. They had noticed that her skin tone differed from theirs. So, they would not stop asking Carole about her racial identity. They asked outrageous questions in an arrogant way. When none of these questions got her to tell them what her race was, Mr. Norton could not hold his patience anymore. He directly asked Carole, "What are you anyway?" He meant to find out what her ~~her~~ racial identity was.

b) What do you think is problematic with the questions? Does the word 'what' make a person seem less than human? How?

a) The question discrimination between races and is said in a derogatory formation.

Yes, it makes the others perceive to feel less than human and low and inferior. The way it is said and the usage of body language of Norton makes the child uncomfortable even though she does not understand the concept of race.

c) Is there any word/phrase in para 32 that does the same thing?

a) "They" are neither one thing, nor the other indicates the same thing.

2) Answer these questions about Carole and her understanding of race.

a) Does Carole understand the terms 'race' and 'multiracial'?

A) No, Carole doesn't understand the term 'race' but from the tone of the Norton's she can deduce that it is something bad. She has not heard of the word 'multiracial' either. She is so taken a-back when she is asked whether she is multiracial or not. She fumbles and asks what the word meant.

b) When Carole first sees the Norton's does she identify them as white-skinned? What is the word she uses to describe Mr Norton's?

A) No, Carole does not identify Mr Norton as white-skinned. Carole uses the word sunburned to describe him.

c) Do you think Carole understands colour of skin or race as a major difference between people?

A) Carole is too young and too innocent to be able to comprehend the differences that divide the world. Even though she thinks that Mr Norton's face is a bit sunburnt, it does not bother her that he is of a different skin tone. In sharp

Contrast are the Nortons whose sole concern is to find out Carole's ~~own~~ ethnic identity.

3) Answer these questions about Nortons •

a) What is the first thing Mr. Norton notices about Carole ?

A) The first thing Mr. Norton notices about Carole was her black doll. He was baffled to see it and exclaimed that he had never seen anything like that in his entire life.

b) In para 32 Mrs Norton says that world is not ready for mixed people. though she does not mind them. Do you think she is being honest about her feeling How do we know ?

A) Mrs Norton is honest about her feelings for mixed people because she does not mind Carole as much as Mr Norton does. In fact she keeps reminding Mr Norton that she is just a child. She makes little gestures, asks Mr Norton to make wake the girl up for the meal. She also urges Mr Norton to make way for Carole when ~~she~~ she gets up to go to the bathroom.

c) What do you think is the difference between Carole and Norton's in the way they approach people? Do they treat everyone equally?

A) Carole and Norton's look at people in a very different manner. For Carole's all people are equal. She does not differentiate between black and white. She is not aware of what is race and it does not matter to her. However, the Nortons differentiate and discriminate people on the basis of race and look down on the other people as inferior.

4) "I never use just one colour."

a) What is Carole talking about?

a) Mr. Norton, curious about Carole's ethnic roots asks her what colour she would make her father's face, if she were to draw him. Carole is puzzled by his peculiar question and obviously does not know what colour to use. So she says that she would never use one colour.

b) Carole's mother is a white woman but Carole says she would colour her using many different colours. Why do you think that's

a) Carole wants to colour her mother in different shades, in spite of the fact that she is a white woman. This is because there is no one colour to depict the whiteness of the skin. She falters and says that she could be yellow. But when the Nortons ask if her mother is Chinese she disagrees. She then mentions that her mother's face could be red.

However, at such a young age Carole is not aware how differences in skin tone denote one's ethnic identity.

c) What does this tell us about the labels 'black' and 'white' that are used for people? Are they accurate? Do children think in terms of these labels?

a) The labels 'black' and 'white' are nothing but social constructs. These designated labels are inaccurate as they make children fretful and peevish as well as spoil their innocence and purity of heart.

Social prejudices are humiliating. Though children cannot recognize sarcasm but can realize the bad intention of people who try to insult them on the basis of ~~an~~ ethnicity and skin tone. Children do not recognize these labels unless they are consciously made aware of their ethnic origins and ~~the~~ racial standing in the society.

b) What do you think Carole has learned about people and their attitude towards race? Do you think her innocent outlook on life will remain the same after the flight?

a) Young Carole, who was so far not affected by racial discrimination, was made conscious of her own racial identity by the Noritons. She understood that she was 'mulatto'. A child of a parents who were not of the same ethnic

identity. This realization was bound to change her innocent and naive outlook and leaves an everlasting impact on her life and will strengthen her to protect her against the racial discrimination in the society.

c) Do you think it was thoughtless of the Nortons to ask a child such questions? Would they have asked an adult the same questions?

a) It was thoughtless and insensitive of the Nortons to ask Carole intrusive and unnecessary questions about her racial identity. They ~~did~~ didn't comprehend that their behavior was invasive and disrespectful. They knew that she was a child, travelling without her ~~per~~ parents. They took advantage of her vulnerability and innocence, asking her insensitive questions.