

Role of the artist: sonny's blues and pleasantville

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Artists have a huge task or making their works is interesting or educational. Baldwin on Sonny's Blues and the Movie Pleasantville are no the exemption. The two artists have focused on the situations facing people in the contemporary society which has come out not only interesting but also educational.

The two pieces narrate the societal problems and how the characters are trying to fit in. In the short story, Sonny's Blues, the artist, who is a teacher, explains the setting of the society he lives. He referees the students he is teaching to be the same to his brother Sonny, who was jailed for selling and using heroin. " He had been picked up, the evening before in a raid on an apartment downtown, for peddling and using heroin." The problem is drugs and this problem not only affected Sonny's life but even the students he is teaching. He views them not to have a bright future. The artist is trying to portray the bad sides of drugs and hence, aims at making the readers aware, not to get involved in drugs even if its use is rampant, for one to be successful. He even regrets the situation by saying, I'm glad Mama and Daddy are dead and can't see what's happened to their son." He even advised his brother, " you're getting to be a big boy, ' it's time you started thinking about your future. ' I'm thinking about my future,' said Sonny, grimly. ' I think about it all the time."

In the movie, Pleasantville, the two, twin brother and sister fight over a television. The brother, David, want to watch a 1959s TV show while the sister, Jenifer, socially-active wants to watch a concert on MTV. The two winds up trapped in a 1950s TV show- the show which is set in a small Midwest town. They would converse, Jennifer/Mary Sue, " So what's the big
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deal? Oh. Okay - they're like not good at basketball anymore. Ohmigawd, what a tragedy" David/Bud, " You don't understand. You're messing with their whole goddamn universe! Here, the residents are seemingly perfect. The two attempts to fit in, and from this, they become more aware of social issues like racism and freedom of speech. They would converse, David " They're happy like this." Jennifer, " No, David. Nobody's happy in a poodle skirt and a sweater set." The artist here also uses the characters fight to take them back in the olden days to realize problems such as racism and freedom of speech in the society. The role of the artist in coping with the problem is the society, in this case, is to use the character David, to come to reality and understand the current world, the world he lives in, which is his major message to many people who are not aware of the current societal problems. In regards to the message, the two artists have played the similar role- identifying the problems in the society, its effects and how it can be solved.

Another similarity in the two works is the influence the society has on people. Both works narrate the situations derived from the influence of given deeds or settings. For instance, in the short story, Sonny's Blues, many youths are using and selling drugs. It is seemingly a way of life which is influenced by the setting of the society. Many youths are practicing its and therefore, practicing it would not be bad- many could argue like that. on the other hand, the two twin siblings, David and Jenifer, tries to fit in the 1950s life which lead them to understand problems such as racism and freedom of speech as mentioned earlier. The similarity here is that both artists have used the influence of the social setting be one of the core aspects which lead

to social problems. It is therefore clear that the artists partly blames the social setting which leads to influence and hence leading to social problems. Coping with these problems, therefore, starts with the change of the social settings as advocated by the artists. It is the mandate of the society to make changes to allow the elimination of social problems.

A remarkable difference here first is the one; Sonny's Blues is a short story while Pleasantville is a film, even though both of them, focuses on the societal problems. Perhaps this difference is due to the time or period in which the worlds were released and for this, the role of the artists was to targeted bigger audience to get the message. Sonny's Blues is a 1957 shorty story, a period in which reading was prioritized. On the other hand, the film Pleasantville is a 1998 fantasy comedy-drama, a period where many people liked watching. The role of the artists was to ensure the coping with the social problems and this would be only be reached if the targeted audience is reached hence, the used of different genres or pieces as dictated by the period.