Englis Essay On Sula Essay, Research Paper

Peoples? Rolls In Sula

In the novel Sula all the characters have their roles that they?re molded into just like everyone does in life. Based in the time that it takes place in and the fact that the vast majority of the characters are African-American their roles are pretty much forced for them to live by a predominately White- male society.

The introduction to the novel starts off towards the end of slave times (the late 1800?s). A good white farmer promised freedom and a piece of bottom land to his slave if he would perform some very difficult chores (pg. 5). The slave performs the chores and the White farmer tricks the slave into wanting the hilly land, which he gets. The hilly land is the worst land possible to have. Where Planting was backbreaking, where the soil slid down and washed away the seeds, and where the wind lingered all through the winter (pg. 5). Getting the worst land possible fit the slave?s role perfectly. Because he was a slave he always got the worst end of everything and by getting the so-called ?bottom land? he got the worst end of the deal.

Throughout the next few years the town of Medallion was formed. It was a poor town but the people who lived there made the best of it. Their roles in life in Medallion all seem to fit the poor town or poor neighborhood lifestyle perfectly almost as if we?d expect it too.

The town of Medallion is a predominately black town, located in Ohio during the early 1900?s. Blacks weren?t expected to do much. No one really cared about them in a White-ran society. White people looked down on them and in society?s eye they were at the very bottom of the social ladder. Almost all of the characters roles are roles that people would assume in their societies position.

Shadrack?s role in Medallion is that the community thinks he?s kind of crazy. They just leave him to do his own thing. He is a World War One veteran and witnessed something horrible happen during one of the battles.

Because of what he witnessed he realizes how much death is random and unpredictable, therefore he institutes a holiday every January 3rd. This holiday is called National Suicide Day. ?This was their only chance to kill themselves or each other.?(Pg. 14). The first year the townspeople were kind-of scared and thought Shadrack was crazy for doing it. But in the following years after the town accepted it and went along with it. This is the way the town saw Shadrack. This is the role he assumed.

Eva?s role is being the head of the Peace household, which consists of many people. It consists of her children, ?Hannah, the eldest, and Eva, whom she named after herself but called Pearl, and a son named Ralph, whom she called Plum.?(Pg. 32). The Peace household also consists of Eva?s granddaughter, Sula, the Dewey?s, Tar Baby, and young married couples. Eva?s role is clearly set in this story. She is the head of the peace household and a mother with a husband who left her. Due to these circumstances she does what she can to provide for her children. She goes away for a while and comes back with only one leg and about ten thousand dollars to provide for her children. Losing her leg was clearly some type of self-sacrifice. She assumes this role as head of the Peace household until Sula has her put in a home because she sets her son Plum on fire.

Plum?s role in this world is cut short by his mother when she sets him on fire and sends him to his death. After he comes back from the military he becomes a heroin addict and starts stealing money from his mother so he can supply his addiction. She sets him on fire, kills him, and his role in life is over.

Sula is the person who this novel is named after. She is a very free-spirited young African-American woman. She looks at the bottom and top of the social ladder as the same. Sula says, ?You say I?m a woman and colored. Ain?t that the same as being a man?? (Pg. 142). She also says, ?I don?t know everything, I just do everything.? (Pg. 143). She is the only person in the story who rejects the life given to them in the bottom. Her life takes a different route and she goes to college and lives in the city for a while. After ten years she comes back to Medallion and lives out the role of being a rebel and temptress. She also becomes the town scapegoat. Anything bad that happens gets blamed on her, such as Teapots falling down the stairs and breaking his leg. Also she gets blamed for making ladies husbands? cheat on them and sleep with her. But from everything she gets blamed on her something good comes out of it. Teapots mom becomes the best mom in the world and the wives of the husbands who cheated on them, their marriages get better.

Nel?s role in life is that she is Sula?s best friend. From when they are young, all the way up to when they are adults, and even after Sula passes away. Nel accepted the way of life in the bottom. She marries Jude, raises a family, another person in the Medallion community.

These are the people?s roles that they are molded into because of the time this story takes place and the setting it is in. Everyone in life eventually assumes a role and makes patterns and lives like that. The novel Sula follows those roles and patterns for a group of people in the early twentieth century. It is a biographical masterpiece of fictional characters that must all assume their roles and live out their lives.

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