

Professor Lovell

English 121

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Isolation and Loneliness

The novel "Frankenstein" by Mary Shelley displays the theme isolation and loneliness through three main characters. Shelly uses Walton, Victor Frankenstein and the monster to show the theme of loneliness through their actions. As people we need social interaction to grow, learn, and strive to be better human beings. A main goal for most people is to achieve happiness in their life. Parents should give their children love, affection and nurturing habits to help them adapt to the world. But what if the influences of their parents aren't what society says they should be? Some would argue that if a child is neglected, and never showed love that they would grow up to be troubled. And some would argue that a child who is given everything can still turn out to be troubled. Throughout the novel we will see how isolation is the start of all the characters' problems that lead up to tragic events, especially with the monster. Some of these characters were given love, a good upbringing and education. Some were given nothing but emptiness. Even though all characters were brought up differently, in the end their habits and life

styles are very similar.

The novel begins with letters to his sister. In the second letter Walton express that he has no friends and seems to really fancy the idea of having one. “But I have one want which I have never yet been able to satisfy, and the absence of the object of which I now feel as a most server evil. I have no friend...” (Shelly-7) He then goes on to explain his want and need for a friend. It is made clear from the beginning of the novel with Walton’s words that he is lonely. Walton wishes for a man who could sympathize with him. He feels that a friend could repair his troubles. It could be suggested that if he did have a companion early on, that a friend could have warned him about pushing knowledge in unknown territory. Maybe if Victor had a friend they could have warned him about pushing the limits in science. Walton goes on a dangerous adventure to explore the North, while Victor explores and pushes all the limits in his studies. Ultimately they are both alone and lost within themselves. They have no one to guide them. Even as adults we still need guidance and a helping hand. Walton shares many character traits with Victor such as ambition, discovery and loneliness.

In chapter I Victor’s story begins. He starts his story by introducing us to his family telling us about his childhood and showing us his mother’s misconstruing words about ownership.

He points out various occasions where he was alone and wanted to be alone. He doesn't ever express the desire for companionship as Walton or the monster did. He avoided it. Victor remembers being an infant, and has fond memories of his parents and their love. However the childhood memory that struck me as kind of odd, was the introduction when he was around the age of five, by his mother to a young girl named Elizabeth. Before Victor had a visual image of the girl, Victor's mother had made a disturbing reference to Elizabeth that stuck with him forever. "On the evening previous to her being brought to my home, my mother had said playfully- "I have a pretty present for my Victor- tomorrow he shall have it." (Shelley-28) This was a very strange way to introduce Victor to Elizabeth. The ownership he displayed for her at such a young age was a little frightening, "And when, on the morrow, she presented Elizabeth as mine-mine to protect, love, and cherish." (Shelley-28) It's strange that he has no memories of parents playing with him or reading to him. Could this early memory have triggered or changed Victor's thoughts and feelings, and has it set a path for his deranged thinking as an adult? Were people just possessions to him rather than friends or loved ones? It's hard to say, but I think these were early signs of Victor not being connected with people. I have to wonder about the relationship he had with his parents? Victor seems to display the knowledge of companionship

with this quote “Harmony was the soul of our companionship, and the diversity and contrast that subsisted in our characters drew us nearer together. Elizabeth was of a calmer and more concentrated disposition; but, with all my adour, I was capable of a more intense application, and was more deeply smitten with the thirst for knowledge.” (Shelly 29) Even though he feels a connection with Elizabeth he puts forth his studies and denies himself love, affection and friendship. It looks as though he has everything, and yet it almost seems like he’s punishing himself. He doesn’t know how to love or give back or know to carry on a friendship.

After the birth of Victor’s brother he talks a lot about his temper, avoiding crowds and only attaching himself to a few friends. To have these observations of yourself at such a young age is pretty astounding. He thought a lot about how he came across to others and used his own analysis of himself to decide his surroundings. He felt it was better to do things on his own due to his temper. He used that fuel towards his studies. Victor must have felt very different from his peers and family and found it hard to associate with others. After he left for college Victor must have found the thought of isolation comforting because he continued down this lonely path. He was far away from all that he knew and it didn’t seem to bother him. Away at college he roomed

alone, studied alone and had many secrets. Victor worked around the clock for two whole years creating a deep dark creature. I find it interesting that the creature had no name. Again Victor has no connection to anything. The monster was abandoned by his creator, and was forced to tackle the world alone with no references or influences. He too had many secrets. He hid out from people and experienced a lot of things on his own through trial and error just as Victor did through his experiment. Victor is always lurking in the shadows and the monster does too. He so wants to be close to people but doesn't know how. Victor could not achieve personal happiness. Victor gave up everything to create this monster. Victor realizes what he has created and realizes that he does not accept it and wonders how society will?

Victor lived as though he was rejected by the world. Ultimately he chose paths that lead him down a road of destruction. His actions caused many people heartache, loneliness and despair. Was this his goal in life, to make people unhappy? Even though Victor showed a little concern and remorse he did nothing to prevent any other wrong doings.

References

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Simon & Brown. 2011. Print.

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