

# Theme of isolation and loneliness essay sample

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## **Beowulf**

Beowulf is an epic poem based on a great hero called Beowulf. He decides to help Hrothgar who was under attack by the monster Grendel. He defeats Grendel plus his mother and becomes king. After sometime, Beowulf dies after being badly wounded by a dragon which he defeated. Beowulf travelled in great places and distances while fighting against supernatural beings and demons.

The themes of isolation and loneliness are illustrated in Beowulf through Grendel (Streissguth 78). Grendel felt excluded and isolated from the humans because he was living alone with his mother and this made him feel that he does not belong to the community. The loneliness and isolation Grendel felt made him the monster he was, he desired to belong to the humans in the community but they isolated him. The exclusion from the rest of the community pushed him into becoming a hideous and cruel beast with a hard heart and thirst to kill humans. He felt very different from those living in the community because of his hideous appearance. Gardner explains how he swam across a lake of fire of snakes reaching out for humans in order to kill them. The loneliness made him think of nothing other than to kill the people who are isolating him. Isolation and loneliness made Grendel a horrible monster because he took out his pain and anger on innocent people because he could no longer stand it.

Grendel's isolation caused him a lot of pain throughout the novel for he longed for companionship but never found it, he only got rejection from the people in the society. He started killing innocent people just to ease his pain and sufferings from the loneliness they caused him and the rejection he

suffered from them when he need their friendship. Grendel was ignored by the world and its people because they attacked him anytime he tried moving closer to them. Additionally, Grendel's isolation and loneliness forced him to brutally terrorize all the humans without regrets since his desire to become a part of them failed thanks to their rejection. Grendel had a thirst for human blood and flesh because they isolated him and left him all alone with his mother. Grendel and his mother were considered as outcasts and therefore were isolated from the rest of the people and this isolation caused the people destruction because Grendel became a destructive and cruel monster.

Isolation and loneliness is also illustrated by Beowulf. He was a hero who was alienated from the rest of the society (Streissguth 112). He was isolated by fellow human beings because of his extra ordinary power of fighting beasts like Grendel. They alienated him despite the fact he did brave deeds and saved the society from the cruel beast Grendel. The isolation from the people in the society made Beowulf feel very lonely because he had neither family nor friend to share his feelings and spend time with. He became a hero after fighting Grendel and killing him but his actions set him apart from the people in the society even though they appreciated his courage. In addition, the people never saw him as an ordinary person as no one had ever killed a monster as he did and so they alienated him in the society.

## **Grendel**

Grendel is a novel by John Gardner. It retells Beowulf story but from the antagonists point of view meaning from Grendel's view. It explores Grendel's life before Beowulf comes in and kills him. Loneliness and isolation themes

are still illustrated by Grendel and his mother as they live in a cave away from the society just like in Beowulf. Grendel's mother is so isolated from the outside world as her life is in the cave and she cannot even speak. Grendel was very lonely and isolated despite the fact that he had the same attributes as the other humans and he could talk but they feared and hated him. He needed some companionship but it was very hard for him to find a mate due to his appearance and isolation whereby he lived in a cave. He was in need of friends and he tried being friendly to the humans but they ran away from him and so he decided to become cruel and kill them because of their rejection. He made up a decision to attack them with the fear that they will attack them before he does because he felt that they hated him, he never did it out of his wish, he was forced to by the experiences he had with the humans. Grendel says " At times I would try to befriend the exile, at other times I would try to ignore him, but they were treacherous. In the end, I had to eat them." (Gardner 33) He was isolated throughout the novel even though he was the same as the humans both emotionally, behaviorally and socially. He desired to have friends and moved very close to human but he got none because he was already isolated from the rest of the community (Gardner 67). In Grendel just like in Beowulf, Grendel and his mother illustrates the theme of loneliness and isolation.

## **Frankenstein**

Frankenstein is a novel by Mary Shelly about Victor Frankenstein who created a living being out of dead people's organs. The being created became a monster because of its appearance. This is a novel about alienation and loneliness and how it affects the innocent people. Victor

Frankenstein experienced alienation his entire life from childhood and he isolated himself from the rest of the people. He left his family at a tender age and never communicated; he isolated himself from them and dedicated his life to scientific studies. Victor abandoned and isolated himself from his family and friends, while working on his creature. He always locked himself in a room alone and this never bothered him because he loved isolation. He chose to isolate himself from the people so as to create his creature and to keep it a secret from the rest of the society. He alienated himself from friends, family and even school just to dedicate his life to science and to create a being. Loneliness and isolation are the main themes in Shelley's novel Frankenstein. It originates from Shelly's own life where she had problems with her father and husband. Victor creates a monstrous being that is forced to hide away from the society because of its appearance.

The theme of isolation in Frankenstein is also illustrated through the creature Victor created. Unlike its creator, the monster Victor created refused to be isolated from the society. It is the people who isolated it because of its hideous and monstrous appearance. The creature wanted to be loved and fit in the society like the humans but was never accepted and this made it very lonely. Frankenstein ran away from the creature he created and left it alone with no information of who it is, where it is and left it all alone wandering in the enormous world. The creature felt very lonely and however much it tried to come close to humans they threw stones at it to send it away.

The people in the village feared the creature since its appearance was monstrous and therefore could not fit in the human population.

Frankenstein's creature complained " I am an outcast in the world for ever"

(Shelley 90), the creature felt like an outcasts that human beings do not want to associate with. This means that, the creature felt very lonely and isolated by the society. The creature's experience with DeLacey family made it so lonely and angry. The rejection Frankenstein's creature received sent it into isolation. The monster longed for a family, to be accepted and to belong somewhere but it was very clear to it that it had no lineage but DeLacey's family had a lineage, it was a big family while the creature had no one to call family, it was all alone just roaming in the world. This reflects its isolation because even though the creature had some human attributes like the desire to love and be loved, it could not fit in the human society because of its appearance. Its effort to fit in the society failed as it was humiliated by the people and this forced it to declare an everlasting war against its creator and all the humans for the loneliness and alienation. It is out of loneliness, isolation and devastating experiences it got from humans that Frankenstein's creature ultimately decided to turn into a monster that kills people.

Frankenstein's creature never chose isolation, but it was forced into it by the people in the society. The creature desired to have a companion, a family and people around it to show it love but it never got any of that. Because none of what it desired was achieved, the creature decided to hurt people. In addition, out of loneliness, the creature ordered its creator to create a female companion who could at least be there to show it the love it desired. The creature's statements were " I am alone and miserable, man will not associate with me, but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me." When Frankenstein failed, the creature out of loneliness

and anger caused destruction by killing Victor's wife to be and younger brother William out of revenge. The society's isolation of the creature shaped it into a savage since initially; it was neither evil nor spiteful but was friendly and wanted to identify with the humans. All that Frankenstein's creature wanted was friendship, companion and to fit in the society with humanity.

Another character who illustrates the theme of isolation in the novel is Robert Walton. He chose to isolate himself even though this made him lonely because just like Frankenstein's creature, he longed for companionship. He chose isolation because of his lust for knowledge just like Victor. The difference between Walton's isolation to that of the creature and Victor is that he communicated with his sister Mrs. Seville through his letters.

Walton's loneliness is expressed in his letters he wrote to his sister " 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 severe evil. I have no friend, Margaret: when I am glowing with the enthusiasm of success, there will be none to participate in my joy" (Shelley 36). Likewise, he feels alone and isolated in the ship because he could not satisfy his companionship wishes. His loneliness became more since he could not participate in the activities of the crew. This is seen where he says;

" I desire the company of a man who could sympathize with me, whose eyes would reply to mine."(Shelley 37). He was never satisfied with his own life; he was very lonely and needed a friend.

The themes of isolation and loneliness are without doubt the most important themes in Beowulf, Grandel and Frankenstein novels. The themes follow a pattern that is repeated in all the novels as the main characters in the novels

were isolated or isolated themselves from the society and this created loneliness in their lives. The feelings of isolation and loneliness resulted into violence in both the novels. The main characters all suffered isolation and loneliness in the novels.

## **Works Cited**

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