

Comparison of frankenstein and alice in wonderland english literature essay

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A Comparison of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland

In a world where the lines between normal and abnormal are quickly being blurred with a society leaning to a more false or manufactured way of life we still see things as part of the group or not. The acceptance from society is a theme I am going to explore in my essay. We fight, argue, and pull away from what we fear or do not understand, and the exiled members are left to feel their emotions. The characters of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein and Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland in their own way must deal with being outcast, rejects, or outsiders of the society as a whole. What is acceptable in a society? What is unacceptable in a society? Mary Shelley introduces, in her novel Frankenstein, the "Mad Scientist" Victor Frankenstein a reclusive creator of the grotesque Monster. Due to his obsession and passion for his scientific endeavors he is left as an outcast, an outsider to the world around him. The emotional baggage Victor carries compounds over time which pushes him further and further away from the society. His ambition, secrecy, and selfishness also causes a rift in his connection to the society. By the end of the story he is a disillusioned, guilt-ridden man hell bent to destroy his doomed life's work, whether by his ambition to become a god or his lack of visiting public areas, his lack of humanness is what dooms him. The Monster on a different point of view dreams of being part of the society but quickly finds it nearly impossible to function in a normal life. The steps he takes to improve his intelligence so the people in the town would accept him did nothing to keep the townspeople from shunning him to live as an outcast. In an attempt to find some form of a life within a society the Monster goes to his creator to request him

to create him a companion, but Victor is not responsive to the idea of a second mistake. Victor begins to imagine the children if there were children " a race of devils" (Shelley). The abandonment by society is a central theme with the three main characters of Frankenstein, besides Victor and the Monster the story is also narrated by a seafaring captain named Robert Walton. Victor at his core is withdrawn and obsessive in nature which alienates him from the society and at the same time the readers also become outsiders to the society. The Monster in a contrast to Victor does everything he can to change, to fit in with the society; he educates himself and even begs his creator for a companion. Walton has a physical abandonment spends years at sea and his personal failures drive his journeys. Mary Shelley uses confessions as a rhetoric device for her characters reasoning behind the terrible actions the confessor do through the story. The monster confesses the murder of Victor's brother as a reason for him to receive a companion. " You are in the wrong ... I am malicious because I am miserable" (Shelley). We as the reader are left to feel sorry for the monster and his loneliness. Victor confesses to Walton that he has a large sense of guilt due to the monster and a strong sense of responsibility for the deaths his creation caused. Walton's confessions are throughout the novel as he retells the story. Another device used in this novel was the poem by John Milton " Paradise Lost" which was used by Shelley for her characters to gain acceptance. The monster finds himself like Satan, " The Fallen angel becomes a malignant devil. Yet even that enemy of God and man had friends and associates in his desolation; I am alone" (Shelley). He also finds some commonalities with Adam, " Like Adam, I was apparently

united by no link to any human being ... I was wretched, helpless, and alone. Many Times I considered Satan as a fitter emblem of my condition" (Shelley). You can also sense a connection between Victor and Satan due to him acting as God to create the Monster. Each of these devices is used to place these characters on the outside of society. In the novel *Alice in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll places the reader in an illogical world; where the roles are completely turned on their ear. The irony of a normal child placed as the outcast to a world of misfits and rejects. The magical world of Wonderland forces Alice to come up with a new way to embrace her new found reality. She must mentally judge the illogical answers to help her logically come up with who she is and what she needs to do. In the challenge with the Mad Hatter, and the March Hare, Alice's notion of intelligence is thrown in the air when her logic doesn't fit with the illogical answers of Wonderland. She is educated, and is an active member of her society outside of Wonderland but when she is inside Wonderland she is a complete outsider in a world of lunatics. Alice is lost in a world of the illogical and she finds that these backwards logics cause her to be seen as an outcast, or as a reject to this foreign land. Using devices such as irony and chaos Lewis Carroll shows his readers how different Alice is compared to the creatures of Wonderland. Alice is forced to deal with having to figure out the differences between the " illogical" and nonsense. During the encounter with a mouse Alice mistakes the Mouse's " Tale" with his " Tail" which is used to show how in Wonderland distortion of language is a consistent and visiting characters to this world like Alice, must learn to understand the illogical system controlling the world. Alice is forced to question her personal beliefs of humans on the hierarchy of animals as the

White Rabbit is seen as an authority figure. She begins to question the experiences and if she would conduct herself differently when she gets back home. Her sense of reality begins to blur with the reality of the nonsense world of Wonderland, which causes her to fall further away from the society of Wonderland. In the final chapter of the novel Alice is seen in full grasp the world of Wonderland as the King reads the Knave's Poem. Her understanding of the world when she corrects the King when he attempts to add meaning to the nonsense words of the poem. It is Lewis Carroll way of using irony again because through her travels through Wonderland she was consistently trying to make sense of the Universe of wonderland. In the novel unlike the previous novel of Frankenstein, Alice becomes balanced with her society and is let in to full enjoyment of others. How boring would society be if everyone were all the same? The standards of a society should never be made of the point of what is or is not normal. These two novels, though in completely different in tones and perspective, feature characters on the outside of their respective realities and to speak to the rejects, outcasts and the socially exiled members of society. One character a Mad scientist of obsession and revenge; another a Monster filled with loneliness and rage; a third failure feared Captain; and the last a well mannered child of wealth. We all must find our place in this world and if we do not we could find ourselves as an outcast, a reject, or as a outsider to the ones we love the most.