

The outsider comparison essay



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Adolescence has always been a challenging period for many people. Most teenagers experience difficulty finding a place to fit in to society, some never do and end up completely by themselves. Although some outwardly reflect being an outsider, others, on the other hand maintain an attitude that fits with the norms of society but at the same time have an inner struggle with their position in society. The fictional characters Donnie Darko from the movie "Donnie Darko" and Holden Caulfield from "The Catcher in the Rye" both experience being the "outsiders" in their societies.

There are many similarities in the plotline, their relationships with others and their perception of themselves that highlight the characteristics of being an outsider in society. More importantly, both these characters reveal seemingly different perspectives on the same theme of being an outsider. The experiences of Donnie Darko and Holden Caulfield accurately reflect the position of "the outsider" in society. Throughout both the plotlines the characters steadily make more and more irrational decisions.

In Holden's case he starts off with getting kicked out of his school and deciding to spend the weekend in New York instead of telling his parents about what had happened. Donnie Darko experiences sleep walking and waking up in another part of town in the morning. As both the plotlines progress the behavior of these two characters gets more irrational. Holden has a fight with a pimp and later on gets drunk at a bar to the point where he can barely walk. Donnie Darko continues having strange visions and ends up flooding his school and burning down a house.

In both cases the characters inner struggles feed their drive to make irrational decisions. Holden constantly struggles with the world around him claiming that everyone except himself is a phony. Donnie Darko experiences hallucinations which he cannot tell anybody about because nobody would believe them to be real. Donnie and Holden both have inner struggles with reality that manifested as irrational behavior. The relationships that Holden Caulfield and Donnie Darko have with the people in their society are representative of somebody who fits the norms of society and at the same time is divided from true relationship due to their inner struggle.

Holden and Donnie although outwardly maintaining a social life, create distance between themselves and those around them through the window of their inner worlds. Holden has friends in his school and acts as though he is sociable but at the same time maintains the firm position of being the only real person as opposed to everyone else who he claims to be phonies.

Donnie also has friends but his point of view is always different from theirs. He is compassionate towards the Asian girl that his friends make fun of and he does not confide in his friends when he experiences his hallucinations.

Both characters have a division from their relationships due to the fact that they have different perspectives on the world as opposed to everybody else. Relationships with others are often based in the agreement of a common opinion or belief and since both characters do not find anyone who shares their views, they cannot sustain a healthy relationship with those around them. The perception that Holden Caulfield and Donnie Darko have of themselves have many similarities. Both Holden and Donnie picture themselves as being the “hero” of their world.

Holden sees himself as the only real person in a world surrounded by people with fake persona's. Later on he adopts the role of " the catcher in the rye" which is a hero type role involving saving kids from falling into the phony adult world. Donnie perceives himself to be " super hero" due to the fact that he experiences hallucinations that are beyond anyone's understanding. He also has a notion of himself being a hero type character because he thinks he knows when the end of the world will be. Both characters consider themselves to be separate from everyone else as result of their perception of who they think they are.

Donnie Darko and Holden Caulfield have many experiences that are much the same to each other and find themselves to be the " outsiders" in both their societies. This position of the outsider is taken by these characters through a series of events, their relationships with the people around them and their perceived image of who they think they are. Although being an outsider is always difficult it is even harder to attempt to act a certain way that does not reflect your perception of the world. While there might be pressure to conform to societies views, one should always maintain a position as an individual.