

Love and passions in Emily Bronte's novel "Wuthering Hights"

Instructor: Afrah Abdul Jabbar Abdul Sahib

University of Missan –College of Education / English Department

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to shed light on the variety of love and passions in Emily Bronte's Victorian novel *Wuthering Heights*. Emily Bronte is considered to be a highly imaginative novelist of passion of the 19th century. *Wuthering Heights* is her only novel that she penned in 1847. The novel shows that she was greatly influenced by the social conditions of her times and her experiences. Her novel depicts the human nature and dreams of the society in which she lived. *Wuthering Heights* is the name of the house where the Earnshaws lived, a house that witnessed the tragedy of passion and destructive love. The writer has presented an array of betrayal, hatred, passion, intense love, desire and revenge.

The novel depicts romantic, passionate intense love, familial love and the consequences of all types of love. It was one or another type of love that led the characters to act according to the intensity of their passion. The same love created hatred and cruelty among them. The novelist has shown that the purest kind of love can inflict the greatest pain in the world as in the case of Heathcliff and Catherine's love *Wuthering Heights*.

So, this study aims to discover the reasons that led to tragedy of passion. There is an interplay of love and violence between the two main characters namely Heathcliff and Catherine. This interplay, in addition to the environmental factors that led to the final tragedy, are the focus of this study. The study also analyses the relationship between various characters as far as they affect the central question. The relationship between the protagonists is dealt with in details in order to understand how their mutual love is expressed through words and actions.

Keywords: love , hatred , *Wuthering Heights* ,Tragedy of passion, cruelty.

Introduction

Emily Bronte is one of the three Bronte sisters born in 1818. She is a novelist and poet but she has written only one novel in her lifetime. Yet, *Wuthering Heights* is an example of the best composed English literary works. The novel was published in the year 1847, in the Victorian era. The novelist depicts the power and passion of intense love as well as the dark and evil side of human nature. The novel revolves around the love relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff. The climax is a tragedy since the love ends up in revenge. Emile Bronte succeeds in portraying the depth of emotions, jealousy, panic and revenge, that is monstrous. The life of the characters is warped by fate.

Wuthering Heights, a house that stands alone in a big field, is the centre of action in the novel. It is the family mansion of the Earnshaws. *Wuthering heights* investigates the strains between major characters in the novel. Destructive love is a prominent theme in the novel. The tragedy

can be justified only when the characters of the protagonists are understood well. Both are exactly opposite in character. Yet, the love bond between them is unique and strong. The novel shows that difference in characters can lead to destruction and revenge even in a love relationship.

Nelly Dean and Lockwood are the voices of reason in the story, and therefore will not be thoroughly elaborated within this topic. When Lockwood begins the novel by retelling his first visit at Wuthering Heights, we meet Heathcliff, a dark-skinned gypsy with black eyes who was well dressed and was intelligent and reserved, though he seemed to have a dark sense of humour at the expense of other people¹

On one hand, the writer displays the love between Catherine and Heathcliff, which is nothing but all-consuming passion for each other, and on the other hand, there is another love pair, that of Catherine and Edgar, which is a contrast and is civilized rather than passionate. Theirs is a love of peace and comfort, a socially acceptable love, but it can't stand in the way of Heathcliff and Catherine's more profound and violent connection.

Heathcliff is the passionate, vengeful hero of the novel. When Lockwood starts the novel by retelling his first visit to *Wuthering Heights* the protagonist Heathcliff is introduced as a 'dark skinned gypsy with black eyes who was well dressed and was intelligent and reserved, though he seemed to have a dark sense of humour at the expense of other people'.²

After Lockwood's second visit to his neighbours, he describes Heathcliff as though he may be 'awful natured and shocking, as well as being morose'.³ His origin was mysterious, so he remained an outsider in the upper class landed gentry. He was young and robust. When Cathy (Catherine) turns her attention towards the advances of Edgar, he quits *Wuthering Heights*. After a long duration, when many things have changed at *Wuthering Heights*, he returns as much mysteriously and suddenly. His new rich and educated status is also a mystery. Unfortunately, the return disturbs the balance of Cathy's marriage. He takes his revenge by eloping with Isabella Linton, causing tremendous pain to her brother Edgar. He also lures Hindley Earnshaw to gamble and takes over the rights of *Wuthering Heights*. His chain of revengeful acts comes to an end when he senses the approach of his own death. He is convinced that death would bring about his union with his beloved Cathy, a final but ghostly union.

His brutality is aimed at himself and he has to pay the price of his cruelty. His sole happiness in life was love for Catherine but he is denied not only his human rights but also his pure and honest love by social conventions. His love for Catherine Earnshaw is the only principle of his being. Strangely enough, he prevents Cathy from being happy in the path of civilized marriage which she has chosen, in spite of his love for her. Harold Bloom discusses the term love in this case.

This passion is so monumental and so destructive, of everyone, that it seems inadequate and imprecise to call it love⁴

The obsessive love for Catherine is shown in Heathcliff's words after he finds out she is dead:

¹ Brontë, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*: (1847, pp. 3,5-7)

² Brontë, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*: (2003, pp. 3& 5-7)

³ Ibid(pp. 10 11 & 15)

⁴ Bloom, Harold, *Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights – A Contemporary Literary* 1988.

*"Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living! You said I killed you, so punish me, then! I know that ghosts have wandered on earth. Oh, God! It is awful! I cannot live without my soul!"*⁵

Catherine Earnshaw is young and innocent, cultured and civilized and she loves peace and comfort. She is warm and truly passionate. She is the main cause of all the tragic events in the novel. She cannot be called an ideal and model lady of the nineteenth century; she had her own human defects. She was of a difficult and rebellious nature. She was very much attached to her mother and could not understand her role as a woman. As a young girl. She was not accepted by the male members in the family, hence, her behavior with them remained restricted. Her character is opposed to the normal standards of behavior in the age. The only male member and her partner in her joys and sorrows was Heathcliff. When she rejected him, he became fierce and rebellious beyond imagination. She could not get out of her girlhood, out of her relationship with Heathcliff and out of her connection with *Wuthering Heights*. She remained tethered to the bonds of her youth throughout her entire life

Catherine was an exceptionally boisterous and extremely insidious even towards her father. She had grown up in the intimate companionship of Heathcliff, an established rover, tightening the bond between them while in their puberty, neglected by all except the strict dominance of her brother. The latter could never get along with Heathcliff, nor did he approve of his only sibling's attachment with him. Catherine and Heathcliff had no physical/sexual attraction for each other. Their love was of a higher kind. There was zeal and passion in their love. Yet, Catherine gave priority to a sibling's authority more than to her own emotions. Finally, she marries a weak and simple man and puts an end to her own happiness as well as that of Heathcliff's

Catherine's character can be judged from a number of incidents. When her father asks her, "Why canst thou be a good lass, Cathy?" she turned her face up to his, and laughed, and replied, "Why cannot you always be a good man, father?"⁶

Her father's following demise speaks in which condition the patriarchal society will be unless the female passion is tamed⁷. Catherine and Heathcliff, as 'sick kids', are punished by Joseph, who is aware of Catherine's second-rate status, on account of Hindley's carelessness to his sister.⁸

Catherine demonstrated that a change in the object of love cannot bring about any change in the affection that she had for Heathcliff. Their affection for each other could not be broken. No doubt their love creates joy for each other, at the same time, it caused pain to them as well as to those around. In spite of her love for Heathcliff, Catherine agreed to marry Edgar because a marriage with him implied wealth and status, a position that would make others jealous of her.⁹ Their love was true but it was unfortunate; and they felt guilty about it, yet, nothing could be done. Love cannot be planned and carried out; it is something that just happens in the course of time, is decided by circumstances in which the lovers meet, interact and spend time together. It also depends upon their roles in society. The love of Catherine and Heathcliff was an unfortunate accident. The two were too young when it was blossoming and had no idea about the consequences. They did not stop to consider their social positions, the opinions of their

⁵ Brontë, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*,(2007,137)

⁶ Brontë, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*,(1959,p.43-44)

⁷ Fisk, Nikole P. 'A Wild, Wick Slip She Was': The Passionate Female in *Wuthering Heights* and the Memoirs of Emma Courtney. *Brontë Studies*.(2006, p. 133-143)

⁸ Hu (2009, p. 11)

parents or social circumstances. The novel shows that true love can also be an issue of regret. Such love can lead to violence, danger and harm. It destroys purity and innocence.

Love between Catherine and Heathcliff was so strong that it can be compared to the North wind that can destroy anything that come in its way. Their love is as passionate and strong as the north wind, and thus it has the capacity to destroy everything that gets into its way. The impossibility of being with his beloved Catherine makes Heathcliff destructive and more resolved to seek for revenge on those culpable for his misery. Catherine tells him that sometimes she has the feeling that his true passion is hate, rather than love. Judged by his bare deeds:

*'She was much too fond of Heathcliff.
The greatest punishment we could invent
for her was to keep her separate from him,'⁹*

Hindley Earnshaw was never in favour of this relationship. Catherine's attraction for Heathcliff is so strong that she feels compelled to go against her Hindley's wishes and the social class conventions existing at that time. However, after courting for a while, Catherine makes the tragic decision of accepting Edgar Linton's proposal for marriage. This decision creates a breach between the Earnshaws and Lintons, who were old neighbours. One day, Heathcliff overhears Catherine telling Nelly "It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now".¹⁰

They only have each other to depend. Catherine's famous description of her love for Heathcliff:

My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I AM Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being.¹¹

Once she is possessed by thoughts of social position and wealth, she is unable to hide her feelings and attitude towards Heathcliff. Heathcliff, from his side, never cared about such issues. He was emotionally attached and faithful to Catherine. He could not bear her frank and brutal treatment. He could have neglected the criticism and hatred of anyone else, but he could not bear it when it came from Catherine, particularly her statement about Heathcliff that 'he does not know what being in love is'.¹² This indicates her anxiety over their future relationship and later is firmly stated in Catherine's trying to make Isabella lose her hope about Heathcliff.¹³

Catherine confided in Nelly and consulted her whether she was doing right by marrying Edgar Linton. Nelly is fully aware of her passion for Heathcliff, yet, she also knows what kind of a man he is. Catherine confesses to Nelly, 'I am Heathcliff'.¹⁴ She makes it clear that she cannot forget Heathcliff. Her love for him is not superficial as most human beings understand; it

⁹ BRONTË, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. (1994, p. 49).

¹⁰ BRONTE, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. (1994, p. 59)

¹¹ *Ibid*(p.104)

¹² *Ibid*(, p. 80)

¹³ Tytler, Graeme. 'Nelly, I am Heathcliff'!:The Problem of 'Identification' in *Wuthering Heights*. *Brontë Studies* ,(2006, p. 168-169).

¹⁴ BRONTË, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. (1994, p. 81)

inclines towards spiritual love. She conveys indirectly that her mind can never abandon Heathcliff although she marries Edgar.¹⁵

Catherine mentions quitting the idea of marrying Linton if it means quitting Heathcliff.¹⁶ She creates an unpractical notion in her mind that Edgar would accept Heathcliff as part of the union, and consoles herself, trying to get rid of the guilt in her mind. In addition to that, trying to find a logical reason for her action, she proclaims: 'Whereas, if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power'.¹⁶

Catherine rejects Heathcliff because of his lower rank, feeling certain that nothing can force them apart. Lying on a death-bed and speaking to Heathcliff who saw her action as a betrayal of their love, she cannot share his perception, not even the fact of leaving him because their relationship is based on their shared perception that they are identical, not taking into consideration any empirical changes.¹⁷

However, she knows at the bottom of her heart that she has done him wrong, that she is responsible for his misery. At the same time, she points out that she too has suffered. She tells Heathcliff:

'If I have done wrong, I'm dying for it. It is enough! You left me too: but I won't upbraid you! I forgive you. Forgive me!'.¹⁸

It is apparent that after getting married to Linton, she still 'had seasons of gloom and silence'.¹⁹

In her final moments, Catherine is convinced that her death would set her free and allow her to fulfill her promise to Heathcliff. She wants to die to get back her lost freedom, that she shared with Heathcliff in their childhood. She feels relieved to think that death would unite her with Heathcliff.²⁰

The sudden arrival of Heathcliff poses a dilemma for Catherine, when Edgar asks her directly to choose between him or Heathcliff. She loves both and was unable to love one without the other. She misses certain things in her relationship with Edgar and admires those qualities in Heathcliff. She is excited when he comes, delighted to have him back as a love of gone-by days, without giving a thought to possible problems.²¹

¹⁵ Phillips, James. The Two Faces of Love in Wuthering Heights. *Brontë Studies* (2007,p. 96-105)

¹⁶ BRONTE, Emily. Wuthering Heights. (1994, p. 81)

¹⁷ Phillips, James. The Two Faces of Love in Wuthering Heights. *Brontë Studies* (2007,p. 96-105)

¹⁸ BRONTE, Emily. Wuthering Heights. (1994, p. 144)

¹⁹ Ibid(p.89)

²⁰ Marielle Seichepine (2004) Childhood and Innocence in *Wuthering Heights*, Bronte Studies,

²¹ Tytler,, Graeme. 'Nelly, I am Heathcliff ':The Problem of 'Identification' in Wuthering Heights.

Bronte Studies ,(2006, p. 168-169).

Catherine is certain that Edgar loves her. She tells Nelly, "I tell you, I have such faith in Linton's love, that I believe I might kill him, and he wouldn't wish to retaliate"²² Thus, she takes Linton for granted. She thinks that his love for her would compel him to accept Heathcliff. This expectation was too much. Catherine's state of mind during her illness seems to be unstable because she says something quite different at that time. She mentions that she is not satisfied with his indifference towards her.

"No, I'll not die-he'd be glad-he does not love me at all – he would never miss me".²³

Catherine had realized that her love could never succeed. The best way out was death. She believed that death would give her not only freedom from the knot created in her life that was so difficult to open, but would also unite her with Heathcliff. Such is the love portrayed between the two by the novelist – Cathy and Heathcliff could never live without each other.²⁴

Cathy experiences a new kind of attachment with the rich, pampered, high born and delicate Edgar Linton. He was exactly the opposite of Heathcliff in every respect. As per her nature, she takes Heathcliff for granted but is struck with grief when Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights. A year after her marriage with Linton, Heathcliff returns only to cause turbulence in Cathy's marriage. Cathy is delighted but Edgar becomes jealous. There are conflicts between the two which are too much for Cathy's delicate constitution. She hastens her death through starvation. Her rage adds to her misery. Finally, she dies in childbirth but haunts the novel literally till the end.

Heathcliff is haunted by her memory. He claims that he had seen her ghost walking in the moors and even Nelly admits that she has seen her figure. Cathy's tragedy also threatens until the last to haunt and repeat itself in the life of her daughter.²⁵

One evening Cathy came to see Nelly. She didn't know Heathcliff was in Nelly's room. She told her that she had agreed to marry Edgar and began to cry. Nelly asked Cathy whether she loved Edgar, she answered that she loved him because he was handsome, young, rich and pleasant, and because he loved her. Nelly told her that all of these are not good reasons for her to marry Edgar. But Cathy seemed not happy and Nelly asked her what's wrong with her. Cathy pointed to her head and heart and said "in my soul, and my heart, I'm convinced I'm wrong".²⁶ She then proceeded to say that: I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him; and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire.²⁷

Cathy was unaware that Heathcliff had heard her. She thought that Heathcliff could never understand what love meant.²⁸ It was beyond his comprehension. But love is something that is sensed, that is experienced, and has nothing to do with culture or education. It is a raw and

²² BRONTE, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. (1994, p. 94)

²³ BRONTE, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. (1994, p. 112)

²⁴ Wang, 2012

²⁵ Bloom, Harold, *Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights – A Contemporary Literary*, (1988, p.17)

²⁶ Bronte, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*, 2003, p.62).

²⁷ Bronte, Emily, *Wuthering Heights* , 2003,p.63)

natural human emotion. Nelly knew this well. Nelly told her that there weren't any reasons that Heathcliff should not know love just as well as Cathy did and told Cathy that if she left Heathcliff, Heathcliff would be alone and would be the most unfortunate creature that ever was born.²⁸ Cathy refused to take her advice. She said that her marriage with Edgar would not separate her from Heathcliff. She even went so far as to say that if marriage with Edgar was going to separate her from Heathcliff, she would not marry Edgar.

She was wise enough to understand that Heathcliff possessed nothing and marriage with him would be a marriage with a beggar, Cathy was used to a comfortable life of high standing. On the contrary, if she married Edgar, she would be in a position to help Heathcliff financially.²⁵ Nelly knew that Heathcliff would not like to accept money from Edgar and she mentioned it to Cathy. Moreover, she said that it would be the worst reason to marry Edgar. Cathy believed that on the contrary, it would be the best reason. She wanted to marry Edgar for the sake of Heathcliff.

Cathy said that her life was meaningless without Heathcliff. She compared her love for Linton to foliage in the woods, which changes with seasons. She compared her love for Heathcliff to hard rock, hidden beneath but so important and necessary. She said that with nothing else in the world except Heathcliff, the world would still be there for her. Without Heathcliff, in spite of everything in place, the universe would be a strange and unfamiliar place for her. She warned Nelly not to talk about their separation,²⁹ and soon both realized that he was missing.

Nelly guessed right that he must have heard them and left. Cathy ran out in the rain to look for him, got wet and fell ill. Soon she realized that he had left Wuthering Heights for good and became very miserable. She wondered what could have made him so unhappy that he left Wuthering Heights.²⁹

Catherine first saw Linton while she was standing outside the window with Heathcliff and the other children were inside, arguing over a dog. The poor dog was nearly split between Edgar and Isabela. In the same way, Catherine is split between Heathcliff and Edgar later in life. Many incidents in the novel are symbolic and predictive of the future. Catherine was fascinated by the 'splendid place'.²⁹ Heathcliff remarks, "*If Catherine had wished to return, I intended shattering their great glass panes to a million of fragments*".³⁰ confirms the fact that she '*does not wish to return - she prefers to stay on the other side of the window*'.³¹

Mutual visits of the children continue from one house to another and Catherine does not fail to notice the difference between the educated and cultured gentleman Edgar and Heathcliff, a lone man abandoned by society and left with no chances of receiving education. She points out Heathcliff's 'lack of culture' to him when he observes that she was spending a lot of time with Edgar.²⁹

Catherine was rather carried away by the looks and riches of Edgar, his decency and modesty which came with culture. Her social life was limited and she had never met anyone like Edgar Linton. In her view, Edgar was 'handsome and young and cheerful and rich...'.²⁹ Nelly points

²⁸ (Ibid., pp.63-64).

out that ,” he won’t always be handsome...”, Catherine answers, *‘He is now; and I have only to do with the present.’*³¹

It follows from this that her love for Edgar has empirical determination, based on experience such as his looks, wealth and intellect²⁹

Catherine wanted to be known as ‘the greatest woman in the neighbourhood’³⁰. This desire was fulfilled when she married Edgar. It also gave her an experience of intellectual development, financial freedom and a sense of satisfaction. Hence, Nelly’s observation,

*‘I believe I may assert they were really in position of deep and growing happiness’.*³⁰

Her marriage with Edgar was based on empirical foundations. The empirical and spiritual interests were unconnected. She shows wisdom enough not to betray herself because the way in which she loves Heathcliff is the state of being sensible in her love for her husband.³¹

The central action in the novel revolves around the destructive relationship between orphaned Heathcliff and Catherine. *Wuthering Heights* repeats cycles of relationships from the 1st generation of the Linton’s, Earnshaw’s, and Heathcliff’s transferred on to their children, the 2nd generation- Linton, Hareton, and the 2nd Catherine. Amongst this cycle, amorous and vengeful relationships are amid the family.

Both the protagonists in this novel are hateful and violent. Yet, they share the human element of need for affection. Cathy’s death is an unbearable loss to Heathcliff and his desire to get her back. Without her, his violence and hatred multiply. He remains obsessed with her memories.³²

The obsessive love for Catherine is shown in Heathcliff’s words after he finds out she is dead:

*"Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living! You said I killed you, so punish me, then! I know that ghosts have wandered on earth. Oh, God! It is awful! I cannot live without my soul!"*³²

Wuthering Heights displays passion that has a kind of metaphysical force. Catherine says very often. “I am Heathcliff”. She may mean that she is the opposite of or complementary to his being, as male and female, light and dark or civilized and savage.

Catherine and Heathcliff are well-aware of their nasty behaviour. Catherine dreams that she is in heaven and feels like she doesn’t belong there.

*If I were in heaven, Nelly, I should be extremely miserable... I dreamt, once, that I was there... heaven did not seem to be my home; I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth, and the angels were so angry that they flung me out, into the middle of the heat on the top of Wuthering Heights...*³³

²⁹ Phillips, James. The Two Faces of Love in *Wuthering Heights*. *Bronte Studies* 2007, p. 96-105

³⁰ BRONTE, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*, 1994, p.89

³¹ Phillips, James. The Two Faces of Love in *Wuthering Heights*. *Bronte Studies* 2007 , p. 96-105)

³² Bronte, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*, 2007

³³ Bronte, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*, (1994,p.79)

Heathcliff took his revenge in his own way.

*“ Heathcliff, monstrous to people he hates, gets his revenge by letting things take their own course. He lets Catherine marry Edgar and remain married to him. He lets Isabella’s passion satisfy itself. He lets Hindley Earnshaw drink himself to death. He lets Linton die. ”*³⁴

Heathcliff once thought that if he could only leave Catherine then he would be free from the fate that binds them but he cannot escape. He realizes that there is no other world for him where there is no Catherine. That is why he returns. When Heathcliff returned 3 years later, he used Isabella Linton as a means of revenge on both Catherine and Edgar. Heathcliff was unafraid, he did not have any sense of guilt and he had not the least pity for Isabela. He used Isabela as an instrument to torture the people she loved and also to torture Cathy. Isabela’s love for Heathcliff was true and she hoped he would transfer his attention from Cathy to her. Isabela knew that Heathcliff did not care for her but she tolerated him because she loved him. There was never any possibility that her love would be returned.

Catherine is strong headed and rebels against patriarchy. Her words reveal her character:

*“I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them! ... I’m sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills ”.*³⁵

It is just this force of character that gives her the courage to argue with Nelly and refuse to see sense. Nelly always thinks for the good of Catherine and continues to support her whether right or wrong. She never loses an opportunity to point out her mistakes to Cathy. She explains the situations to her patiently, knowing that Cathy would have her own way. Cathy even admits that it would be foolish to marry Edgar when she loved Heathcliff. However, Bronte offers a picture of selfishness and sacrifice with the same person, within the same decision. Because the events that follow reveal the painful departure of a heartbroken Heathcliff and a sorrowful but errant Catherine.

The focus is on Catherine’s sacrifice rather than the resultant sorrow. Finally, she confesses her love for Heathcliff, so ironically presented in the kitchen scene. Perhaps, the novelist wanted to point out that women choose relationships of convention or economic security without understanding what is good for them.

They cannot think beyond the emotional context. Catherine realizes that she has betrayed herself as well as Heathcliff when she married Linton. Thus, her words of confession:

*“I love him(Heathcliff) ... because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same ”.*³⁶

By choosing Linton, she brings destruction on them all

³⁴ Bloom, Harold, *Emily Brontë’s Wuthering Heights – A Contemporary Literary* 1988.

³⁵ Bronte, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*, 2003, pp.102-103

³⁶ Bronte, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*, 1994, p.63

Catherine reasons with herself practically that marrying Edgar will make her “*the greatest woman of the neighbourhood*”.³⁷

Heathcliff’s violence is directed towards other as well as towards himself. His violence against himself was worse, it was harmful and destructive and punished him with unhappiness. His violence was also directed towards social conventions that denied him human rights, denied him his genuine love, and denied his union with Catherine Earnshaw.

Heathcliff is made of strange and mysterious matter. Just as Nelly advises Catherine from time to time and checks her wrong behaviour, she does so with all the children including Heathcliff. He once said to Nelly, “One day, I shall pay Hindley back.” Nelly cautions him that he should forgive and that punishment should be left to God. Heathcliff replies

*“No, God won't have the satisfaction that I shall. I only wish
I knew the best way! Let me alone, and
I'll plan it out: while I'm thinking of
that I don't feel pain”.*³⁷

As a boy, Heathcliff was sullen but troublesome. He adores Catherine and he tolerates Nelly. He hates Hindley. He keeps his hatred for Hindley locked up within himself even as they grow up.

Nelly remembers his stoic endurance:

*“He (Heath cliff) seemed a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment: he would stand Hindley's blows without winking or shedding at ear,... and open his eyes, as if he had hurt himself by accident and nobody was to blame”.*³⁸

Heathcliff grows up in the atmosphere of two extremes- love for Catherine on one hand and hatred for her brother on the other hand. There is some change in Heathcliff who returns from his exile and hears about Catherine’s marriage with Edgar. We learn about it in Nelly’s report.

He has not lost whatever destructive force which seeks asylum in his soul, but he has learned to control it in part, to use it to gain his ends. But Heathcliff's new pose does not fool the one who knows him best. Although Catherine has loved Heathcliff, she warns her sister-in-law not to seek his affections because he is "fierce, pitiless, wolfish man.”

Only Catherine can control this fierce man. She too quits the control when she deserts him to marry Linton. Without Catherine’s control, Heathcliff cannot control the feelings of hatred, revenge and destructive forces within him. His cruelty and desire for revenge intensifies.

*“I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is a moral teething; and I grind with greater energy, in proportion to the increase of pain”.*³⁸

Heathcliff’s "agony reaches its peak with the death of his beloved Catherine, who dies giving birth to her young daughter. His agony turns to anger as he curses Catherine, who has now deserted him this second time. He cries ..

³⁷ Bronte, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*, 1993, p.49)

³⁸ Bronte, Emily, *Wuthering Heights*, 1993, p.125)

“Oh God!...I cannot live without my soul!”.³⁹

Heathcliff's love is not ordinary, his sense of revenge is too intense and his grief is incomparable. He is torn between violence, passion, love, revenge, cruelty, sorrow and hardened as no human being. His experiences are unknown to normal human beings and he is tormented by extreme sorrow.

CONCLUSION

Wuthering Heights is the story of a unique kind of passionate love ever depicted in fiction. The protagonists are Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, who are unequal in every respect, yet, the love between them is pure, genuine, true, intense, spiritual and passionate. Their relationship is intimate but not sexual. As children, they lived under the same roof and grew up together. When they grew up, Catherine was made aware of social conventions and practical reality. Although she loved Heathcliff, which was a fact in her life, she realized that she could not marry him for several reasons. He was low born, uneducated and penniless. She chose Edgar Linton too, for various reasons. He was an educated, cultured gentleman and a rich heir to the neighbouring estate. In addition, she would be able to support Heathcliff in many ways by marrying Linton. Her brother too encouraged her in this relationship while he was strongly against Heathcliff, with whom he could never get along since he entered their life and their house.

This love story focusses on the darker side of love. It shows the destructive nature of love. The love between Cathy and Heathcliff not only destroyed their own happiness, but also that of others around them. They can neither unite in a marriage nor quit each other. This is the central dilemma. From the facts discussed above, we can arrive at some conclusions that the writer wants to point out through the story.

In the first place, love just happens and is not planned by considering the worth or status of an individual. Particularly, in case of love between individuals who grow up together from childhood, the love blossoms with them, as they bloom like flowers, from puberty to adulthood. This kind of love bond is strong, intense, passionate and permanent. When true love cannot culminate, when social conventions obstruct its path, the consequences can be dangerous, harmful and destructive. Uncultured minds can only be controlled through love.

Everybody and everything are controlled by fate. Education and culture assist in maintaining control over mind, thoughts and emotions. If emotions are let free, destruction and unhappiness will result. The object of love cannot be transferred easily. Catherine cannot forget Heathcliff and shower equal love on Edgar. In her marriage with Edgar too, she sees a couple of selfish motives and a couple of advantages for her beloved Heathcliff. This first love is her obsession. It is always there at the back of her mind. Denial and repression have a great influence on the two major characters and accordingly affected their behaviour and destiny. All of these elements determine that the love story in *Wuthering Heights* could only end in tragedy.

Edgar is infatuated by the beauty of Catherine. He begins to love her but it is never reciprocated. In love, one cannot take anybody for granted. Catherine took Heathcliff for granted. Later, she

³⁹ Ibid(p.137)

also took Edgar for granted. How could she expect Edgar to accept Heathcliff and support him, her previous lover? No matter how much he loved her, this was expecting too much. There is always a sense of jealousy between two lovers with one object.

Isolation, lack of parental guidance and support can lead to wrong decisions. Nelly gave all the advice she could but she did not have the authority to do so after all. A stranger, an outsider who has nothing in common cannot be incorporated in a strange, unfamiliar community. Individuals who are socially apart cannot easily accept each other. However, natural and real love is possible between them because real love recognizes no social barriers. Marriage between such lovers will also be a failure. Unfortunately, such love bonds are strong and cannot be broken. Nor can such lovers get along with others. Perhaps, the best way would be to remain unmarried and continue to love, to be faithful to love.

Heathcliff and Isabella's love is never mutual. Heathcliff marries Isabella for money and class, he marries her to gain access to Thrushcross Grange. Isabella falls in love with Heathcliff as a teenager, so is obviously blinded by age and a desire to love. Heathcliff always makes sure Isabella is fully aware he is not in love with her, hence his hanging of her dog.

Hindley marries Frances while he is away at boarding school. Hindley also keeps his marriage with Frances a secret because of social pressures. Frances belongs to a lower class. He seems to be very happy when in her company, her death makes him very sad. They were both immature and cruel, which suited one another.

All the marriages in the novel are failures except that between Hareton and Cathy of the new generation. They symbolize the true way of executing love, a piece of wisdom constructed on the mistakes of the previous generations.

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