

**Tribhuvan University**

**Catherine as a Second Sex in Bronte's *Wuthering Heights***

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the Degree of Masters of Arts in English

By

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## Letter of Approval

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **The time: Victorian Period**

A popular conception of the Victorian age is that it was the age of thought and art. It was an age when leading mind began to explore in every direction. There was discovery in art, science, history, religions, politics and life itself. In comparison to Elizabethan period- the great period of English letters and music, there was more actual talent in the Victorian period whereas; only greater achievement was there in the Elizabethan period. Infact, the Victorian middle class was triumphant in every aspect. The Victorians never for a moment doubted themselves, they had never lost confidence in the Victorian idea of life. The middle class was rich and dominating, but not corrupt. The Victorian era was an area of material affluence, political consciousness, educational progress and reform, democratic and social reforms, industrial and mechanical progress, scientific advancement and social unrest. Victorian period was an age of rapid social and educational reforms. The Victorian people laid emphasis on order, decorum and decency. The matter of paramount significance in this connection are the literary features of Victorian age, especially tradition of novels flourished more than anything.

The Victorian period was the great age of the English novel. As the middle class form of literary art, it flourished along with the upliftment of the middle classes in power and importance. The Victorian novel is an extraordinary mixture of sentiment, journalism, melodrama and imagination of symbols. The readers-writers of the Victorian period wanted to see all the fundamental problem of human experience through the characterization of “great” figures acting out their destiny on a grand scale, symbolically and imaginatively. Infact, the Victorian readers wanted to be entertained, and in a sense,

they wanted to escape. They wanted to be close to what they were reading about amusing that the literature was journalism, that the fiction was history.

The Victorian novelists like Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Bronte Sisters, George Eliot, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy occupy the highest rank in the history of the English novel. Together, they all are the names that first come to mind when we think of the Victorian novelists. Thus, in relation to the literature, Victorian Period can be divided into two parts, The Early Victorians and The Later Victorians. The novelists like Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, Charlotte Bronte and Emily Bronte are some of the great figures of the first half of the Victorian age known as The Early Victorians. And, the novelists like George Eliot, Samuel Butler, George Meredith and Thomas Hardy represent the Later Victorians. But they all do not form a coherent body. We can see the difference between the novelists of the first half of the Victorian age and those of the second half. The former Victorian novelists were the one who took their public to a quite remarkable degree; they were conditioned and guided by it. They were the spokesmen of their age. But, the later novelists, in a sense, were writing against their age; sometimes they were found to be quite critical and hostile to their age. They have common features of a special climate of ideas and feelings, and a set of fundamental assumptions.

Charles Dickens' novels are full of symbolic images and situation. Before him, the novelists wrote only about the life and adventure of the rich and aristocratic people but he chose to highlight those who were poor and ill-treated by the society. His *Oliver Twist* is a powerful indictment of the education of poor children of his day. His novels are the powerful combination of journalism and melodrama making the new place in the

middle-class entertainment. His *Hard Times* concentrates on the follies of utilitarian industrialist who suffers due to his wrong principle.

William Makepeace Thackeray wrote mostly to unmask the human folly and weakness, social pretension and hypocrisy. He himself was against the hypocrisy and presented himself as a moral realist who had a keen eye at the society as it was and he brought to the surface all those vanities, snobberies and all- pervading selfishness which were beneath the glowing mask of the society. His *Vanity Fair* presents a panorama of human vanities and weaknesses. It is a novel without a hero, for a hero rises above and masters his circumstances but in *Vanity Fair*, all are the slaves of their respective circumstances.

Victorian time was marked with the variety of writing with the peculiar characteristic of variety of novelists. Among them Thomas Hardy is the one who is one of the greatest novelists in the whole range of English Literature. Hardy is the regional novelist who mostly wrote about “Wessex of South”, England. His novels presented the rural life and labour, the passion and egotism of the young lovers and consequences of human emotions. His irony basically focused at the very condition of human existence rather than at human egotism or at the disparity between real and amused. George Meredith, a psychological novelist whose basic interests are to show the variety of vanities, the relation between natural and artificial factors in building up personality and the problems of self awareness. He has also written about the character and behaviour of a woman in a man’s world to strengthen the women character’s in relation to male weakness.

George Eliot was essentially a novelist of intellectual life. Her psychological insight into human motives and springs of action is deep and profound. She

intellectualized the English novel and imparted to it moral fervors and bias, which it had not get possessed in the hands of Dickens and Thackeray. She was one of the Victorian sages as well as novelists who was worried, and thought and argued about religion, ethics, history and character. She was concerned with moral problem of a character, in all her fictions, be it *Adam Bede* or *Middlemarch* and the others.

Charlotte and Emily Bronte made a notable contribution to the English novel during the early part of the Victorian era. Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, brought her contemporary fame, that shows her writing, with an almost melodramatic abandon, out of her own passions, dreams and frustrations. Charlotte shows the courage to write about wish fulfillment and straight autobiography which the Victorian female writers could rarely do. In the novel, there are the elements of masochism, some scenes of stark melodrama as well as wish fulfillment but they are all fused in the high temperature of the narrative so that they do not stand out as so. The novel sometimes looks preposterous, sometimes plain silly but it is carried through sheer power along from beginning to end.

Apart from all these themes, that the Victorian novelists have written Emily Bronte has written about freedom, private passion, emotion and psychology of an individual, keeping human emotions at the centre. Perhaps Emily Bronte alone has been able to justify her imaginatively mastery to the whole world through her only and masterpiece- *Wuthering Heights*. The juxtaposition of an emotional life of human individuals with that of a real life is so powerfully fused that it is difficult to distinguish reason from emotion while regarding the novel. *Wuthering Heights* is the real height of imaginative literature of Victorian age.

Victorian age was the age when women were limited to themselves only. They could not show their identity to the world. Some women in the Victorian time were



treated as equals by progressive men but women in general remained in control. Women have to show elegance refinement of feeling and a morality. Women's writings were liable to be looked on with prejudice. Thus, the women writers accepted pseudonyms. Mary Evens appeared as George Eliot, Charlotte Bronte as Currer and Emily Bronte as Ellis Bell. Though Emily wrote many poems, she destroyed them as publishers refused to publish them categorizing them as being passionate and tragic love. Later, she started writing using male pseudonym.

As in Victorian period novels were written for the problem of men in the society, showing their role superior and to deal with the specific social and economic characterization, there were very few writers who expressed those private passions and explore those realms of personal emotions. Almost no one has been audacious enough to deny her power and her unique place in the development of English fiction due to her one full-length study of human nature- its impulses and its desires, its loves and its hatred, its disasters and its triumphs, its defeats and its victories as Emily Bronte has done in her grand novel *Wuthering Heights*. Being a woman novelist of the Victorian period she has shown her power by creating such a rebellious character as Catherine and very fairly done a justice to the conflicting demands of her heart and head. Bronte's very use of personal questions establish the greatness of her art, in comparison to other writers of her age and the following.

### **Introduction to *Wuthering Heights***

Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* appeared as a unique and a different kind of novel for the Victorian readers of Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, William Makepeace Thackeray and so on. After its publication, it created a kind of sensation in the field of literature and stimulated diverse critical responses. The uniquely

original theme and the individual handling of plots add to the books power. The characterization is unquestionable and so is the visionary description of the landscapes and situations. The fine and smooth poetry moves the story forward with ease. The combination of the lyrical language and lofty subject matter gives the novel an epic touch. Though the characters are presented as individuals, they are not individuals in simple form. They are complex and represent the whole of their race.

In the beginning of the story, Mr. Lockwood, a tenant to Heathcliff saw a few books covered with writing scratched on the paint piled up in a corner of a residential house, Wuthering Heights. The writing was nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small-Catherine. Earnshaw, here and there varied to Catherine Heathcliff and then again to Catherine Linton. Through these writings, it is in fact, difficult to find out Catherine's real identity. Who is she? She is Catherine Earnshaw, or Catherine Heathcliff or Catherine Linton or none?

Catherine was the daughter of Mr. Earnshaw, so she wrote Catherine Earnshaw, she loved Heathcliff and wrote Heathcliff as she would accept him as a husband. Later, she was married to Linton, she accepted his surname and wrote Linton. From the beginning Catherine was an independent, uncompromising, rebellious and passionate character. Her demand for "whip", her ability to ride "any horse in the stable" (64), her acting as a "mistress" (40), her using her hands freely; all symbolically tell us about Catherine's rebellious nature. It has been often argued that Catherine's anxiety and uncertainty about her own identity represents a moral falling, a fatal flaw in her character which leads to her inability to choose between Edgar and Heathcliff. Catherine in the story is brought up as an independent girl later turns out to be a liberal woman. She decides, she handles the major step of her life on her own. Although Catherine has

concrete love for Heathcliff but does not marry him because she cannot gain prestige in the society. Though she marries Edgar and sacrifices her love for Heathcliff, she could never forget her profound love with Heathcliff and Heathcliff as her inner desire can be expressed through her conversation with Nelly Dean as she says:

My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it; I'm well aware, as winter changes trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rock beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary, Nelly I am Heathcliff. He always, always is in my mind not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. "My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and, if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the Universe would turn to a mighty stranger. I should not seem a part of it. (82)

Catherine chooses her way to marry Edgar but she's not unconscious of the dilemma she is in. She seeks Nelly's opinion on her decision when Nelly replies "You love Edgar and Edgar loves you. All seems smooth and easy;- Where is the obstacle?" (79).

Catherine answers striking one hand on her forehead and the other on her breast, "Here! and Here! In whichever place the soul lives- in my soul; and in my heart, I'm convinced I'm wrong" (79). But she is unaware that Heathcliff overhears the conversation and leaves her. Then Catherine chooses to marry Edgar but Edgar for her is not an ideal husband as Hindly for Frances and Hareton for Cathy. Even after her marriage to Edgar Catherine always remains outside the law of the patriarchal society. What she cares is Heathcliff. Her heart is stirred by Heathcliff's reappearance after three years. Her inseparable attachment with Heathcliff gets expressed when Heathcliff arrives to see

Catherine: "Catherine flew upstairs, breathless and wild too excited to show gladness."  
 "Oh Edgar, Edgar" she panted, flinging her arms round his neck. "Oh, Edgar, darling!  
 Heathcliff's come back – he is!" (94).

Catherine is so happy with Heathcliff's arrival that she is "afraid the joy is too great to be real" (95). She welcomes Heathcliff with so affection and it is unnatural for a husband like Linton to bear it. She wanted to be reconciled with Heathcliff as a friend but her desire was so unnatural in the society of *Wuthering Heights* for a woman to be one's wife and another's beloved at the same time. Catherine was divided between two men of her own choice. She could not forsake any of the two though Edgar means nothing to her. The situation has not been suitable and favourable for her to be with Heathcliff. He was still poor, degraded and inferior to Edgar. She's still on Heathcliff side because without him "the universe would turn to be a mighty stranger" (82) for Catherine. Her whole struggle throughout her life was to get united with Heathcliff but the society seemed to be stronger than her. But still she would not compromise with the patriarchal society. She would choose death rather than to compromise with it: "Well, if I cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend- if Edgar will be mean and jealous- I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own." (117).

Unable to do anything Catherine fell ill and longed for her lost childhood when she was carefree and Heathcliff being with her represented the spirit of freedom. Then after marrying Edgar she has denied both her childhood's freedom and her strength, Heathcliff. She wanted to be girl again and regretted to be Mrs. Linton. She remembered how her brother Hindley used to prevent her from meeting Heathcliff and how she and Heathcliff used to run to the moors disobeying him. Her uncompromising nature is revealed even through her death. She chose death rather than to remain Mrs. Linton. She

died not to rest but to be 'one' with Heathcliff. Her death symbolized her refusal to enter the law of the society and her desire to unite with Heathcliff, which was not possible in her lifetime. Her desire to unite with Heathcliff even after death is expressed through her own words: "I'll not lie there by myself; they may bury me twelve feet deep, and throw the church down over me, but I won't rest till you are with me . . . I never will!" (126).

Undoubtedly it is clear that Catherine is uncompromising, rebellious, obstinate and freedom fighter. She has her own kind of interpretation of life and has her own concept of true existence for women.

Heathcliff and Edgar Linton are the two prominent male characters in *Wuthering Heights* adopting equally opposite characteristics. Heathcliff is a slum child and that Linton is higher up on the social scale than even Earnshaw. Heathcliff is the one who is torn between love and hate. He's a creature about whose past nothing is known. A dark, dirty beggar, he was picked up on the Liverpool Streets by Mr. Earnshaw, Catherine's father, and brought to the Wuthering Heights where Hindley's wrath, rejection and jealousy towards him would have broken him if Catherine's support and love was not there. From the very beginning he showed great courage, steadfastness and love. Catherine has also seen him as her 'whip', her strength and power to challenge the society. They were both each other's strength. They're inseparable. Heathcliff's love for Catherine was unquestionable. He has made up his mind. If love alone is insufficient to hold Cathy, he will secure the necessary money; if his only happiness is to be snatched from him, he will turn to hate. Not only Hindley will be the object of his wrath, but Edgar too and with him all the Lintons. As long as he had Cathy his worldly condition, his suffering was nothing but without her, all is chaff to be trampled underfoot. Catherine is his soul and

his existence: "Oh, God! It is unutterable. I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul" (167).

Edgar Linton, on the other hand, contrasts with Heathcliff in every aspect. He is presentable and well mannered, sincere but somewhat smug, honest but thoroughly conventional, good looking, devoted to Catherine but incapable of understanding or possessing her. He could not realize that Heathcliff was the other self of Catherine. Towards the end of Catherine's life, he was reluctant and proud enough to be engaged with the books in the library when poor Catherine was dying. Here, Bronte has tried to show Edgar as pitiless and merciless husband. Hence, the contrasting nature of heroes can be felt where one is very indifferent to Catherine when she was dying and the other who struggles and dies in the novel, only for her.

### **Critics on *Wuthering Heights***

*Wuthering Heights* has stimulated diverse critical responses since its publication. No sooner was the book published then it got into a sharp controversy. Some observers like Charlotte Bronte and Linda H. Peterson see an unmistakable link between the book and the real life of its creator. The interest upon Emily becomes apparent in the fact that the Bronte's life was in itself a subject of focus. As Linda H. Peterson has said, "*Wuthering Heights* did not go unnoticed by its early readers. Literacy critics repeatedly acknowledged its originality, genius and imaginative power – if they also complained its moral ambiguity?" (132).

*Wuthering Heights* was always read, criticized and appreciated by the critics. Before her, there were few important women novelists whose novels have been almost forgotten today. They had embraced the traditional women's roles rather than attempt to

show women's personal freedom like that of the lead character, Catherine, in *Wuthering Heights*.

David Daiches writes:

There is nothing quite like *Wuthering Heights* anywhere else in English Literature. It is the work of a woman who- whatever the psychological explanation – cut herself off deliberately from normal human intercourse and lived throughout her short life in private world of imaginary passion. (1066)

Emily was a woman who had her own independent world. Emily Bronte, therefore finds *Wuthering Heights* an appropriate ground to express her feelings, her love of liberty and her anger towards patriarchal society which she does keeping Catherine at the center and Hindley, Edgar, Heathcliff and other, the rulers of the society at the periphery.

Lyn Pykett in her essay "Gender and Genre in *Wuthering Heights*" says:

Bronte's plot has a number of similarities to the stories which she would have heard, during her brief stay at Law Hill School, about Jack Sharp, its sometime owner, and the walkers of Walterclough Hall. The rivalry between the usurping adopted son, Jack Sharp and a natural son. This degradation, his subsequent decline and bankruptcy are all echoed in the plot of *Wuthering Heights*. (87)

Here Pykett has justified that Emily wrote the novel presenting an actual family histories, which she heard when she was at Law Hill School.

Terry Eagleton in his essay "Myths of Power in *Wuthering Heights*" points the difference between the works of Charlotte and Emily Bronte and says:

Charlotte's fiction is "mythical" in an exact ideological sense: it welds together antagonistic forces, forging from them a pragmatic, precarious coherence of interests. *Wuthering Heights* is mythical in a more traditional sense of the term: an apparently timeless, highly integrated, mysteriously autonomous symbolic universe. (118-19)

*Wuthering Heights* is known throughout the world as Emily Brontë's great story of hate. It is the book where the theme of love and hatred jointly move together. Due to its strange elemental fierceness and barbarity, its stormy evening, divorced from the world we know, its seemingly crude, inartistic structure, and its superhuman emotions, *Wuthering Heights* is not an easy book to discuss. Emily's character Heathcliff shocks the reader. He not only acts and suffers but causes others to act and suffer. His deeds and reactions, his strength and madness for power give a gothic touch to the story and his power for good and for evil shocks and surprises the reader.

Mary Visick finds the language in *Wuthering Heights* not similar to the ordinary speech but to the level of poetry. *Wuthering Heights* was an attempt of a poet who later turns out to be one of the greatest novelists through her only masterpiece *Wuthering Heights*. In this context Visick in the essay "The Genesis of *Wuthering Heights*" rightly says:

That *Wuthering Heights* is an extraordinary powerful achievement, hardly to be questioned.... It is the work of a poet who wants to write a novel. The wildly unnaturalistic theme of a woman who betrays her deepest self and so destroys herself and of a man who in his turn dies simply for a love of her, isn't played down or apologized for, or explained away, rather it is reinforced by the same narrator, Nelly Dean and common place listener, Lockwood. (208)



Virginia Woolf compares *Wuthering Heights* to *Jane Eyre* and establishes its superiority. "It is a more difficult book to understand than *Jane Eyre* because Emily was a greater poet than Charlotte" (122). She praised Emily Bronte as one who "looked out upon a world cleft into gigantic disorder and felt within her the power to unite it into a book" (122). She further goes on to saying that this gigantic ambition is to be felt throughout the novel as she writes:

A struggle, half thwarted but of superb conviction, to say something through the mouth of characters which is not merely "I love" or "I hate" but "we, the whole human race" and "You the eternal power..." The sentence remains unfinished. (122)

Lord Cecil in his essay "Emily Bronte and *Wuthering Heights*, The theme of *Wuthering Heights*" considers it a metaphysical novel as he writes:

On the one hand, we have *Wuthering Heights*, the land of storm; high on the barren moorland, naked to the shock of the elements, the natural home of the Earnshaw Family, fiery, untamed children of the storm. On the other, sheltered in the leafy valley below, stands Thrushcross Grange, the appropriate home of the children of calm, the gentle, passive, timid Lintons. Together each group, following its own nature in its own sphere, combines to compose a cosmic harmony. It is the destruction and re-establishment of this harmony which is the theme of the story. (137)

Cecil sees the difference between the house of Earnshaw and Linton and also identifies the natural difference between the children of *Wuthering Heights* and Thrushcross Grange. The wild untamed children of *Wuthering Heights* and tamed, gentle children of Thrushcross Grange move out together to disturb and maintain the cosmic harmony.

Angus M. Mackay in his essay "Shakespeare's Younger Sister" calls Emily Bronte Shakespeare's younger sister which can be understood as he writes:

Emily Bronte's rank as a poet is to be measured not by her verse, but by her single romance. The quality as well as quantity of work must need to be taken into account in estimating the genius of writer . . . . But if we look only to the quality of the imagination displayed in *Wuthering Heights*- its power, its intensity, its absolute originality\_ it is scarcely too much to say of Emily that she might have been Shakespeare's younger sister. (101-02)

The genius of a writer is confirmed not only with his/her quality of work but also with quantity. Though Emily has written more poems and few novels, her powerful quality of the imagination in *Wuthering Heights* made the critic put her in the level of writers like Shakespeare, Wordsworth and Scott. What gives to Emily her unique place among English novelists is her imagination. *Wuthering Heights* is great, not for its story, which is rash and confused, not even for its drawing of recognizable or virtuous, passionate lively and strong characters but for its power to communicate a vision.

Harold William Garrod comments upon *Wuthering Heights* saying it a technically bad novel. Its incapability to meet with the craft of fiction and ill-constructed story has made it an imperfect novel. He even claims that *Wuthering Heights* is not and never has been a popular novel. As he comments:

The faults of *Wuthering Heights* proceed, not from defective knowledge of human nature, but from inferior technique, from an insufficient acquaintance with the craft of fiction. The story is in general ill-constructed, and in its detail often complicated and obscure. (134)

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Miriam Allott has studied the different ways of looking at the book *Wuthering Heights*. The book was noticed only during 1850s and since then it became popular, it was read, criticized, filmed, dramatized and known by almost everyone in the country whether they belong to literary group or not. Miriam points out:

It is 'romantic' to them because of its passionate love story, its larger-than-life characters and emotions, the gloomy grandeur of its settings, with which its Byronic hero, Heathcliff, is so closely identified, its mysterious 'Gothic' atmosphere and its powerful and exciting narrative. It is read at school; it has been dramatized, filmed and televised repeatedly; it is known to almost everyone in the country, whether they are 'literary' or not. (11)

Among the earliest critics of *Wuthering Heights* it was only Sidney Dobell who in 1850 recognised the merit of *Wuthering Heights* over Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*. Then in 1883, when Swinburne expressed his admiration for *Wuthering Heights* saying that it was comparable to *King Lear*, then other critics started to give the book a more serious thought. The best nineteenth century analysis of *Wuthering Heights* emphasized the psychological truth revealed in the novel's plot and characters. However, most nineteenth century critics were interested in searching for the biographical, historical or literary sources of the novel.

Most of the critics looked for the real persons and the events in *Wuthering Heights* forgetting that it is not a personal diary or autobiography. They seemed to have a belief that literary criticism ought to explore relation between 'fiction' and 'our real life experiences'. Another mode of criticism focused on the literary sources of the novel. Some of the critics related the novel with the German 'gothic tales' and English poet Lord Byron for the sources of *Wuthering Heights*. But whatever be the mode of literary criticism, almost every critic has accepted the originality and the power of the book. As a work of art no critic has denied its greatness.

## Chapter 2

### *Wuthering Heights: The Study from Simone de Beauvoir's Feminism*

#### **Feminism : An overview**

There is a struggle between man and woman, whether in the field of literature or in general life and this struggle is the result of western thought, culture and philosophy that considers women as a feeble creature from the time of old testament. According to the old testament, woman is created out of man's rib and she is supposed to be weak. Thomas Aquinas believed that woman is inferior to man. Aristotle declared that the female is female by virtue of certain lack of qualities. We all know Shakespeare's well known quotation "Frailty thy name is woman". Sigmund Freud advocated that women's personality is shaped by what he calls 'penis-envy'. Western culture is, thus, shaped by the concept that man is superior and woman is inferior, man is one and the woman is the other; man is active, first, center and primary and woman is passive, second, periphery and secondary. She has not got her own identity. Such biased concept is found everywhere in western philosophy, history, politics, religion as well as in literature.

But the situation did not always remain the same. Women gradually started to become conscious of their secondary situation and began to question it. One of the vital events of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was the changing role and increasing importance of woman. The major concern of women in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was to advocate the rights for a woman to choose her husband and her right to education. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) is supposed to be an embryo of female consciousness in 18<sup>th</sup> century which also marks the beginning of modern feminism.

Some novelists like Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth Inchbald, Fanny Burney, Charlotte Smith and others dramatized the actual circumstance of female existence. They even

questioned the traditional assumption about sex-role. Fanny Burney is supposed to be the first novelist to dramatize her struggle. But these novelists could simply dramatized a woman consciousness, devoid of any feminist manifesto. They did not have feminist approaches to literature. Infact, they were not feminist in the true sense of the term. Feminism was not inaugurated to literature until late in 1960's.

Actually, these female writers prepared a strong foundation to modern feminism as an approach to literature. When feminism was inaugurated " behind it" says M. H. Abrams:

. . . however, lie two centuries of struggle for women's rights, marked by such books as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869) and American Margaret Fuller's *Women in the Nineteenth Century*(1845). (207).

Even though it is difficult to define feminist theory, it was thought that feminism could be divided into liberal, radical and revolutionary phases in the early feminist theorizing: that is into those who argued for equality as men, those who celebrated women's supposed difference from men and wished to deconstruct the system of gender difference. Feminist criticism is not a unified term. It covers media, literature, and civilization as well. Taking feminism as a multidisciplinary field of knowledge Mark Hawkins Dady says:

Feminist critical theory has always been an interdisciplinary subject; for those who are primarily engaged in literary criticism, it has always been necessary to look beyond the boundaries of purely textual analysis in order to explore both the factors that contribute to the discriminatory treatment

of women and those factors that enable women to resist and counter domination. (264)

Similarly, Troil Moi defines feminism as, "The word feminism or feminist are political levels support for the aims of the new women's movement" (135). Moi's this concept about feminism focuses it as a political movement which aims of breaking the patriarchal boundaries and hierarchy between men and women.

Feminism in its present form is the result of decades' women struggle. It is the tussle for power. With that the politics of gender entered a new dimension in the field of literary criticism and theory. It developed as a tool for approaching literature and after this, feminist criticism has been developed, institutionalized and diversified. There is no harmony between two sexes- male and female in relation to their status in the society. Women are silenced in the patriarchal ideology. Thus, the feminist try to break the silence of women that offer equal status and rights for women. There is inequality shown in the norms created by males where women are forced to follow those values. Defining feminists in term of their work Maria Mies says, "Feminists are those who dare to break the conspiracy of silence about the oppressive, unequal man-woman relationship and who want to change it" (6). Moreover, she talks in favour of women autonomy. For her autonomy is the feminist effort to maintain balance in the existing patriarch norms and values, she wants to recreate the innermost subjective human essence in women. Feminist, infact, are in search of such humanistic environment where there is no center, no hierarchy, no formal leadership. There should be dynamism and diversity.

Much of the feminist critics have raised a strong voice for liberation from the biased male-tyranny on women for a long time. Mary Wollstonecraft in the eighteenth century attempted to liberate women from male-dominated motives hidden in the

emphasis of feminine features like meekness, humility and childishness. Unravelling the bases of socialization of women whereby they are taught to be feminine, Wollstonecraft indicates the fault in the process of socialization. She detests the then false education system that inspired women to love at the expense of reason, and encouraged women to study medicine, business, and mathematics.

One of the major feminist writers of the twentieth century, Virginia Woolf had made a great contribution in the field of feminist theories. She advocates for the radical change in the conception of family and social life. She refuges the traditional views about women that they are submissive, rather focuses for a separate space for women in literature and society. Woolf believes that:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally, but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from the rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation . . . it is narrow minded in their more privileged fellow creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting, stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. (822)

From these lines, she points to the facts that women are closed within domestic sphere, but just contrary to these men are free and public life is reserved for them.

Different modes of Feminist Criticism developed after later 1960's. There are three main strains of feminist criticism namely, French, American and British. They are the feminist voice, though they differ in point of view and methods. Basically, they examine the similar problems. French, British and American feminists have examined similar problems from somewhat different perspectives



French feminists have tended to focus their attention on analyzing the ways in which meaning is produced. Drawing attention on ideas of the psychoanalytic philosopher Jacques Lacan and Sigmund Freud, French feminist remind that language is a realm of public discourse. According to them, a child enters the linguistic realm first as it comes to group its separateness from its mother, just about the time that boys identify with their father, the family representative of culture.

French feminists have said that the structure of language is phallogentric, it privileges the phallus and, more generally, masculinity by connecting them with things and values more appreciated by the culture. They believed that masculine desire dominates speech and posits women as an idealized fantasy fulfillment for the incurable emotional lack caused by separation from the other. The French, thus opined that language is associated with separation from the other.

Some of the French feminists argued that language only tends to give women narrow range of choices. They further talk about another possibility, namely that women can develop a feminine language. Julia Kristeva has said that feminine language is 'Semiotic' not 'Symbolic'. They say feminine language is rhythmic and unifying. Kristeva further says that feminine language is deprived from the preoedipal period of fusion between mother and child. Associating it with the maternal, feminine language does not only treat to culture which is patriarchal, but is also a medium through which women can be creative in new ways. The main focus of French feminists is to show that women are self-sufficient in themselves. Their effort is to help the women to be free from the patriarchal boundary.

Another current of feminist literary criticism is American feminist. American feminists began by analyzing literary texts rather than philosophizing about language like

French did. Many American critics reviewed the works of literature produced by male writers and tried to study the female characters in the feminist framework. They examined the portrayals of women characters in the patriarchal ideology and showed how clearly the tradition of masculine dominance is inscribed in the literary tradition. Kate Millet favours power as an inevitable matter to change the society. In her *Sexual Politics*(1969), she has cited that power is exercised in the society by subjugating women. She further emphasized that women should be given power for their overall development. She says, "Patriarch dominates and subordinate the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male. Power is exercised directly or indirectly in the civil and domestic life, to constrains women" (137). In the male literary works, women are presented just as the sexual objects, whose roles are subservient to those of the male protagonist. Violence and domination are used as tools to exercise power in the society. She analyzed the sexual politics of literature in her work. She further argues that politics is an institution through which power is exercised in the society. Her work paved the way for the readers to reconsider their evaluations fundamentally about some male writers. Since then, "Sexual Politics" became the catch term of many writers. She says, "The essence of politics is power" (205).The main issue raised by Millet is the violation and suppression on women done by patriarchy. She considers that patriarchy doesn't give the equal status for women, it always keeps male in center and women in the marginalized space.

Kate Millet, Carelyn Heilbrunn, and Judith Fetterely, among many others, created this model for American feminist criticism. The main focus of these feminists critic is the denunciation of patriarchy. Elaine Showalter has named the model 'Feminist Reading' or 'Feminist Critique'.

Another group of critics including Susan Gubar, Sandra Gilbert, Patricia Meyer Spacks and Elaine Showalter herself created a somewhat different model which Showalter calls 'Women as writer' or 'Gynocriticism' which is the study of women as writers and its subjects are the history, styles, themes, genres and structure of writing by women.

In one of her influential work of feminist criticism *Towards the Feminist Poetics* (1977), Showalter provides a survey of the literary works produced by the famous female writers of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She raised questions about exclusion of the books written by female writers in the literary course. Moreover, she urged for the separate canon, building of female's literary texts. She says " . . . women's literature must go beyond these scenarios of compromise, madness and death . . . . Its purpose is to discover the new world" (1229). It is called "Gynocriticism". She further adds women are different in terms of nature, race, culture and nation so they cannot be studied universally. There should be a specific style of reading. Thus, she says that the texts written by females should be read from the gynocritical point of view to justify the womanhood in their text. Gynocritics explore the difference and the originality of the texts. Gynocriticism is an attempt to establish feminist tradition.

The target of gynocriticism is to study well-known women authors, to rediscover women's history and culture and to discover neglected or forgotten women writer. With an attempt to fulfill this purpose Showalter provides an outstanding comprehensive overview through three of its phases, Feminine, Feminist and Female. The first phase, Feminine, is the period between 1840 and 1880. In this phase, the women were silent and used to accept male domination. They wrote for equal to males but could not revolt against male domination. George Eliot belongs to this period. The second phase, Feminist

phase is the period between 1880 and 1920. During this phase women writers protested against the patriarchal standards and values. Infact, this period is more challenging period for women who were required to protest against male cruelty. Virginia Woolf, Frances Trollope, Elizabeth Gaskell belongs to this phase. This period is better known as protest stage. They began to create their own style of writing. And, the third phase is dated from 1920 to present, the female phase. This phase is the period of women's awakening. According to Showalter, women writers started advocating their own autonomous female perspective. Women began to work as activists and revolutionary as well. It includes the writers as Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield.

British feminist have given a new dimension to the cultural history practised by Millet and others. They mostly analyze a range of cultural practices, products and knowledge and do not isolate literature from general cultural context. Unlike American they pay emphasis on popular art and culture, not only on texts. Rosalind Coward looks at female desires across a multitude of different cultural phenomena varying from food to family snapshots, from royalty to nature programmes and from fiction to fashion. Thus, British feminists do not like to narrow their study within text only, rather they look at female desire and experience in a broad cultural scope.

Though British, American, French feminist seem to be somehow different from each other, all of them examined the similar problems from somewhat different perspectives. French feminist have specially raised their voice against the patriarchal tradition of use of language that is supposed to be- male dominated and phallogocentric. So, critics, argue, they should create their own language if they really want to write something of their own. Since, they do not have their own language in writing, they are

bound to express the male values. Thus, whether they write or keep silent, they suffer in both cases.

As a result, British feminists tend to distinguish themselves from what they see as an American emphasis on text linking women across boundary and as under emphasis on popular art and culture. Infact, British feminist regard their own cultural practice being more practical than that of American, whom they blamed for being indifferent to historical and cultural detail. British feminist theory focuses on engagement with historical process in order to promote social change. In short, as Showalter has said, English feminist criticism stresses oppression, French repression and American Expression.

### **Gender: A Hot Debate**

Feminism theory is a theoretical discourse advocating women's rights based on the belief in the equality of the sexes. It is a doctrine redefining women's activities and goal from a women centered point of view and refusing to accept the cult of masculine chauvinism and superiority that reduces women to a sex object, as second sex, a submissive other. It seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities and injustices women suffer because of their sex, and defend equal rights for women in a political, economical, social, psychological, personal and aesthetic ground. So, feminism is a struggle of women for the womanhood.

With the emergence of feminist theories "The Gender Theory" emerged in the late 1980s. Feminist criticism became popular in literary discourse in this period. The Gender Theory was used to study the sexual difference. The Gender Theory shifts feminist criticism from periphery to center into literary analysis for it is a liberal theory that offers

space for male critics to be feminist critic which was not practiced by the previous feminists. It also studies the subject of masculinity into feminism.

The most important development in recent gender theory is the participation of male critics to support female and their problems. The male feminists have begun to talk in favour of females from the point of view of female. Feminists write for emancipation, freedom from the exclusion, for autonomy and for independence. What feminist writers want is the change in the traditional concept of regarding women as subjective, weak, dependent and other. Men should take females as their necessary counterparts and help them to come in the independent arena.

Feminism is a political question and matter of power. Since the publication of Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, feminist critics and theorists began exposing the way male dominates female. She says, "essence of politics is power, perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its most fundamental concept of power" (40). Feminists have politicized the critical methods and "feminist criticism has grown to become a new branch of literary study" (41).

The feminist argued that in most systems of sexual differentiation the "phallus" is taken to be the principal signifier of the male and the social system which corresponds to such mode of representation that enables men to dominate women in all social relations. It is believed that in androcentric world, men can see and gain knowledge, they can master the knowledge whereas women are to be mastered.

All the feminists agree that the entire cultural phenomena are dominated by a patriarchal value. The oppression of woman comes in many forms. Some Marxist feminists believe in the manipulation of women's labour. Whereas, there are some liberal feminists who think that there is no moral and intellectual difference between male and

female, but females only lack equal opportunity from the social institutions that labeled negative qualities to female like passive, weak, secondary, uncreative. Feminism is a kind of awareness of the patriarchal oppression, in whatever form it comes, and also a manifestation of struggle against such oppression.

Female is actually not the female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities but a biological body. It is the matter of biological differences. The word feminine refers to the gender and the social roles imposed upon woman by so called masculine men. Thus 'gender' and 'sex' are entirely different matters. Infact, sex does not determine gender. Thus, all the passive qualities are labeled upon woman by the patriarchal culture for its own benefit. It is obvious that human beings are born either male or female but it is made masculine and feminine by the culture.

Thus, Helen Cixous deconstructs the phallogentric hierarchies like masculine-feminine and active-passive and says, ". . . that which appears as feminine or masculine today would no longer amount to the same thing. The general logic of difference would no longer fit into the opposition that's till dominates" (48).

In addition to all these theories, there is the exemplary feminism of various male writers who succeeded in not being prisoners of their sex. These includes Samuel Richardson, a radical feminist in comparision with a male chauvinist like Henry Fielding and his *Clarissa* is supposed to be the major feminist text of the language. Likewise, Henrik Ibsen in his plays *A doll's house* and *Hedda Gabler* embodies the frustrations and tragedy of women trapped in the conventions of patriarchal society. George Bernard Shaw, who thought man to be simply a woman without petticoats believed himself to be as good a feminist as Mary Wollstonecraft. Similarly, Thomas Hardy, who challenged the sexual ideology of his time through his characters that even caused social upheavals.

Simon de Beauvoir in her famous work *The Second Sex* has demonstrated how women are marginalized, hegemonised and subjugated by patriarchal ideology. All the feminist critics and writers are concerned with destroying the patriarchal ideology and constructing such a society that offer equal opportunities regardless of biological differences. Women are always presented in secondary roles in the literary texts. Feminists criticize such one sided evaluation of literature. Beauvoir says, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman . . . it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature . . . which is described as feminine" (89). The generalization of superiority of male and inferiority of female cannot give equality and dignity to women. Thus, feminist blame the critics for discriminating females by the concept of gender and patriarchy.

### ***Wuthering Heights* in the framework of Beauvoir's theory**

Feminism is the recognition of the claims of women for rights, equal to those possessed by men. Women are considered as weak in terms of education, culture, body, religion and society, where as males are considered as strong in every aspects of life. Due to this deep-rooted gender conception, men dominate women. The sense of alienation, powerlessness and dependency felt by women in their everyday life has encouraged the emergence of the study of women.

With the publication of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, there comes a more radical mode of feminism in France and then in the literary theory. In the same essay she traces the problems of modern feminism and argues that when a woman tries to define herself she starts by saying "I am a woman" (101). No man could do so. It shows the basic division between masculine and feminine. She adds that women have to define themselves as a woman and a man as a human. Women do not have their own history and culture. They are always dominated by the male members of the society. They are



behaved as the second sex. That's why directly or indirectly females started revolting against the suppression.

She does not believe in the terms like masculine and feminine coined by male-culture. She demands to change the attitude of looking women as inferior people and giving her only negative qualities that weakens the women's position in the society. She believes that:

The terms masculine and feminine are used symmetrically only as a matter of form, as on legal papers. In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of man to legislate human being in general: whereas woman represents defined by only the negative limiting criteria, reciprocity. (101)

She raises voice against man-woman dichotomy as the male ideology makes woman second sex. She further says that woman are not born women but made so. Women are artificially made inferior. The human culture has given superior status to the sex that hunts and kills, and not to the one that gives birth, to masters of nature and not to the natural functions. Thus, the essay *The Second Sex* is an overall account of women and tags given to women.

Simone de Beauvoir further explores the historical oppression of women. Women are always defined inferior to man and understood that whatever a man does is always right and it is a woman who is always wrong, basically this discrimination is due to the right and wrong position of a man and a woman respectively. She adds:

Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being. Michelet

writes: "Woman, the relative being....." And Benda is most positive in his *Rapport d' Uriel*: " The body of man makes sense in itself quite apart from that of woman, whereas the latter seems wanting in significance by itself . . . . Man can think of himself without woman. She cannot think of herself without man. And she is simply what man decrees; thus she is called " the sex", by which is meant that she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex\_\_ absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is absolute, he is the Absolute\_\_ she is the Other. (102)

Women are categorized as Other and the category of the Other is as primordial as consciousness itself. Women are regarded simply as the sex object to men, she has no other existence. Only, she is defined and differentiated with reference to man, not he. She is 'object', 'incidental', 'inessential', 'the other', 'the second sex'. Originally, the duality of the Self and the Other was not attached to the division of the sexes but it rises along with the fundamental category of human thought. Women were always taken for granted, and were always categorized as secondary or second sex, inferior to men.

It is believed that females are mystic and vast and there are so many things which cannot be understood about female. They undergo different processes like child birth, menstruation and so forth that men could never understand but Beauvoir condemns these myths saying that they are natural process and male made myths are false. She further says that men also undergo different natural processes which are never understood by females. She adds:

The myth of a woman is a luxury which can appear only if man escapes from urgent demands of his needs, the mere relationships are concretely lived the less they are idealized....but along with luxury there is utility; there dreams where irresistibly guided by interest. Surely most the myths had roots in the spontaneous attitude of man towards his own existence and toward the world around him. But going beyond experience towards the transcendent idea was deliberately used by patriarchal society for purpose of justification; through the myths this society imposed its law and customs upon individuals in a picturesque, effective manner it is under a mythical form that group- imperative is indoctrinated into each conscience. (999)

Beauvoir has brought a widespread consciousness on the part of women, pointing to the socio-historical construction of women. She condemns the socialization that persuades women to be sexy and to be flesh for more entertainment of male ego. Rather, she professes for a mentality for women to be self assertive and determined, able to tackle with impediments, and to liberate them from the social construction of femininity. She criticizes the male made myths about women that is just a mirage that doesn't have any relation with reality at all. It has no any proven facts but are only myths. She even criticizes the cultural identification of women as merely negative or 'other' to man. Here man is supposed to represent humanity in general. Not only this but even the book deals with the great collection of myths of women especially in the work of many male writers. She says the notion of otherness of 'she' effects to the social ideology, it encourages to give false concept about the male\female relationship. Thus, she requests feminists to

break such false norms and values and establish female's distinct ideology that stresses on women's freedom and independence.

In her view women are marginalized, subordinated and hegemonized by patriarchal ideology. In the literary texts women are always in secondary role. They are ordinary, unimportant and marginalized. She criticizes the one sided evaluation of literature.

### Chapter 3

#### Struggle of Catherine to Assert Her Existence

##### **The World of *Wuthering Heights***

Emily Bronte, in her novel *Wuthering Heights*, presents a female protagonist who is unquestionably rebellious and struggles throughout the novel in search of her existence, in the patriarchal society. Women, in the Victorian period, were supposed to be mild, submissive and were confined inside the four walls of the house and were mostly subjected and dominated by males. It was necessary to break such system and society to emancipate women from the false ideology created by men.

Catherine, the protagonist of the novel *Wuthering Heights*, struggles for her existence, true identity and emancipation from the male dominated world. She does not compromise with the patriarchal norms and values which were obstacles on her way. Catherine, from the early age, is a character with different attitude and behaviour than other female characters in the novel. She is not afraid with the society and rebel against it though there was the chance to be boycotted from the society. If she does not follow the rules and regulations of the patriarchal society she would be followed by the unnecessary tags. Catherine is a revolutionary girl who aimed to free women from the so called male dominated society. She is in favour of equality and hates the discrimination between men and women. She is strong enough to control and overrate every male oppressor in the novel, be it Hindley or Heathcliff.

Victorian period was the time when women were thought of as child-like, frail and emotional beings unsuited by nature to the rigors of intellect. Even though the women shared the status of the families and husband, they had no voice in decision-making at any level, except as they could persuade their husbands or their fathers to

listen. The men held both broadly legal and domestic power over women, like the power they assumed over children and servants and women were expected to submit to the wishes of the men who were their guardians.

The story begins in 1801 with the arrival of Mr Lockwood as a tenant of Thrushcross Grange, a property rented from Mr Heathcliff of Wuthering Heights .A snowstorm and Heathcliff 's refusal of a guide prevent Lockwood from making a return trip to Thrushcross Grange through the unfamiliar moors and thus, accommodates in an unusual chamber of the dreary house. There, he discovers the names "Catherine Earnshaw" , "Catherine Heathcliff", "Catherine Linton" scratched into the wood of the window sill. Through these lines, it is in fact, difficult to find Catherine's real identity. Who is she? She is Catherine Earnshaw or Catherine Heathcliff or Catherine Linton? In the light of this fragmented and varied identity, it is no surprise Catherine knows "Heathcliff is more myself than I am" (80), for he has only a single name, Heathcliff, while she has many or in a sense none.

After returning back to Thrushcross Grange, he persuades Ms Nelly Dean, a house keeper, to tell the story of Heathcliff and Catherine. Mr Earnshaw, the then owner of Wuthering Heights, on one of his journeys to Liverpool asked his children to ask the gift that they need:

Now, my bonny man, I'm going to Liverpool, to-day . . . . What shall I bring you? You may choose what you like . . . . Hindley named a fiddle, and then he asked Miss Cathy (elder Catherine); she was hardly six years old, but could ride any horse in the stable, and she chose a whip. (34)

Her ability to ride any horse in the stable, her acting as a mistress and her asking for a whip is obviously a strange behaviour of a young child. Symbolically, the small

Catherine longing for a whip seems like a powerless younger daughter yearning for power. Catherine hated Earnshaw acting as a patriarch and therefore, pleases in "doing just what her father hated most" (41). Just few hours before he dies when Mr Earnshaw was complaining about Catherine's nature saying "Why can'st thou not always be a good lass, Cathy?", she immediately answers him, "Why cannot you always be a good man, father!" (41). Her father's harsh words "I can't love thee" (41) made her little heart cry at first but she never begs excuse of her father but simply laughs. From the early childhood Catherine has love for freedom. A product of wild moor, she is a born rebel, a mischievous girl of high spirit, a troubling child, a problem to androcentric society. Nelly Dean rightly describes her:

Certainly, she had ways with her such as I never saw a child take up before; and she put all of us past our patience fifty times and oftener in a day : from the hour she came downstairs till the hour she went to bed, we had not a minute's security that she wouldn't be in mischief. Her spirits were always at high-water mark, her tongue always going \_ singing, laughing and plaguing everybody who would not do the same. In play, she liked, exceedingly, to act the little mistress; using her hands freely, and commanding her companions . . . . (40)

Meanwhile, she finds the inner core and a profound connection with the stranger who enters her own father's affection and her life. Catherine, now, finds her power to challenge the society, in the form of Heathcliff and achieved an extraordinary fullness of being. She is both loving and violent, gentle and passionate, affectionate and willful. Her turbulent and aggressive personality rivals only that of Heathcliff. While her brother feels dispossessed and threatened by Heathcliff in contrast to Catherine who sees the 'dirty

gypsy body' a reflection of her own wild nature. Catherine had from the very start of the story had a strong feeling for Heathcliff, Nelly Dean senses it, "I ran to the children's room; their door was ajar, I saw they had never laid down, though it was past midnight; but they were calmer, and did not need me to console them. The little souls were confronting each other with better thoughts that I could have hit on" (42).

Here, we can witness Catherine and Heathcliff consoling each other in the news of Mr Earnshaw's death . After Earnshaw's death Heathcliff was reduced to the status of servant and realizing her power and inspiration being separated from her decided to rebel against Hindley's tyranny. Catherine protested against Hindley's tyranny by refusing to eat and continued "to run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day" (44). Catherine's attachment to Heathcliff itself is a great challenge to the existing social codes and values of the society. That's why Hindley always tries to keep them within the social boundaries "hoping to succeed in separating the two friends" (51) for he knows well that Catherine-Heathcliff relationship is a direct challenge to the those social forces which tyrannize, oppress and restrict individuals and their relationship.

Once finding Heathcliff and Catherine playing together, he throws them into the kitchen but whatever tortures they got "they forgot everything the minute they were together again, at least they had contrived some naughty plan of revenge . . . ." (44).

A significant event takes place in the life of Catherine when on one of the mischievous journeys on the moor with Heathcliff, they happen to visit Thrushcross Grange and peeps through the window. She was fascinated by its beauty. Heathcliff describe of Thrushcross Grange: " \_ ah! It was beautiful\_ a splendid place carpeted with crimson...." (46). The event brings Catherine into close contact with Edgar Linton, the



heir of Thrushcross Grange, and later decides to marry him. But, she has second thought about her love that she proudly expresses to Nelly:

I've no 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. (82)

Through these lines Catherine admits that within her heart she is not doing the right thing for she knows that she can never raise Heathcliff high into the society marrying him. Thus, in marrying Edgar she thought, she can free Heathcliff from Hindley's grip. She further clarifies her intention in marrying Edgar "I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power" (107). But Heathcliff overhears her decision to marry Edgar and runs away from Wuthering Heights without letting others know where he was going. His absence made Catherine sick and she deliberately longs for her instrument that she felt was inseparable from her. Heathcliff's disappearance arouse a storm in Catherine as she exclaimed: "I wonder where he is \_ I wonder where he can be! What did I say, Nelly? I've forgotten. Was he vexed at my bad humour this afternoon? Dear! Tell me what I've said to grieve him? I do wish he'd come. I do wish he'd come" (83).

Heathcliff's absence made her weak and helpless. The rebellious spirit disappears from her and she loses her strength to protest against patriarchy and marries Edgar but marrying Edgar was not the end of her relationship with Heathcliff. She says, "Who is to

separate us, pray? They will meet the fate of Milo! No, as long as I live Ellen: for no mortal creature. Every Linton on the face of the earth might melt into nothing, before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff" (81).

Catherine's soul is stirred by the reappearance of Heathcliff after three years' absence. She runs upstairs, holds Edgar tightly as she says "Oh Edgar darling! Heathcliff's come back \_\_\_\_ he is" (94). She welcomes Heathcliff with so tender a heart that it became intolerable for Edgar to bear it. On the other hand, Catherine wants Edgar to reconcile with Heathcliff. Edgar, in response to her urge replies: "Will you give up Heathcliff hereafter, or will you give up me? It is impossible for you to be my friend and his at the same time: and I absolutely require to know which you choose" (118).

Catherine knows that to be one's wife and another's friend at the same time was unacceptable in the male dominated society but still she keeps on struggling to save her existence. She is aware that it would degrade her position and status in breaking the relationship with Edgar but she could not separate herself from her 'other self', from her power, Heathcliff. She is on the side of Heathcliff whenever there is fight between Heathcliff and Edgar because without Heathcliff "the universe would turn to be a mighty stranger" (82) for Catherine. She protects Heathcliff from Edgar: "Get away, now; he'll return with a brace of pistols, and a half a dozen assistants. ....I would rather see Edgar at bay than you" (115-16).

Her, trying to protect Heathcliff is an attempt of her to escape from patriarchy cause Heathcliff is not 'other' to her, he's her own soul. But the society is more powerful than her. When she could not persuade Edgar to reconcile with Heathcliff, patriarchy became intolerable burden for her. Still she does not compromise with it. She embraces death rather than to forsake Heathcliff and compromise with paternal authority. A sense

of realization came into her when she understands that Edgar could never respect her feeling for Heathcliff. She expresses it before Heathcliff: "If I have done wrong, I am dying for it. It is enough! You left me too: but I won't upbraid you! I forgive you. Forgive me" (116).

Now she has realized that after marrying Edgar she has betrayed her childhood freedom and Heathcliff both. She feels unable to continue her struggle. She is aware that her miseries are the result of patriarchal system. She expresses the reason of her misery : "I was a child, my father was just buried, and my misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me and Heathcliff" (25).

She feels that she is imprisoned and longs to run on the moors with her childhood mate. Longing for childhood to be herself "among the heather" (126) is direct denial of her duty as a wife of a patriarch. She addresses Edgar as a "stranger" (125) and wants to return to her past. And, her asking for Nelly to open the window, gives us the hint that she wants freedom but she does not know that she has already missed her "chance of life" (126) in missing Heathcliff.

In a patriarchal society, all women suffer and are failed to materialize the choices which they made going beyond the existing tradition and culture and Catherine too, suffers and feels dying when she feels that nobody is with her and to compromise with the situation was not in her nature. She says to Nelly "Oh, I will die, since no one cares anything about me" (120) and repents for choosing Linton as a husband when Nelly reveals that Edgar is "among his books" (121) when she is dying.

In her last meeting with Heathcliff she discloses that she is imprisoned in her husband's house and wants to escape from the prison to establish her own kind of existence in "the glorious world" (160) of her own choice and, to enter into that world,

she has to break the barriers of patriarchy which now seems very difficult for her. With Heathcliff she shares her keen desire for freedom like this:

. . . the thing that irks me most is this shattered prison, after all. I'm tired, tired of being enclosed here. I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there; not seeing it dimly through tears and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart; but really with it, and in it. (160)

She weeps and cries for her lost strength and says "I only wish us never to be parted" (159) and her wish to become wild again, child again is her denunciation of patriarchy. She desires to unite with Heathcliff after death, if the society does not allow it in her life time. Her wish to unite with Heathcliff was in reality, her wish to unite with her childhood strength that she's denounced for material success. As Victorian women always long for beauty, power and wealth, she could not be exceptional but very lately she realized that she could not continue to live being Ms Linton. She chooses death rather than to remain Ms Linton. Her death symbolizes her refusal to enter the law of father and her desire to be one with Heathcliff. She dies not to rest but to be one with Heathcliff. She expresses this desire through her own words "I'll not lie there by myself; they may bury me twelve feet deep, and throw the church down over me, but I won't rest till you are with me.... I never will" (126).

Hence, her uncompromising nature is disclosed through her death. Her, longing for childhood, desire to be one with Heathcliff is the direct denunciation of patriarchy. Thus, she proves that she is a rebel, struggling woman who never for a moment compromise with the rules and codes of the society like other female characters but rather prefers death rather than to remain suppressed and confined into the patriarchal society.

Just after the fight between her husband and Heathcliff, Catherine makes herself ill and eventually dies delivering Edgar's daughter, Cathy. From the very beginning, Heathcliff shows great courage, resolution and love. When he could not get Catherine, he exercises his brutality by destroying Hindley, kidnapping Cathy and Nelly and destroying Isabella and Hareton. He vows to take revenge upon all Earnshaws and Lintons. Heathcliff is genuinely bad and his deeds are atrocious. Heathcliff is a very solitary person after Catherine dies, he has no friends, and he has nothing to love and thinks that he can cure the sadness with revenge. Unknowing that Catherine is sick, he elopes with Isabella, an infatuated girl, who is unaware that Heathcliff marries her for property, not love. Knowing the truth, she manages to escape from Wuthering Heights and moves to London where she gives birth to Heathcliff's son Linton and dies when he is about twelve years old.

Legally Linton is Heathcliff's son so he takes Linton to *Wuthering Heights* which Hindley Earnshaw has lost in gambling with Heathcliff. He, then forces Cathy to marry Linton, who is sick and dies soon. By then, he has reduced Hindley's son, Hareton to the level of servants and after Edgar's death, the property of Earnshaws, too, falls in the hand of Heathcliff, through Cathy, who is the only survival among Lintons. However, after the death of Catherine, Heathcliff never fully recovers from the loss. His love last to the point that seven years later he decides to bring up the coffin of Catherine and embrace her one final time. When Nelly discovers what he has done for he has not shown respect even for dead, he replies:

I disturbed nobody, and I gave some ease to myself. I shall be a great deal more comfortable now; and you'll have a better chance of keeping me underground, when I get there. Disturbed her? No! she has disturbed me, night and day, through

eighteen-years-incessantly-remorselessly-till yesternight: and yesternight I was tranquil. (289)

He sees his own and Catherine's image in Hareton and Cathy and therefore retires from his long struggle. The book ends as Heathcliff dies and Cathy at the end of the novel is to be married to Hareton.

Catherine, on the other hand is waiting for Heathcliff in the grave and their union is symbolized by their "walks" (336) on the moors as reported by country folks.

### **Male's superiority and brutality**

#### **Mr Earnshaw: The Former Master of *Wuthering Heights***

Mr Earnshaw is the ruler of *Wuthering Heights*. His role is significant in the novel although he appears on the scene for a short time cause he was the one who introduced, Heathcliff to the family. While returning back from his journey to Liverpool, he sees a dark gipsy boy unowned and unclaimed by anyone and brings it home. He tells Nelly, the housemaid "to wash it, and give it clean things, and let it sleep with the children" (35). She puts "it" on the landing of the stairs, hoping it will go away and when Earnshaw discovers this she is banished from the house. When she returns after "a few days later" (36) she finds that the dark child was now christened Heathcliff, after their dead son.

Heathcliff was not easily accepted by the other members of the family including Ms Earnshaw for they call him 'it'. They are against the decision but cannot reject the decision as it is made by the ruler, master of *Wuthering Heights*. Ms Earnshaw is presented as a feminine prototype in the novel who is submissive to her husband and does not dare to stand out against his decision. The male heads of household abuse females and males who are weak or powerless. This can be seen in their use of various kinds of imprisonment or confinement, which takes social, emotional, financial, legal and physical

forms. Mr Earnshaw, the master of Wuthering Heights, maintains the system of patriarchy. It is clear from the fact that he's much worried about Hindley, the would-be ruler of Wuthering Heights so after consulting his lawyer, Hindley is sent for his education who returns well-trained after his father's death but Catherine was confined within the boundaries of Wuthering Heights. Nelly describes him:

Young Earnshaw was altered considerably in the three years of his absence. He had grown sparer, and lost his colour, and spoke and dressed quite differently and on the very day of his return, he told Joseph and me we must thenceforth quarter ourselves in the back – kitchen, and leave the house for him. (43-44)

Catherine, longing for freedom used to run to the moors where she could feel free. It is clear that decisions are to be made, only by male members of the society, not the women who were rather encouraged to be silent and submissive. Nelly, also gives us a hint that, Mr Earnshaw, is a very strict father when she admits "he had always been strict and grave with them" (40) and Catherine, on her part, had no idea why her father should be crosser and less patient" (40). As a matter of fact until the Victorian period, to some extent even today, women were treated as inferior human beings. Nelly also confesses how Mr Earnshaw tries to suppress Catherine's independent feminist impulse and considers her weak in comparison to her brother that made the little Catherine cry and feel inferior. "Nay, Cathy" the old man would say, "I cannot love thee; thou'rt worse than your brother. Go, say thy prayers, child, and ask God's pardon. I doubt thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee!" (41).

The novel *Wuthering Heights* is able to show the social shape of the then society and shows the real status of the Victorian women as it is organized around two contrary

stories of female development, the story of Catherine Earnshaw and her daughter, Catherine Linton who suffer throughout the novel trying to resist themselves from the patriarchal order.

After the death of Mr Earnshaw, the power and the property goes directly in the hand of his son, Hindley. Thus, through the novel *Wuthering Heights*, Bronte has very truly shows the understanding of the psychological tension women felt in courtship and marriage and in economy and address specific injustice that have been practised in the then society including the inability of women to hold property and make decisions.

The text represents the natural patriarchal family of Victorian period where the family and its members, irrespective of male and female were governed by the rules imposed on by the superior members of the society. And, in various ways the text represents the corruption of child's native goodness by the society. Catherine, be it elder or younger, is not sent to schools whereas Hindley was, and the only reason is, he is a male, the heir of his father's property and should be well-educated and mannered.

Catherine often fails in her life to make the right decisions as her father corrupted her native goodness during her childhood. Once he says, "Why canst thou not always be a good lass, Cathy? And she turned her face up to his, and laughed, and answered, "Why cannot you always be a good man, father?" (41).

These lines show us the relationship between the father and the daughter and the last line provokes the female voice which protests male's power over females.

### **Detestable Hindley: The Later Master of *Wuthering Heights***

After Mr Earnshaw's death, Hindley became the master of *Wuthering Heights*. As soon as he takes charge of his throne, he started showing his power. After he asks Nelly and other servants to shift to servants quarter. He also relegates Heathcliff to the servants



quarters and treats him as a servant who has no family rights. Nelly was occasionally discharged from her position for displeasing her masters, be it Mr Earnshaw or Hindley. Hindley becomes tyrannical to everyone irrespective of male or female. He is equally tyrannical towards Catherine whose diary is an authentic evident to prove him a real patriarch. Hindley, for Catherine, is the supreme ruler of patriarchal state of *Wuthering Heights*. Lockwood reads Catherine's quotations: "' you forget you have a master here', says the tyrant. ' I'll demolish the first who puts me out of temper! I insist on perfect sobriety and silence' " (19).

Hindley often tries to suppress the feminist impulse arising in Catherine by force and wants Catherine to be as submissive and silent as his wife, Frances for he has understood that Catherine has feminist impulse and she is growing rebellious enough to threaten the patriarchal codes owned by him. Whereas, for Catherine, Hindley is a detestable person who considers a woman simply as object for his pleasure. Catherine directly opposes this and feels as if she's locked within the four walls of *Wuthering Heights* and is often ashamed of him and his wife too, for her complete submission to her husband. Catherine writes, in her diary: "Frances pulled his hair heartily, and then went and seated herself on her husband's knee; and there they were: like two babies, kissing and talking nonsense by the hour\_ foolish palaver that we should be ashamed of" (19). Hindley is the supreme tyrannical ruler of patriarchal kingdom of *Wuthering heights* and it is further proved when Catherine writes in her diary, on finding Catherine and Heathcliff playing together, "Hindley hurried up from his paradise on the hearth, and seizing one of us by the collar, and the other by the arm, hurled both into the back-kitchen" (19-20) which according to his patriarch codes, is the suitable place for women.

But Catherine is rebellious enough to accept the so-called stereotyped sex-roles assigned to females by the patriarchal ideology and reveals her quests for freedom to run outdoors although Nelly was ordered to "bolt the doors" (45) and "nobody should let them in that night" (45). Hindley suffers much after the death of his wife, the only person who was the dutiful subject of his patriarchy and grew more tyrannical as Nelly says Hindley " . . . had room in his heart only for two idols\_ his wife and himself" ( 64). Hindley, then starts degrading himself to the extent of insanity. No other servants could bear his atrocity, it is clear in one of the Nelly's confessions when she says "The servant could not bear his tyrannical and evil conduct long: Joseph and I were the only two that would stay. I had not the heart to leave my charge . . ." (65). Lost in madness and insanity he orders even Nelly to leave the house, another dutiful subject, because he wants to rule over the place only to ruin himself and his son. It is known when Nelly says:

Hindley ordered me to pack up\_ he wanted no women in the house, he said, now there was no mistress; and as to Hareton, the curate should take him in hand, by and bye. And so, I had but one choice left, to do as I was ordered \_ I told the master he got rid of all decent people only to run to ruin a little faster. (89)

### **Heathcliff: Master of "masters"**

Mr Earnshaw brought "a dirty, ragged, black haired child" (45) into Wuthering Heights and named him Heathcliff who was not easily accepted by other members of the family. He was only known and addressed as "it". Nelly describes how Heathcliff was treated: "They ( Catherine and Hindley) entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it might be gone on the morrow" (35).

The foremost impression that he gets from the Earnshaw's family is that of hatred as "he bred bad feeling" (36). But in a few days time there develops a "thick" (36) relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine. Catherine finds Heathcliff an instrument and inspiration in the development of her feminist impulse. From the beginning consciously and unconsciously she was in need of an external force in her struggle against male oppression and she gets it in the form of Heathcliff. On the other hand, Heathcliff finds consolation in the company of Catherine. He, therefore sees Catherine as the only human being, and takes her to be his mate, strength and existence.

The great tragedy comes into his life when Catherine decides to marry an established man, Edgar Linton and their relations are thwarted with this decision. Overhearing the part of Catherine's dialogue "it would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now . . . ." (80) , he leaves Wuthering Heights and disappears for three years. When he returns, he is not the one who was tortured by Hindley and bullied by Lintons. He is no more "it", as he used to be addressed, but a perfect man. Nelly describes him:

I was amazed, more than ever, to behold the transformation of Heathcliff. He had grown a tall, athletic well-formed man, beside whom my master seemed quite slender and youth-like. His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army. His countenance was much older in expression and decision of feature than Mr Linton's: it looked intelligent, and retained no marks of former degradation. (95)

Throughout his life Heathcliff plans for a revenge upon Hindley and confesses it with Nelly in a conversation: "I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. I don't care how long I wait, if I can only do it last. I hope he will not die before I do" (60). He is now much determined to take revenge on Hindley and on Lintons and succeeds in ruining

both's life. Heathcliff gambles with Hindley, who has become a drunkard and somewhat mad since the death of his young wife, and Heathcliff wins all the Earnshaw money and lands and at the same time he attempts to reestablish his relationship with Catherine, who is now, Catherine Linton. He also ruins Edgar and gets mastery over Thrushcross Grange marrying Isabella who was woven in his trap and by getting his own son Linton marry Cathy, the only heir of Thrushcross Grange.

Heathcliff is an indispensable creation in the society of *Wuthering Heights* and through him Bronte wants to reveal the abuses and power of male in the patriarchal society. Heathcliff, in other words, is one of the divided souls of Catherine, he is the patriarchal culture within her which she wants to get control over. But her attempts to control the patriarchal rules failed when Heathcliff turns against her and others.

Determined to take revenge upon his oppressors Heathcliff makes everybody his subject and destroys them savagely. Isabella Linton, who became the victim of Heathcliff, who she finds the image of a romantic hero. She could not see the Patriarchal vigor in him which Catherine is aware of and, therefore, warns Isabella:

Nelly, help me to convince her of madness. Tell her what Heathcliff is \_  
 an unreclaimed creature, without refinement- without cultivation. He's not  
 a rough diamond- a pearl – containing oyster of a rustic; he's a fierce,  
 pitiless, wolfish man . . . and he'd crush you, like a sparrow's egg, Isabella,  
 if he found you a troublesome charge. I know he couldn't love a Linton . . .  
 . Avarice is growing with him a besetting sin. There's my picture; and I'm  
 his friend\_ so much so, that had he thought, and let you fall into his trap.  
 (102)

Catherine is the only one who can see turbulent and disturbance growing inside him as she is as wild as he himself. But poor Isabella's infatuation is immediately crushed after her marriage to Heathcliff when she is victimized by Heathcliff's patriarchal nature. Isabella in her letter to Nelly writes: "Is Mr Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil?" (136). Heathcliff, thus, grows as the supreme power, ruler of the society and a most terrible 'father' figure. Later, Heathcliff keeps Hareton, the son to Hindley and Frances Earnshaw, under his control and uses him against his own father, Hindley. Heathcliff exercised his power fully by reducing Hareton, to the status of a servant in the household at Wuthering Heights as Heathcliff is determined to make him suffer for the indignities he suffered under Hindley. Hindley's evil influence is felt upon the boy who reflects the most insensitive traits. He turns the young Hareton into a spoiled lad for whom has no respect or love for his father or for his education and behavior. As Nelly Dean says:

He raised his missile to hurl it: I commenced a soothing speech , but could not stay the hand- the stone struck my bonnet; and then ensued, which whether he comprehend them or not, were delivered with practiced emphasis and distorted his baby feature into a shocking expression of malignity. (109)

Hareton has become a reflection of the cruelty Heathcliff was imposed on, he has done to Hareton what Hindley did to him. Heathcliff has so powerful influence on Hareton that he treats him as if he was a father. After the death of Catherine, he became more violent and when Cathy comes of age, Heathcliff lures Cathy to Wuthering Heights and locks Cathy and Nelly and threatens Cathy that she should be locked in Wuthering Heights until she marries Linton and finally forces her to marry his son Linton, who is

sickly and dies shortly after the marriage. Cathy was locked in *Wuthering Heights* in such a way that she could not even meet her father in his last hours and later she persuades Linton to release her and escapes through the upper-window to meet her dying father. She goes to Edgar and a short time later he dies very peacefully. The imprisonment of Cathy Linton and Ms Dean is not an excessively melodramatic incident, Heathcliff has an instant answer for his treatment of the two women. He is the master and they are females, subject to his governance. After, Edgar's death Cathy comes fully into the grip of Heathcliff and suffers till he dies. Lockwood, a tenant to Heathcliff judges him correctly and hates his savage treatment towards his son's widow- Cathy when Heathcliff orders Cathy to prepare tea lockwood notices that "The tone in which the words were said, revealed a genuine bad nature" (10).

Heathcliff is the most difficult character in *Wuthering Heights*. In his initial stage, he was pure, guiltless, half man, half woman, imperfect human being. Catherine was Heathcliff and Heathcliff was Catherine. They were inseparable and together form a perfect human being and each finds his or her image in the other. They were the two halves of the single soul and their separation makes them helpless and incomplete. When Catherine was separated from him, he became a supreme patriarch. He expresses his feelings: "I've fought through a bitter life since I last heard your voice; and you must forgive me, for I struggled only for you" (96). Actually, he struggles to possess his 'other self' and his struggle continues even after her death. Basically he wants to be one with his lost soul but the existing patriarchal society doesn't allow him to be united with his soul. Without Catherine, what was left in him, was only a patriarch self and he became the ruler, master of his society. Catherine, on the other hand, chooses her death rather than to

surrender to the society as she knows without Heathcliff, her 'other self', her power, she cannot fight against society and shows her uncompromising nature.

### **Catherine as a Second Sex**

Right from the beginning, while interpreting we can see Catherine in the framework of feminist theory, and in many situations Catherine's voice for freedom seem to represent Simone de Beauvoir and the culture seem to treat her as a second sex.

From the starting Catherine is a mischievous child, loves freedom and stands apart in her family circle. But, still she is powerless and needs support and strength to fight with the society. When she says "I am Heathcliff" (82) it is clear that she identifies herself with Heathcliff in order to strengthen her desire to fight.

Beauvoir's sense of alienation, powerlessness and dependency is felt by Catherine in her life that has encouraged her to break the traditional norms and values. She defines herself as Heathcliff because she knows that in the world of *Wuthering Heights*, women cannot develop their identity. The introduction of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* is supposed to be most significant event in the novel. Everybody in the family hates him but Catherine is very much fond of him for her he is a 'whip'- symbolically her instrument and strength- which she had asked for her father to bring from Liverpool. She is a good rider by this time, so she has asked a whip. The 'horse' can be taken as a tyranny, male-dominated society and the 'whip' as a weapon with which she could get control over that tyranny and male oppression.

In the patriarchal society like of *Wuthering Heights* mothers have no value, no role no power and position. Thus, Catherine's mother dies when she is only about eight. Heathcliff has no one known as his mother. Catherine dies just two hours after she gives birth to Cathy, her daughter. Linton Heathcliff loses his mother when he is about thirteen.

The absence of all the mothers from the world of *Wuthering Heights* gives opportunity to the fathers in the shaping of patriarchal order. *Wuthering Heights*, therefore shows the picture of a society in which mothers/females are degraded to nothing. And, the very absence of the mother in *Wuthering Heights*, strengthens patriarchy and males get a large ground to exercise his law. Cathy, the daughter of Catherine, loses her mother and is therefore compelled to enter the father's law. She started to be a great admirer of her father's law and culture. She was even educated in her house. She has no existence without her papa, Edgar Linton. She was confined to lead her life within the boundaries of Thrushcross Grange.

We can have many instances in the character Catherine, which have similarity with Simone de Beauvoir's lines. When Nelly Dean, Catherine's maid, had been consoling Catherine at Thrushcross Grange, she all of a sudden ordered Nelly to open the window: "Open the window again wide. Fasten it open. Quick, why don't you move?" (She says to Nelly) "Because I won't give you death of cold", I answered. "You won't give me a chance of life, you mean", she said . . ." (126).

It is what exactly represents Catherine's voice for freedom, freedom from the patriarchal system that suffocates her. So she orders Nelly to open the window so that she can see the outer world. Though she orders Nelly only to open the window, but her intension was surely to enjoy freedom, freedom from her life that could not understand her.

Before marriage she was suppressed by her father, after his death by his heir, Hindley, Catherine's brother and later by her husband. Catherine is a feminist rebel. She opposes patriarchy and along with this she tries to construct her own ideal world. She raises voice against her father, Mr Earnshaw, and her brother, Mr Hindley. From her early childhood she longs for freedom. She is the product of wild moor, she is born rebel,



a troubling child, moreover a problem to the androcentric society. Nelly Dean describes her: "We had not a single minutes security that's he would not be in mischief. Her spirits were always at high water mark; her tongue always going . . . singing, laughing and plaguing everybody who would not do the same" (69).

Her father loses the whip she has asked for and brings Heathcliff which she accepts as her strength. Her demand of a whip, ability to ride any horse in the stable, her using hands freely, symbolically, tells us about Catherine's rebellious nature. In the world of *Wuthering Heights*, women were not sent abroad for studies but, were kept confined within the territory of the house. When Hindley was sent abroad for higher studies, Catherine was bound to stay home. Mr Earnshaw could never prove that he was a good father. It is also revealed in the lines by Catherine "Why can't you always be a good man, father?" (40).

Catherine is never submissive to the patriarchal order of her family and society. When Hindley becomes the new master of Wuthering Heights, after the death of Mr Earnshaw, Catherine comes to the front with her voice of resistance against it. Catherine is the only woman character in the novel who tries to establish her own identity on the basis of her love for freedom. She is completely different from other female characters in the novel like Frances, Hindley's wife, Isabella, Edgar's sister and her own daughter, Cathy. All these characters silently bear the pain and torture offered by the male members of the society but Catherine is the one who revolts against it. She has her own philosophy of her life, she has her own ideology.

Catherine wants to rebel against Hindley's tyranny, that is not only for Heathcliff, whom Hindley hates most but her main purpose is to protect herself in protecting Heathcliff. Her aim is to establish a peculiar kind of relationship with Heathcliff. Here,

Catherine's view is same with that of Beauvoir's who also requests to break the hierarchy between male and women or masculine and feminine. She does not believe in such terms that gives secondary position to women. Infact, Catherine, too, wants to establish such relationship where there will be no man's domination and woman's subordination. She refuses to be an ideal prototype of the adolescent woman but a revolutionary spirit of the time. She actually represents new values and sets an example of feminist rebel. It is also reflected in the lines of her diary that Mr Lockwood, a tenant to Heathcliff, happens to read at Wuthering Heights: "Hindley is a detestable substitute, his conduct to Heathcliff is atrocious. Heathcliff and I are going to rebel. We took our initiary steps this evening" (18).

Catherine decides to marry Edgar for position and power in society but inside she felt that she has lost her freedom. Catherine's marriage to Edgar has locked her into a social system that denies her autonomy and Heathcliff's return represents the return of her true self-desire and freedom. Self-starvation practised by Catherine, then, also associated with female feelings of powerlessness which is similar to Beauvoir's interpretation on women. Hunger strike is a traditional tool of the powerlessness, as the history of the feminist movement has claimed.

But still she does not compromise with the patriarchal tradition. She prefers death rather than to forsake Heathcliff and compromise with patriarchal authority. She is aware that her miseries are endowed upon her by the patriarchal authority that separated her from Heathcliff. She expresses her misery: "I was a child; my father was just buried, and my misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me and Heathcliff" (125).

She feels that she's in prison and longs to escape from the prison and to enter into a glorious world. She desires to establish her own kind of existence in the world of her own choice. It's her direct denunciation of the world created by the males for their convenience, where women have to lead a life of a prisoner.

The thing that irks me most is this shattered prison, after all. I'm tired, tired of being enclosed here. I am wearing to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there: not seeing it dimly through tears, and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart; but really with it, and in it. (160)

Catherine sees Heathcliff as no other being but as her own self for she loves masculinity and power that was in Heathcliff. Heathcliff for her, represents power and masculinity that she was longing for whereas mildness and weakness was possessed in Linton. Catherine loves Heathcliff through her feminist impulse. So, everytime when she says "I am Heathcliff" (82), it revealed the fact that Catherine saw the boldness and power in Heathcliff, that she wanted to use as a tool against the existing social norms.

Later when she realized that the Heathcliff who used to be her power, could not be possessed by her in this society, she vowed to meet him in the grave and confessed that Heathcliff is in her soul. If she cannot possess her power in her lifetime, she would rather die enclosing her power, Heathcliff, in her soul "Oh, you, see, Nelly! He would not relent a moment, to keep me out of the grave. That is how I'm loved! Well, never mind! That is not my Heathcliff. I shall love mine yet; and take him with me\_\_ he's in my soul" (160).

In her last hours, she begged Heathcliff to forgive her as she could not be with him and betrayed him for social status. Catherine was always a positive – thinker,

optimistic personality. Even though Wuthering Heights was not visible, was miles away from Thrushcross Grange, she fancied to see it and further goes on describing her free life there in Wuthering Heights as if she was with Heathcliff. She longed to be in her glorious world, she wanted to live her life in a full-fledged form. She says, "There are the earliest flowers at the Heights!" They remind me of soft thaw winds, and warm sunshine, and nearly melted snow\_\_ Edgar, is there not a south wind, and is not the snow almost gone?" (134).

Here, "melted snow", "soft winds", "warm sunshine" symbolizes her hope, freedom from her present situation as opposed to the "strong wind", "hard snow" and "terrible night" (134). She saw some rays of hope somewhere there in Wuthering Heights and felt as if she is in prison at Thrushcross Grange.

Catherine's wish for a whip was symbolically her wish for power. Another sign of her powerlessness can be seen in a scene when she staring her reflection in a mirror hanging against the opposite wall, asked Nelly, "Is that Catherine Linton! He imagines me in a pet\_\_ in play perhaps" (121).

In the above mentioned lines Catherine was not sure of her identity. Perhaps, she recognized herself as a pet in a cage and expressed her wish to escape from domestic confinement. Later in her rage and madness she tore the pillow with her teeth. Tearing the pillow and letting the feathers go free seem to be very meaningful. Here, Catherine symbolically presents that women are reduced to object of social utility as the birds which are killed for feathers. The feathers are imprisoned in the pillow whereas women in the houses as Catherine, in Linton's house.

Catherine has no existence without Heathcliff. She cries and says, "My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries . . . . If all else perished and he

remained, I should continue to be . . . . He is more myself than I am" (82). Therefore, Catherine-Heathcliff relationship is not just a passionate love affair but a true and natural relationship between a man and a woman, without the hierarchy between superiority and inferiority. Catherine is Heathcliff and Heathcliff is Catherine. When she says "Nelly, I am Heathcliff" (82). Here, Catherine identifies herself with Heathcliff. And Heathcliff affirms that Catherine is his soul and his existence: "Oh, God! It is unutterable. I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul" (167).

The separation between Heathcliff and Catherine, is in other words, the separation between the 'self' and the 'other'. From the childhood Catherine identifies herself with Heathcliff and when the separation takes place she becomes miserable. Catherine is inseparable from Heathcliff and vice versa.

The whole effort of Catherine is to obliterate the boundaries between herself and Heathcliff. It meets Beauvoir's theory that human being should not be seen divided as 'male' and 'female' and there is nothing like 'masculinity' and 'femininity', these terms are coined by the rulers of patriarchal reign to claim the superiority of man over woman. The novel gives the concept that the concept of gender and gender roles are not natural but cultural. Emily Bronte tries to disclose this fact through the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff. Their relationship dismantles the concept of gender and shows that the 'self' is inseparable from the 'other'.

She is in a true sense, uncompromising, rebellious and a freedom fighter. In a patriarchal society, all women are always oppressed and they often failed to materialize the choices which they made going beyond the existing tradition and culture.

But, Catherine refused to be treated as a second sex. She desires the independence from marginality, from patriarchal domination. This kind of deeper, instinctive passion of

a woman was regarded as against modesty in the Victorian society and was so unacceptable but Catherine has rejected the ideology of women created by male and has tried to place women in the different state that seeks freedom from the 'otherness' that expresses Beauvoir's feminism to a great extent.

## Chapter 4

### Conclusion - Catherine's Death as Her Victory

The novel *Wuthering Heights* has been analyzed and interpreted from woman's perspectives where woman has freed her from patriarchal label of a second sex by rejecting the existing norms and values. While interpreting the protagonist Catherine, many critics associate her with Emily Bronte. It brings the fact that Catherine is no one but representation of Emily Bronte herself.

Bronte's life was the ordinary life of the nineteenth century female. She attended a girls' boarding school set up to educate the daughters of the local clergy and learnt some domestic skills at home and during her early twenties she tried governessing in a boarding school. Although she was pleasant enough to live with, her greatest pleasures apparently lay in solitude. She was a woman whose deepest thoughts were always concealed from other. She spent a great deal of time alone on moors, walking, thinking, perhaps composing some of her poetry in the free and open air. To some extent, Bronte's unusual aspects of life are reflected in Catherine herself.

The hierarchy made between man and woman by the patriarchal society has marginalized woman from the social position. Thus, some conscious women like Bronte raised the questions against such discrimination and gave rise to, what is commonly known as 'Feminism'.

Feminism rejects the view that women only should serve males and look after the household and children. Its motto is to focus its work on the welfare of women who are suppressed in a male-dominated society. It is the voice for the equal status for women. It does not believe the view that women are physically weak and cannot compete with men rather it emphasizes that women should grab opportunities and fight against the males to

secure their needs and demands because rights and chances are not given, they should be snatched away. Thus, it is fighting for equal status.

The original background of this novel is the Victorian period where women were dominated and oppressed by the patriarchal society. Bronte has written this novel to emancipate women from that discriminated society. The protagonist Catherine is fighting for her identity, existence and to fulfill her personal desire throughout the novel.

We have the image of Victorian women with the role of love, care, of devotion. But in *Wuthering Heights*, Bronte has created a woman character that turns out quite different from the women of the Victorian period. Catherine, in the story is brought up as an independent girl and later turns out to be a liberal woman. She decides and handles the major steps of her life on her own.

Victorian women love power and wealth and Catherine was not an exceptional. Although she has concrete love for Heathcliff she doesn't marry him because she finds him to be socially inferior to Edgar Linton. Since her childhood to adolescence Catherine always longs for nature, free society. She spends her childhood singing, dancing and moving in the moors.

But deep inside her heart, she felt that she was wrong and longs for freedom, emancipation from Edgar's house. She thought she was confined into the society of men and struggles to free herself. She was not a weak character. Here, Bronte has tried to show Catherine as a rebellious and strong character who has always a strong will to challenge the society.

Catherine carries the spirit of women's liberation from patriarchal clutches. She raises voice against patriarchy and tries to dismantle the equilibrium of patriarch order. She marries Edgar Linton only to criticize the conventional role of a woman and to



denounce patriarchy. She is a rebel, a voice of her class, beyond the ideal stereotyped female of androcentric culture. Even the death could not erase the powerful appeal that Catherine brings. She rules over the *Wuthering Heights* even after her death and affects all the characters, especially Heathcliff.

In the world of *Wuthering Heights* all the women characters suffer, even the strong and powerful woman like Catherine suffer but she suffered to be more powerful whereas the weak character like Isabella suffered to decay. Catherine's daughter, Cathy moves from her childhood to the world of adulthood governed by patriarchal authority in contrast to her mother who refuses such authority and by the end Cathy is seen completely incorporated with patriarchal law as a woman happily engaged to be married.

Another powerful aspects that the character Catherine emphasize is the dismantle of the gender consciousness which is related to Beauvoir's Feminism. The relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff claims that true existence of human being lies in the relationship between man and woman that germinates from the sense of love, equality and other's presence in oneself, and not from the hierarchy of domination and subordination. Since the birth of civilization, human being is categorized as having masculine and feminine. Simon de Beauvoir's in her landmark book *The Second Sex* says that a woman is asked to be a woman by the society. According to her, a woman is different from a man but the difference is often confused as a point of inferiority and superiority. Women are always categorized as 'other' by the male-dominated and are separated from the 'self' and further say that the 'Otherness' of woman is only a category of human thought made for their convenience. In this context Beauvoir says:

The category of the other is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the

expression of a duality — that of the Self and the Other. This duality was not originally attached to the division of the sexes; it was not dependent upon any empirical facts. . . . Otherness is a fundamental category of human thought. (102)

Despite of the Hindley's attempt to separate Catherine and Heathcliff, Catherine remains outside, challenged her brother, the patriarchal order within her own home and enjoyed freedom in the moors. Not only she ran away at the moors with gypsy like Heathcliff but also entered the Thrushcross Grange with the same attachment with Heathcliff, which brings a turning point in her remaining life. For, Catherine is never docile, never submissive, and never ladylike. For Catherine, Heathcliff is none but her own self. Likewise, she's not 'other' to Heathcliff, they're both inseparable. In one of her talks with Nelly, she confesses it:

. . . . 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 \_ so, don't talk of our separation again\_\_ it is impracticable; and\_\_ . . . . (82)

Catherine proves herself to be equal with men in male dominated society. Here, Catherine seeks equality and dismantles the concept of gender and shows that no 'self' is absolute without the 'other'.

One may raise question, why does Catherine die after giving birth to Cathy, her daughter. Emily Bronte herself seems to be accepting the underlying male definition of the sexual structure. Child birth becomes a weakness on the part of Catherine. There are several other hypothesis, the negligence of her husband, carelessness and mental torture might be the cause of her death. It was not only childbirth alone but, her quest to get

united with Heathcliff is the major cause of her death. Obviously, being a woman she could not fulfill her desire and struggles through out her life to assert her existence, existence with Heathcliff in her ideal world. Her death is not her end but it's her victory, her entrance into the glorious world.

Catherine was not bound to anything and for her, life was to be lived freely as she did later on. Bronte has shown Catherine as a very modern woman with modern thoughts as in Victorian period women were not allowed to show this type of rights in her life.

Later, when she could not fight with the society, she desires to die and glorify her will. Her death symbolized her victory, her emancipation and her power. She did not give up and fought till her final breath. When the society could not understand her desire, she died to fulfill her wish. Basically I want to prove that Catherine was a very bold character and had her quest for freedom. Her decisions were made and fulfilled. She revolted against the Victorian society and showed herself to be free from all the bondage of life.

It can be said that Catherine was her own murderer but was happy for her decision. She had the satisfaction of her life. Catherine did what he felt. She fulfilled her desire through her death and rejects the patriarchal order that labels woman as a second sex. Catherine proves it by doing and facing the problems. Thus, death of Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* gives promise to the better condition for existence.

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