

BA (Eng-H) II; Paper-II; Unit-I; Topic-
"Wuthering Heights: Lec-series: 55;
by: Ganges Kumar.

Character sketch of Catherine Earnshaw.

Catherine Earnshaw is a distinctive character in Wuthering Heights of Emily Bronte. Catherine is more naughty in her childhood than children usually are. Her father does not approve her ways, and is therefore, displeased with her. His father wants her to be a gentle and obedient child, but since she does not behave according to his wish, he does not like her. She is wilful and capricious from her very childhood, and cannot brook opposition. After her father's death, she becomes a neglected child. Her brother Hindley, a selfish and self-absorbed, has no sense of responsibility towards his younger sister. In his stupid notion of improving her morally, Joseph, the servant behaves cruelly towards her. But Hindley does not prevent the servant from doing so.

Heathcliff, an important character of the novel, is Catherine's constant companion, in that state. In his company, she roams over the moors for hours together. One night when a

hard, cold wind is blowing she goes across the moor with Heathcliff to Thrushcross Grange. There is some affinity of nature between Catherine and Heathcliff. Both are primitive in certain respects and both are ~~uncontrollable~~ ~~uncontrollable~~ creatures of stormy, uncontrollable passions. Love and hatred exist in both with intensity which is not commonly to be found. Seized with jealousy and hatred, Heathcliff ceases to be a civilized man and behaves like a wild beast. Under a fit of temper, Catherine too, is hardly better than a madwoman. As is the case with a primitive person, she has little control over passions. Owing to this affinity of nature, Catherine regards herself as inseparably united to Heathcliff.

Catherine's marriage with Edgar Linton is more a marriage of convenience than of love. She does not marry Heathcliff in spite of the fact that she loves him deeply, because he lacks culture and education and is penniless. He is virtually one of her brother's servants, and she cannot marry a domestic servant. So it is for social status & comforts of life that she marries Linton. She is conscious of his drawbacks. Linton does not have the manly spirit of Heathcliff and

is a bit too fearful. Catherine does not appreciate Edgar's passivity and excessive love of comfort. Still she marries him because she wants a well-settled life. But she still remembers Heathcliff and has not ceased to love him. Hence, when she returns her love for him, which lay dormant in her heart during his absence, once again grows deep and strong. She is full of joy when Heathcliff returns to the Heights and comes to see her, she encourages him to repeat his visits, and finds great delight in his company. When Linton attempts to stop his visits, she gives up food and drink and behaves like "a mad woman shuts herself up, in her room". Now Heathcliff has returned to her garage, she cannot brook separation from him. The result is that she falls seriously ill and ultimately dies. She dies after giving birth to Catherine in child-birth.

Catherine is a woman of extremely strong emotions. The intensity of her love for Heathcliff is unique, and equally unique is Heathcliff's love for her. Besides, she has a violent temper, she is self-willed and wants always to have her own way. If her wish is checked, she passes into a fit of uncontrollable anger. In anger, she loses self-control and becomes almost wholly an

impulsive creature. It is this primitive element
in her nature that bears affinity with the
primitive nature of Heathcliff. Her doubtful
doubtful nature is reflected in her
seemingly love-conciliating actions.

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