

Wuthering Heights

CLASSMATE

Date _____

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— Emily Bronte

Dr. Mithelesh Kumar Manjhi
Dept of English
J. N. College, Madhubani

Degree-(III) English Honu.
Paper - IV
Unit - 03
Topic - "character sketch of
Catherine"

lecture - 01.

Catherine

Of the major characters in Wuthering Heights, Catherine is the greatest, the fullest, and the most original in creation. She interestingly bears the same name as Shakespeare's Katharina in The Taming of the Shrew. But Emily's shrew is a tragic one, and even her daughter Cathy, who in some ways completes her mother's emotional intention is not tamed by ring master tactics but by Hareton's independent nature throwing out into co-operation and affection.

Catherine is, in fact, a curious case of self-love carried to the extreme, the degree of her obsession giving an almost paranoid quality to what she observes. When she lies with a self-induced frenzy; weak from want of food, she seems at times to be near to arriving at the truth about herself.

"I begin to fancy you don't like me", she tells Nelly Dean during her times illness. How strange I thought, though

everybody hated and despised each other, they could not avoid loving me and they have all turned to enemies in a few hours they have. I'm positive - the people here.

The falsehood her or illusion lies, of course, in imagining that nobody could avoid loving her. They had not suddenly changed to enemies merely because for a moment she was able to see that they were not infatuated she had chosen to believe that everybody was under her spell, and when she sees that spell denied, she concluded that her faithful 'devotees' here now become her adversaries. Her whole perspective is thus, egoistic and unreal.

Catherine represents the spirit of chaos in human affairs. Only in nature does she find that freedom which her will demands only on the moors does she discover that liberty from personal responsibility which her unbridled egoism insists upon. And as she accepts no principle of independence during her life, so in death she wishes to avoid it. She wants to be buried in the open air, with a head stone, and not in the Hinton's chapel where her husband's family have been laid

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