

# Psychoanalysis of the protagonists in the Novels of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*

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**ABSTRACT:** *This research is about the psychology of the focusing characters in Wuthering Heights and Great Expectations. The writers of these two novels have presented some confusing characters that turn these two novels into great climax. Their abnormal activities make the whole scenario of the novels unpredictable. They may not know that their actions and plans are destroying lives of people around them. This is something paranoiac- a mental condition that does all things in their subconscious mind. These characters were hurt somehow that much that they could not bear the situation and as a result they started hurting others to see the same pain they have been through and thus they find pleasure. This is somewhat sadistic characteristic-getting pleasure by hurting someone. Knowing their lives from their perspectives and the every possible reason behind their traumatic characteristics and showing these all positively is the only purpose of my research.*

**Keywords:** *Mental disturbance, psychological abnormality, betrayal, trauma, conscious & subconscious mind, instinct.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Emily Brontë remains a mysterious figure and a challenge to biographers because information about her is sparse. Eva Hope summarizes Emily's character as "a peculiar mixture of timidity and Spartan-like courage," and goes on to say "she was painfully shy, but physically she was brave to a surprising degree. She loved few persons but those few with a passion of self-sacrificing tenderness and devotion. And this explains a lot about Brontë. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* exposes the characteristics of herself so far. She loved a few persons in her life and the character in *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff, is just the same. He has been loved very passionately over Catherine and the consequences happen one after another circling this matter "passionate love". Catherine's cheat with her love and marrying to another man, Edgar, actually turns the entire novel into climax. So, he does every single psychological abnormality only to get back Catherine because

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somewhere in his mind he believes that Catherine is still in love with him and he is going to have her again. He does every possible abnormality to seek attention from Catherine or maybe he fails his control over his life because of the unexpected shock. Charles Dickens' novels combine brutality with fairytale fantasy, sharp, realistic, concrete detail with romance, farce and melodrama, the ordinary with the strange. Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* had a moral purpose as most of his writings. Pip's journey to become a gentleman and the sudden downfall and everything in between are morals so far. Pip forgets from where he belongs to only for chasing after a girl, Estella. Miss Havisham's psychopathic existence makes the novel more interesting. She is so much in her dream world that she forgets she is living. She is stuck in her past and doing all things relating to that. She has made Estella a heartless one and drives her as her own wishes to fulfill her own wishes through Estella.

Estella even never protested against Miss Havisham maybe because she is growing up all along with her from the very young age and she is the only one Estella relies on. But Estella has heart too and she has inner feelings too for Pip. Though she does not express that much but at the end she realizes that she has done great injustice with Pip. Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* exposes the bitter sides of being mentally disturbed. The characters of this novel are presented in such manner that when a person is so much disturbed mentally, he or she can do anything for their own self, for their peace. But it is a matter of big question whether they can have the real peace in their mind or not. In fact, they cannot have real peace actually rather they are all broken inside. They are so much desperate that they have no idea what is right and what is wrong. Emily Bronte has shown or has tried to expose Heathcliff as a negative character here in *Wuthering Heights*. It is true that Heathcliff is very much revengeful after Catherine's betrayal. He does not even let his own son spare from his cruelty.

Edwin P. Whipple has called Heathcliff as a "deformed monster", he goes on saying that "whom the Mephistopheles of Goethe would have nothing to say to, whom the Satan of Milton would consider as an object of simple disgust, and to whom Dante would hesitate in awarding the honor of a place among those whom he has consigned to the burning pitch." Heathcliff's situation was even worse because from his birth he is being abandoned. His psychological disturbance situation one by one haunts him. Everything he ever tried to hold still left him unexpectedly. He has never been in touch with his family. When he got one, he has been tortured by Hindley, Catherine's brother. Catherine then becomes his only dependency but she left him too when he needed her the most. I think, Catherine is way more psychopathic than Heathcliff is. She does not know what she is doing. People do things

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what their hearts tell but Catherine even after knowing that she loves Heathcliff, gets married to Edgar whom she knows for only a little time! In the book Catherine is described as "haughty". As a child she is wild, strong-willed and possibly a might spoiled. She is fickle personality. Her narcissistic quality is more apparent than worrying about her childhood friend or lover Heathcliff. This sort of self-absorption is not observable in Heathcliff though. Edgar is similarly blind to himself. Neither man is able to express themselves to Catherine in an adequate manner. Edgar's best and only expression of love is in his proposal of marriage. Emily Bronte has tried to establish the negative side of Heathcliff mostly, but here in this research, I am going to establish the positive and regular impacts that can fall upon someone when somebody is being betrayed. And I am going to establish the every possible reason behind their psychological disturbance and all about it.

Heathcliff is not the only one who plays the role of psychopath but Catherine also has the same mental illness situation I guess. Maybe she is not that showy like Heathcliff but she is the main fact that stays behind every hazard of this novel. Her only one decision turned up the whole novel into tragedy. But I think she had no choice then because she saw a nurtured family what could possibly be in her dreams only and could not resist herself from saying yes to that family's only son for her marriage. She preferred class and pride more than her love. In fact what else a little young girl of sixteen or seventeen could possibly think then. One of the chief disagreements amongst critics with respect to Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* has been Catherine's decision to marry Edgar instead of Heathcliff. When she chooses Edgar she also represses her own self, her wild side and her childhood. When she says that "he's more myself than I am" about Heathcliff she identifies with him; that the two of them are the same.

Gold argues that "To Catherine, psychological security means having not only a partner, but having one that is wealthy and socially acceptable" Perhaps, the choice of marrying Edgar is because she knows it to be accepted by society and because she will gain status. One could see it as Catherine's wish for power, a wish she has always had, because of the fact that she wants everybody to obey her. Another novel *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens also introduces us with some serious psychological issues according to some sort of characters such as Miss Havisham and to some extent Estella. Miss Havisham is a total psychopathic woman who is very much powerful that she even trains another girl to make just like her (heartless) wish. She is so much into her past life that her every single step is regarding to her past. She cannot believe still or do not want to believe actually that she is being betrayed by her fiancé. Bookworm Sean has reviewed Miss Havisham as-"she is the caricature of the spinster, she is stuck in the past (quarter to nine to

be precise) and is unable to move on, she has turned bitter and yellow, she has imposed herself to perpetual agony. Despite her harshness and venom there is a flicker of light within her soul that Pip unleashes. Her story transcends that of Pip's." There is nothing to be commented about her that she is the 'caricature of the spinster'. She is being betrayed by whom she loves and on her way of getting married and that is too much pathetic. Her mental condition is that much frustrating that her agony turns into revenge. She is doing everything in her subconscious mind. In this novel, Pip is the protagonist here but Pip's every single work or step is done by the influence of Miss Havisham.

It is true. Pip had interests into Estella but he were never that much courageous to show his love for Estella unless Miss Havisham prompts his mind to. Pip's journey of becoming a gentleman is very much influential by Miss Havisham. Miss Havisham has not done anything for Pip's welfare though but for her own. Jeffrey Keeten has commented Miss Havisham that "she is a tragic figure tinged with true insanity". To some extent this is true. She is a tragic figure and her agony turned her into insanity. She is jilted; she is all broken inside and barely can move along that her miserable life has made her nothing but kind of insane. Michael Kneeland has reviewed Miss Havisham that, "I have, for instance, started referring to those instances where parents try to achieve success through their children 'the Havisham effect'." What Havisham did was she grew Estella's mentality like her-psychologically ill. All she wanted to be done by Estella was to tempt other men and then by pretending to be fell in love with them she tear their hearts apart. Havisham wanted to take revenge to the whole male community. So she used a little girl to do her part.

As she is failure and being betrayed, she wants to be the winner now and wants to see and feel the winning feeling through Estella. This is so much familiar with the parent-child thing. Parents want the things done by their child what they themselves never could have done. Parents want success through their children. Miss Havisham is to some extent like that. She wants to be successful by Estella and she grew Estella like her mentality. But it is true that Pip has become a gentleman now only because of Estella as well as Miss Havisham. Miss Havisham after all these actually does not find any peace. She is in the darkness leaving the life behind. She cannot get over anything and even cannot help wearing that wedding dress and waiting like forever. That is the worst punishment for her to live like this but she has chosen it and has taken these all as the end of her life. Estella though is a made characteristic of Miss Havisham but Estella is not what she shows herself. She is a puppet made by Havisham and acts what she is instructed. She cannot protest because from her birth she lives here in this 'Satis house'. Her parenthood is fulfilled by Miss Havisham and thus Estella is somewhat

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bound to Havisham. In both the novels, some psychological factors are playing influential role as it has been analyzed by me. They are somewhat paranoiac-living their lives into dream world, fantasy and most importantly into subconscious mind. Id, ego and superego and many more psychological terms are in so much possibility to go after those characters and to define those characteristics. In this research I am going to establish some psychological factors regarding the focusing characters of these two novels. Sigmund Freud (1923) developed a more structural model of the mind comprising the entities id, ego and superego. He has named it 'the psyche apparatus'. These are not physical areas within the brain but rather hypothetical conceptualizations of important mental functions.

## **2. FREUDIAN INTERPRETATIONS IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS**

I have found in the symbiosis of Catherine, Heathcliff, and Edgar the relationship of Freud's id, ego, and superego. At a psychological level, they merge into one personality with Heathcliff's image of the three of them buried (the unconscious) in what is essentially one coffin. Heathcliff, the id, expresses the most primitive drives, seeks pleasure, and avoids pain; the id is not affected by time and remains in the unconscious (appropriately, Heathcliff's origins are unknown, he is dark, he runs wild and is primitive as a child, and his three year absence remains a mystery). Catherine, the ego, relates to other people and society, tests the impulses of the id against reality, and controls the energetic id until there is a reasonable chance of its urges being fulfilled. Edgar, the superego, represents the rules of proper behavior and morality inculcated by teachers, family, and society; he is civilized and cultured. As conscience, he compels Catherine to choose between Heathcliff and himself. In Freud's analysis, the ego must be male to deal successfully with the world; to survive; a female ego would have to live through males. Catherine rejects Heathcliff because a realistic assessment of her future with him makes clear the material and social advantages of marrying Edgar and the degradation of yielding to her unconscious self. Her stay at Thrush cross Grange occurs at a crucial stage in her development; she is moving through puberty toward womanhood. She expects Edgar to accept Heathcliff in their household and to raise him from his degraded state; this would result in the integration of the disparate parts of her personality—id, ego, and superego—into one unified personality. Confronted by the hopelessness of psychological integration or wholeness and agonized by her fragmentation, she dies.

## **3. REPRESSION AND FREUDIAN THEORY IN GREAT EXPECTATIONS**

Upon detailed examination of Charles Dickens' classic novel *Great Expectations*, subtle themes of repression emerge to offer greater depth of

meaning to the plot and its characters. These ideas of repressed feelings, thoughts, and actions are derivative of psychoanalysis, a method of psychological therapy originated by Freud. The many occurrences of repression become clearer and more intriguing with a basic knowledge of psychoanalysis and its uses in literary criticism. Psychoanalysis is based on the fundamental theory that the mind is divided into two separate parts – the conscious and the unconscious. The unconscious self, which Freud named the “id,” is not outwardly expressed; it is irrational and unknown, and hidden from view within the recesses of our minds. Freud suggests that the id is the power which motivates men and women, and controls their fears, desires and instincts. The conscious self, or “ego,” is predominantly rational, logical, and orderly. Whatever the conscious mind tells us not to do or think is repressed, forced into the unconscious mind.

Psychoanalysis utilizes the interpretations of dreams to explore the repressed or unconscious impulses, anxieties, and internal conflicts of the human mind literature. Repressed themes are seen most broadly in the presence of what can be called the “dominant” and “repressed” plots in the novel. Pip’s unconscious mind is busy at work during this time. He knows that there is something lurking beneath the surface of his thoughts, but he is unable to access this part of his mind until it is brought to the forefront by the appearance of Magwitch in his home. It is as if his unconscious mind has been allowed into his consciousness, so that there is no longer a repression of the important, yet decidedly disappointing, identity of the individual who had given Pip his expectations.

In addition, the characters of Orlick and Pip can be seen as “doubles.” The two boys follow similar paths, from the forge, to Miss Havisham’s, and eventually to the marshes where they have their climactic meeting. However, Orlick is the “dark side” of Pip, acting out in ways that Pip would never do. Orlick expresses the feelings and behaviors that Pip keeps repressed, acting as a physical metaphor for Pip’s own unconscious self. Even though both he and Pip are mistreated by Mrs. Joe, only Orlick is able to fight back, both verbally and physically, while Pip keeps his feelings hidden inside. Later Pip returns to Satis House only to find that Orlick now works there as a doorman. The second, occurrence of one plot dominating another is found within Satis House, in which the “dream” or “fairy tale” vision of the house and nobility cause the “nightmare” of the place to be repressed. From his first visit, Pip knows that he wants to be a part of that world, although Miss Havisham and the house possess some eerie, dark qualities. Nevertheless, Pip focuses only on the dream of Satis House, ignoring the nightmare hidden beneath the surface. In effect, he represses the reality of the house so that he may continue to have high aspirations for a future as part of that society.

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Sometimes, though, elements of the nightmare show themselves on the surface, as if in a dream during which the subconscious suddenly dominates. On two occasions, Pip sees ghost-like images of Miss Havisham hanging from the house when he wanders its grounds, but when he takes another look the apparition is gone. The appearance of such a vision may signify the future hardship that Pip will encounter in his quest to become a gentleman of London society; however, it is hardship that he will ignore at the present, and repress in the future, so that his goals remain unfettered by their possible consequences. It becomes clear that Pip will never be able to fully escape his past, no matter how much he tries to repress it, when he returns to Satis House for his periodical visits throughout the story.

Every time he goes back to see Miss Havisham and Estella, he is brought down once again to the same standing that he inhabited as a child – lowly and common, with calloused hands and heavy boots, in comparison to the lovely and graceful Estella. No matter how much he has gained in the city, his status is not elevated with respect to the rest of Satis House, so he remains perpetually subservient to Miss Havisham and Estella. Estella herself is an excellent example of repression in Dickens' work. She was adopted and raised by Ms. Havisham to exact revenge on males, in order to get back at them for the heartbreak that she herself had endured years ago. To accomplish this, Estella has been groomed to feel no love, to be “proud” and “hard” instead. Miss Havisham has succeeded so thoroughly that Estella cannot even express feelings for her adopted mother, keeping them suppressed deep within herself. She asserts this fact to Pip many times, and at last explains to him: “It seems...that there are sentiments, fancies – I don't know how to call them – which I am not able to comprehend. When you say you love me, I know what you mean, as a form of words; but nothing more. You address nothing in my breast, you touch nothing there.” Estella has kept her feelings repressed for so long that she does not even recognize their existence. At the end of the novel, however, hardship has taught her to feel again, so that she is eventually able to understand what Pip once felt.

Pip is also repressing his more “common,” peasant past when he travels to London to become a gentleman. He wants to start a new life, and wants no one to know about his upbringing. Psychoanalytic criticism promotes the theory that in order to live a fulfilling life and succeed in the future; one must confront his past and understand it. Therefore, as each repressed theme is uncovered and becomes a conscious element of the plot, Pip moves closer to achieving a clean slate for his future. The cultural directives which influence Miss Havisham's behavior make her a plausible character, the psychoanalytic concept which underlies our understanding of her make the novel complex in suggestive ways. In *Great Expectations* endless instances of repression

counterbalance the dramatized neuroses occurring in such clever narrative oppositions as Pip's descriptions of himself as at once "ferocious and maudlin" or "flaccid with admiration". While repression often signals Pip's general feelings of guilt, repression and passion have worked together in the formation of Miss Havisham's personality. Another common explanation of the consequences of repression concerns the loss of the necessary other which brings a show of despair. In each of her powerful roles, she represents the Victorian male figure rather than the female: she owns property and she possesses a female. In addition to her own female identity, she gains power over Pip, a male. This is the response of a repressed individual. It is also said that people takes revenge when they are powerful and everything is in their hands. This is what happens with Miss Havisham and as well as Heathcliff.

Heathcliff also plans for his revenges when he came back to Wuthering Heights after three years being a gentle man and a wealthy man as well. It is also told that, it is needed to be rich and powerful to be insane! Narcissistic rage which includes converting a passive experience into an active one, identification with aggressor, and seeking revenge for past humiliations becomes the active agent in Miss Havisham. In acting out the ambivalent passion for Compeyson which she has repressed through Estella and thus against Pip, Miss Havisham converts her pitifully passive role in the fate of her betrothal into an active one, while her identification with the aggressor allows her endless repetitions of painful wound. Dressing herself as bride and acting as Compeyson the aggressor, she incorporates into one person the potential for continual re-enactment, but her repetition never leads to a satisfying master.

It is no wonder that Pip describes her as corpse-like, no character could be more desirous of death than Miss Havisham, for when her repetitions leads to mastery in the sense that she wounds Pip through Estella's marriage, she regrets her act, lights up in flames and moves steps closer to her death. There is no reason to suspect that Miss Havisham understands her own misery as a consequence of more than having been jilted. The tragedy of her life is not that Compeyson failed to show up the alter; it is not even that he and her step brother had plotted against her—it is that she fails to understand the system that works against her. Rather than seeking whatever small, but personally significant change, she seeks to revenge herself against society on its own term. She acts on the belief that is through dehumanizing and often brutal deceit and abuse that desire can be satisfied to such an extent that it offers no hope for a different future. In his pessimistic approach, Dickens reveals the vicious circularity of individual and social misery. The illusion that Miss Havisham holds onto sustain the dream through the role she intended to assume was the one that could offer satisfaction. Dickens unmasks this illusion in various ways throughout the novel, but the world he depicts offers



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no alternative. The repressions as modus operandi in the institutions and also characters of *Great Expectations* makes the reader aware how to respond to the familiar signs of the repressions without which the full workings of the novel does not have any appeal. The role of Miss Havisham as a character dramatizes how one's public and private lives might be socially and psychologically divided.

Miss Havisham is emblematic of psychological drives, desires and moral principles, the forces which account for her divided-self. Not only does her existence bear a constant reminder of expectations, but it is also a testimony to the necessity for and the effects of repression under a system which denies individual rights to self-development and undercuts principles of moral conduct with greedy self-interest. *Wuthering Heights* deals with extreme emotions and passion, which psychoanalytic theory explains on the basis of a divided self and conflicting drives. The reason for the intense companionship between Catherine and Heathcliff is found in their common fate of lacking sufficient mothering. They therefore seek to merge with each other, which are seen in their united rebellion and strong reactions to being separated. Catherine's betrayal of Heathcliff is seen in terms of her self-preservation drive, hosted by the ego, dominating her behavior.

She chooses comfort and sophistication as well as social status over true love, which she tries to repress. Heathcliff also acts according to this drive when he transforms into a capitalist, betraying his former down-to-earth values to become a worthy suitor for Catherine. Catherine and Heathcliff both become dominated by the death-drive when they cannot be together. Catherine soon turns this destructive force inwards and wills herself to get ill. She dies psychotic. Heathcliff acts like a crueller version of his oppressors in his new role as he takes revenge on the Linton's and the Earnshaw's over many years. His childhood experiences also result in abandonment neurosis which entails negative aggression. In psychoanalytic terms, he now seeks a substitute intimacy through being violent before his frustration results in the same fate as Catherine suffered. His psychotic symptoms include visions of Catherine and the intense wish to be re-joined with her in death. Psychoanalysis is strictly necessary in explaining that when Catherine and Heathcliff betray themselves in order to further their social and economic conditions, they destroy the very core of the self which can experience the joy of these accomplishment and of love. There are three kinds of love that exist in human being- admire love and passion. Admire is beyond love and there people love spiritually and it is beyond worldly things. Love is what usual love relationship is. And the last thing is passion. Passion is kind of thing that

requires extremeness. When they are betrayed or fail to have their love, they become ferocious and do not let the opposite person stay in peace. As they cannot have their love so they cannot even let others to take his or her place in that respective one's life either. Heathcliff's love is such kind of passionate love. Even though Catherine does not express that much, but sooner or later she too realizes the wrongdoings she had done with her love Heathcliff. It is psychologically proved that, too much mental pressure and mental disturbance can bring someone's health problem as well as physical problem. That is what happens with Catherine gradually. Her agony for losing her love as well as guilty feeling for betraying her love tear her heart apart and makes her physically ill. After Catherine's death, Heathcliff breaks down the side of her coffin, so that, upon his own death, they can be buried next to each other and literally decompose into a single, shared body. They strive to transcend the boundaries of human subjectivity and physicality to become something that is other and only them.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Charles Dickens' creation *Great Expectation* and Emily Brontë's creation *Wuthering Heights* both represent some characters those are rarely seen in society or maybe these types of characters live silently among human lives. People living consciously can sometimes be in unconscious level and act things they are unaware of. Human mind is operated through different psychological factors. Our subconscious and unconscious mind controls our mind in these positions. Some consider it as "let it go" and some seek for revenges. Heathcliff and Miss Havisham's way of avenges were something different. Heathcliff never did any wrong to his love Catherine but he tortured her surroundings. Maybe to let Catherine know or show her how he is hurt deep inside. His psychology still thinks that somewhere in Catherine's mind he exists. Catherine herself is not happy either that her mental pressure as well as illness drives her into death.

As a female she may have never expressed her ego, emotion or agony as Heathcliff has done. She is under someone (Edgar) and she is in the barrier that too much mental pressure results her death. Havisham started taking revenges not only because she is betrayed but her ego hurts her and she does not want to be the repressed one not anymore. Apparently she is the winner but on the inside she never found peace rather she died with her own inner fire (she was burnt literally by the candles she used to lighten up all time) and it is a metaphor here. Freud's paranoia theory as well as dream theory explains a lot about these characters Heathcliff, Catherine, Edgar, Estella, Pip and Miss Havisham. They are driven by their own apparently but they are not driven by their selves at all.

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