

The Shadow of Freudian Core Issues on *Wuthering Heights*: A Reenactment of Emily Brontë's Early Mother Loss

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Abstract

The study attempts to indicate how the manifest content of a text is in essence the projection of the obsessional thoughts of the neurotic author. The research approach adopted in this study is what is referred to as psychobiography or the Freudian psychoanalytic criticism. Freud's ideas have been employed due to the increasing shift to him in the recent decades, particularly in the discipline of psychobiography. The findings of this research underline that nearly all the characters of the novel are stricken by their mother's death, and they not only undergo the processes of dejection, melancholia, and hysteria, but also suffer from certain core issues—fear of intimacy, fear of abandonment, fear of betrayal, low self-esteem, insecure or unstable sense of self. The main conclusion to be drawn from this article is that Emily Brontë was a neurotic person whose unconscious obsession of psychoanalytic love of mother is projected in *Wuthering Heights*.

Keywords: Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, Neurosis, Core Issues, Death, Oedipus Complex, Dejection, Hysteria

1. Introduction

So far, critical reception of *Wuthering Heights* in psychoanalytic field has increasingly risen and has given critics many diverse elements for interpretation. Researchers like Margaret Homans in "Repression and Sublimation of Nature in *Wuthering Heights*" (1978), Kelly Hughes in "The Freedom of the Soulful Self: An Examination of the Tension Between the Self and Society Within *Wuthering Heights*" (2006), Laura Inman in "The Awful Event in *Wuthering Heights*" (2008) and Linda Gold in "Catherine Earnshaw: Mother and Daughter", have tended to concentrate on certain concepts like repression, death, rebellion, religion, etc. These critics have found many to talk about in these concepts, and were quick to explore the various meanings of the novel. Nonetheless, their theses, excellent as they are, fail to delve into the role and impact of Emily Brontë's personal life in/on the creation of *Wuthering Heights*.

This study offers an interpretation of *Wuthering Heights* based upon the Freudian concept of mother fixation which underlies Emily Brontë's obsessions with emotional detachments and indicates the significance of her preoccupation with the common core issues. My chief conviction is that *Wuthering Heights* is basically a reflection of Emily Brontë's traumatic experience of mother's early death. Unless one appreciates the significance of the Freudian concept of mother fixation, one cannot appreciate the nature of emotional detachments prevalent in the novel, nor can one understand the reason behind the obsessional and phobic feelings of nothingness in Emily Brontë as well as her characters. I declare that Emily Brontë's own dejected, melancholic and hysteric life as well as those of her characters could be traced to an early childhood experience which might have been amplified and aggravated by later or contemporary painful experiences.

Before turning to the discussion section, a couple of important issues need to be elucidated: first, the significance of and the need for conducting research on an outdated novel (written in 1847) in the current century, and second, explanation of the reasons why Freud rather than Lacan's theories have been incorporated into this study. Despite its initial unfavourable public reception, Mrs Humphry Ward was right in claiming that Emily Brontë writes "for all time" (Winniffrith, "Rise and Fall" 18). In recent years, Emily Brontë's reputation has dramatically risen and the public has shown an enthusiastic interest in reading *Wuthering Heights*. A powerful instance of preference for Emily Brontë over other novelists can be found in an important survey accomplished in 2007 by *The Guardian* to find *Wuthering Heights* as the greatest love story of all time. According to Martin Wainwright, *Wuthering Heights* hit the heights and took the first place, seeing off beating authors like Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Barbara Cartland and her own sister Charlotte Brontë (par. 1).

As for justification and rationalization of Freud over other theorists, I selected the Freudian approach due to some "remarkable shifts in opinion towards" him that has occurred in the 1980s and 1990s (Horracks 20). The latest scholarly studies on Freud have suggested that "the anti-Freudian moment may already have begun to pass" and have made Freud "the indispensable starting point for any serious student of psychoanalysis or psychotherapy, surely, and for (at the least) many serious students of psychology, psychiatry, and the other behavioral sciences" (4).

2. Discussion

2.1 Theoretical Background

It is crucial to realize that throughout many of his articles—"The Interpretation of Dreams" (1900); "Analysis of a Phobia in a Five Year Old Boy" (1909); "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917); "New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis" (1933), to name a few—Freud introduced six common core issues. In *Critical Theory Today* (2006), Lois Tyson has taken the trouble to collect these core issues in one place. Tyson discusses that Freud identified these major core issues as: fear of intimacy, fear of abandonment, fear of betrayal, low self-esteem, insecure or unstable sense of self, and Oedipal fixation or Oedipus complex (16). A very brief review of each of these issues will help us to better understand the psychological abnormalities that Emily Brontë and her characters were suffering from. Fear of intimacy is the persistent and overwhelming feeling that emotional attachment and closeness will eventually hurt us and the only way to remain safe is in keeping an emotional distance from others at all times. Fear of abandonment points to the unbending belief that our loved ones are going to desert us either physically or emotionally. Fear of betrayal is the distressing feeling that our loved ones could be no more trusted and the possibility of their cheating on us is escalating. By low self-esteem, the individual feels he is less worthy than other people and he does not deserve attention and reward; rather he deserves to be punished. Insecure or unstable sense of self is the individual's inability to maintain a feeling of personal identity. The person becomes easily influenced by others and he

continually changes the way he looks or behaves as he gets involved with different people. And finally, the Oedipus fixation refers to a dysfunctional bond with a parent of the opposite sex (16-7).

Freud's core issues are connected to one another and a given core issue can result from or can cause the emergence of another core issue. Each of the core issues might act as a defense and would leave the individual removed and isolated. The core issues stay with us throughout our life and define our being in fundamental ways. Unless the core issues are "effectively addressed, they determine our behavior in destructive ways", leading to melancholia and hysteria (17).

Tyson maintains that one of the most important facts to remember is that fear of death is intimately linked to fear of abandonment. Death is the ultimate abandonment. When we die, we die alone. Fear of death, which includes death of the self and of the others, in turn leads to fear of intimacy. Thus, the individual's fear of death and of losing his life results in his fear of being intimately attached to life, i.e. fear of life. Freud declares that since life eventually results in death, the individual aims to reduce the imminent pain by believing that "I can't risk living my life. I must somehow remove myself from it by doing as little as possible and by feeling as little as possible. I will try to be emotionally dead to avoid being hurt by death" (23).

As a result, the individual undergoes an intense psychological pain, which is triggered by loss. This pain leads to melancholia, or depression, whose features are "a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity and a lowering of the self-regarding feeling to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-reviling" (Freud, "Mourning" 3042).

The melancholic person develops an enormous sense of personal worthlessness, i.e. feeling of being poor and empty. This condition of low self-esteem and self-hatred leads to self-attack. Though a disguised form of aggression directed towards the loved ones, in turn, this self loathing could also lead to hysteria, i.e. "a temporary paralysis of limbs or sense organ dysfunction" (Heller 146). We may conclude that the painful experience of mother's early loss leaves the individual to develop certain core issues which in turn could end up with melancholia and hysteria.

In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920), Freud argues that one way to obtain some control over those issues and to exorcise the pain is by repeatedly echoing what was traumatic and unpleasurable. In other words, the fascination with the projection of the fears and problems onto people and events outside oneself—particularly in phantasy worlds—operates as a defense, since the attention is diverted from oneself to the work of art itself (3720-3).

In addition, Freud emphasizes that beneath the manifest content of a phantasy world exists the latent content which reveals the creative writer's obsessional thoughts, "yet, beneath this composite surface, which functions like a puzzle, lies the puzzle's solution. The dream-thoughts function like a 'latent content' behind the manifest content of the novel" (Leitch 916).

With regard to Freudian psychoanalysis, an examination of Emily Brontë's Gondal poems and *Wuthering Heights* confirms that much of her writing reflects her obsession with themes of abandonment and isolation which appear in various forms like death, betrayal and imprisonment. Indeed, the people most dear to her in her own life either abandoned her or died.

2.2 Emily Brontë and the Psychological Wounds

Accounts of Emily Brontë's personal life reveal that a fixation on a dead mother was to bar her forever from earthly love, and to make her shun health and vitality to her loved ones. She grew up as a dejected, melancholic and hysteric individual who endeavored to ease the pain of such a wound by reenacting, echoing and projecting her obsessions onto her phantasy world. In her "Editor's Preface to the New Edition of *Wuthering Heights*" (1850), Charlotte describes her sister as a true eccentric who is "not naturally gregarious". According to Charlotte, Emily Brontë had a tendency to seclusion, "though her tendency for the people round was benevolent, intercourse with them she never sought [...] with them, she rarely exchanged a word" (368). This fear of intimacy stemmed from some psychologically painful experiences that Emily Brontë had undergone: death of her mother, death of her siblings, death of her brother Bramwell and seclusion from society in Haworth.

Her mother's early loss left Emily Brontë and her siblings to be raised by their father. The loss was traumatic in that it made her believe that she was unworthy of love—low self-esteem in Freudian terms—and that she would ultimately be abandoned by anyone she loved—fear of abandonment. This fear led her to develop fear of intimacy, i.e. to avoid emotional intimacy in the belief that if she does not get too intimate to a person, she will not get hurt the time when that one abandons and betrays her—fear of betrayal. Thus, Emily Brontë became a very private person to the point that, as her sister Charlotte declares, "an interpreter ought always to have stood

between her [Emily] and the world" (Charlotte, "Biographical" 366).

Emily Brontë was later abandoned by her sisters, too, when they were all sent away to school. She remained lonely and was imprisoned in a gloomy parsonage on the desolate moors, feeling constricted and deprived. The isolation gave her a very low self-esteem that, according to Charlotte, "Emily would fail to defend her most manifest rights" (366).

Gradually, Emily Brontë developed fear of intimacy, too. She was unconsciously convinced that if she avoids emotional intimacy and if she does not get too close to a loved one, she "won't be hurt when that loved one inevitably abandon[s] her" (Tyson 18). As a result, she grew an introverted nature and became the most domesticated of the sisters.

Emily Brontë's core issues were further intensified by some other painful events. After the traumatic experience of her mother's early death when Emily was only two, she was also shocked, at the age of seven, by witnessing the death of her two young siblings, Maria and Elizabeth. These painful experiences, states Barnard and Barnard, led her to develop an "increasingly odd, remote, silent, and willful personality". Reclusive and introverted, Emily "stood alone" and did not want any contact with neighbors (46).

Emily Brontë spent the greater part of her life at Haworth, a place "where she lived a private existence, with no close friends and little correspondence" (Bloom, *Classic* 123). The mentioned psychologically painful experiences triggered in Emily Brontë a feeling of melancholia and a cessation of interest in the outside world. She obviously demonstrated symptoms of hysteria. Charlotte reports that "Emily sank rapidly," hasting to leave the world, and "while full of ruth for the others, on herself she had no pity". The awful point was "the trembling hand, the unnerved limbs, the faded eyes." She was "long-suffering [and] self-denying" (Charlotte, "Biographical"

365). Perhaps the best and the last example of Emily's fear of life is demonstrated by "her refusal to see a doctor" and to get medical help (Chitham, *Chronology* 189). In a letter to Ellen Nussey, Charlotte writes, Emily

is very ill ... a more hollow, wasted pallid aspect I have not beheld. The deep tight cough continues; the breathing after the least exertion is a rapid pant – and these symptoms are accompanied by pain in the chest and side.... In this state she resolutely refuses to see a doctor.
(qtd. in Margaret Smith 125)

Not only Freudian core issues are applicable to Emily Brontë's personal life, but also they could be employed in the analysis of her only novel *Wuthering Heights*. Indeed, *Wuthering Heights* seems to be a documentation of Emily Brontë's own claustrophobic feelings. As a creative writer, she unconsciously sublimates her core issues to a work of art in which she keeps the repressed repressed by means of projection (Pourya, 49-50). Her phantasy worlds, either Gondal poems or *Wuthering Heights*, are fraught with numerous and repetitive instances of abandonment, dejection, depression and hysteria—e.g. the prevalence of death, imprisonment, entrapment, exile, and isolation, some of which will be explained below.

2.3 *Wuthering Heights and the Recurring Pattern of Abandonment*

2.3.1 A General Overview

Apparently, Emily Brontë finds alleviation of her fears and painful memories in projection of them onto the characters in her novel. Directly and indirectly, she envisions a world in which everybody is ultimately abandoned by the loved one. Indeed, the novel involves the reenactment of the unpleasurable disappearances of her own mother. This fundamental pattern appears again and again in various ways and forms the matrix of *Wuthering Heights*. Either the characters are afraid of isolation and betrayal, or they abandon and betray deliberately to protect themselves from the imminent abandonment.

The setting of the *Wuthering Heights* forecasts the forlorn and misanthropic personas of the novel. Emily Brontë places the characters in an isolated and separated locality. Lockwood declares "in all England, I do not believe that I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society" (3; ch. i). This "solitary neighborhood" and remote setting of the novel is in keeping with the deliberate misanthropic behavior of its residents. The doors are barred and the antisocial inhabitants with their "regardless manner", which is "exceedingly embarrassing and disagreeable", would not allow anyone in (8; ch. ii).

The aversion to emotional attachments is established at the very outset of the novel. As a reserved man in search of a quiet place, Lockwood finds the inhabitants "more exaggeratedly reserved than" himself (3; ch. ii). Nearly all the characters suffer from the painful experience of isolation. One by one, they undergo the processes of dejection, melancholia and hysteria. Being abandoned, they shun intimacy. Yet, the painful experience is reawakened in almost all of the characters. Each of them displays a deliberate misanthropic behavior, which according to J.H. Miller in his article entitled "Themes of Isolation and Exile" (1995), derives ultimately from

isolation (103).

Besides, Miller states that Emily Brontë's characters suffer from "the loss of some past joy"—i.e. they endure the anguish of irremediable loss and they grovel in an abyss of nothingness. Miller declares that the characters "live separated from themselves" and from others. Such people build their present life upon a memory of an earlier experience, yearning "with impotent violence to regain their lost happiness" and are frightened by the possibility of the recurrence of such a loss in the present (101-5). Drawing upon Miller's article, I further extend to other characters in the novel, asserting that Lockwood, Catherine, Isabella, Frances, Hindley, Linton and Heathcliff speak for Emily Brontë and reveal her unconscious obsessions when they display their anxieties and core issues.

2.3.2 Lockwood

Lockwood's fear of intimacy and abandonment is best exposed by his being difficult to love or be loved. Lockwood, who has a seduce-and-abandon pattern of behavior towards women, attempts to maintain an emotional distance from loved ones by breaking off romances the time when they start to evolve past the infatuation stage. He has a "reputation of deliberate heartlessness" and he elaborates on how he led a young lady into believing that he was interested in her, only to "shrunk icily into [himself], like a snail" (5; ch. i). Such a fear, as I claim, leads Lockwood to believe he is less worthy than other people, "I [Lockwood] proved myself perfectly unworthy" (5; ch. i). Low self-esteem brings Lockwood up as an introverted, shy person and as he grows up he develops "an aversion to showy displays of feeling—to manifestations of

mutual kindness" (5; ch. i).

2.3.3 Catherine

Catherine Earnshaw is first introduced into the novel in Lockwood's dream as an abandoned sobbing child who mourns about being forlorn and forsaken for her whole life, "It's twenty years [...] twenty years, I've been a waif for twenty years" (21; ch.iii). She begs for an admission into the house, or better to say, into the home. "I'm come home, [...] let me in" (20; ch. iii). Catherine's beseeching to be allowed into the house might symbolize and could be interpreted, in Freudian perspective, as Emily Brontë's unconscious need for emotional nurturing. Having lost her mother, Catherine's sense of having been abandoned is intensified when her brother leaves her for college. This event reminds one of Emily Brontë's own feeling of having been forlorn after her siblings had been sent to college like Hindley.

The concept of abandonment is amplified when Catherine's father holds his love from her, stating, "Nay, Cathy [...] I cannot love thee; thou'rt worse than thy brother [...] I doubt thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee! (34; ch. vi). As a hard blow to her self-esteem, this occasion played a substantial role in defining Catherine's being and initiated the development of an unstable sense of self. Having been emotionally harmed, Catherine learns to protect herself by distancing from others. However, the insecure definition of self made her vulnerable to the influence of other people. Accordingly, we notice how she repeatedly alters the way she looks and behaves.

A major transformation occurs in Catherine after her five-week stay in Thrushcross Grange. She dramatically changes her attitudes and behaviors. Trying to raise her self-respect, she undergoes a "plan of reform". Her appearance is so altered that Hindley claims, "why, Cathy, [...] I should scarcely have known you—you look like a lady now" (41; ch. vii). In fact, Catherine finds a new identity in Thrushcross Grange, while the previous one is still in her possession, too. Catherine alternates between two selves; in one, she seems relatively normal and ladylike; in the other, she hallucinates and demonstrates "fits of frenzy". Her mood changes rapidly; at one moment she had high spirits and at other times severe anxiety. "A minute previously she was violent; now [...] she seemed to find childish diversion in pulling the feathers

from the rents she had just made" (95; ch. xii). Unwittingly, Catherine embraces "a double character" without exactly aiming to deceive anyone (52; ch. viii). Such a "double character", in Freudian psychoanalysis, is a sign of her fear of intimacy which stems from her sense of loss. All the same, Catherine secures herself by not establishing profound intimacy with others.

Moreover, Catherine is vexed by the thought of being abandoned by Heathcliff, whom she identifies as her complementary self. His physical or emotional desertion gives Catherine a sense of bereavement, punishment, nothingness and low self-esteem. In a speech with Nelly, Catherine rails against the idea of her separation from Heathcliff, stating that

my great thought in living is himself. 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 [...] Nelly [...]he's always, always in my mind [...]so, don't talk of our separation again—it is impracticable; and—. (64; ch. ix)

Yet, the practicability of Heathcliff's departure produces an experience of anxiety in Catherine as an individual. In Freudian psychoanalysis, the person becomes anxious because he/she was wounded by a feeling of being abandoned when he/she was a child, and now, he/she is anxious because he/she does not want to admit to himself/herself that, in some important way, he/she was abandoned by his/her parents. The individual feels anxious because the thing he/she

has repressed—the painful and frightening memory of early mother loss—is resurfacing, and he/she wants to keep it repressed. It is this anxiety and the consequent destructive behaviors that Emily

Brontë attempts to ascribe onto her characters. Catherine's fear of Heathcliff's desertion and the possible reappearance of her frightening childhood experience leads her to leave Heathcliff and Wuthering Heights for Edgar and Thrushcross Grange in the hope of protecting herself from the potential psychological destruction. As stated by Freud,

by not permitting ourselves to get too close to significant others, we “protect” ourselves from the painful past experiences that intimate relationships inevitably dredge up. Having more than one romantic or sexual partner at a time, breaking off romances [are just two] of the many ways we can maintain an emotional distance from loved ones without admitting to ourselves what we are doing. (Tyson 16)

In contrast to Thrushcross Grange, which is situated in a valley like situation, Wuthering Heights is positioned on top of a hill, standing upright and surrounded by "stunted firs" and "a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun" (4; ch. i). The upright and masculine imagery of Wuthering Heights is juxtaposed to the concave and feminine imagery of Thrushcross Grange. Therefore, Catherine's progression from Wuthering Heights to Thrushcross Grange symbolizes in concrete form Emily Brontë's yearning to obtain mother figure and to "regain her lost fullness of being" (Miller, "Isolation" 105).

Catherine falls into a major depression when Edgar declares she has to choose either him or Heathcliff, "It is impossible for you to be my friend and his at the same time, and I absolutely require to know which you choose" (93; ch. xi). The imminent abandonment reawakens in Catherine the earlier traumatic experiences she had gone through, leading to manifestations of bizarre bodily symptoms which, by employing Freudian paradigms, could be recognized as hysteria. According to Freud, hysterical symptoms are triggered by "reminiscences", recurrence of the painful memory of loss and abandonment and will lead to expressions of self-loathing and self-destructive behaviors. Catherine's melancholia is disclosed by her "senseless, wicked rages". In chapter eleven of the novel, Nelly narrates,

there she [Catherine] lay dashing her head against the arm of the sofa, and grinding her teeth, so that you might fancy she would crash them to splinters! [...] She had no breath for speaking . [...] In a few seconds she stretched herself out stiff, and turned up her eyes, while her cheeks, at once blanched and livid, assumed the aspect of death. (93; ch. xi)

This temporary paralysis is followed by Catherine's refusal to eat and her self-imprisonment for three days. She starts hallucinating about her childhood in Wuthering Heights. She becomes 'delirious' and is scared of her own image in the mirror. Such an unexplainable behavior, according to Freud, has no physical basis; rather it is a symptom of hysterical neurosis (Heller 146-7).

At last, the reawakening of the traumatic experience of loss and disappearance that Catherine had undergone in her childhood intensifies her anxieties to the point that she yields to the unconscious death wish. Catherine has no more self-esteem. As she grows weaker and depressed, she ceases interest in the outside world. The Universe has finally turned to a "mighty stranger". It is no more a place of individual happiness and 'union'; rather, it is a world of frustration and tension. Such a tension, Freud asserts in his "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920), is to be lowered by Thanatos or death instinct, which reduces the tension created by instinctual demands and the impact of external reality on the individual. "Death is [...] a matter of expediency, a manifestation of adaptation to the external conditions of life" (3747). Freud maintains that though some like Hartman may define death "as the termination of individual development" as well as the ultimate abandonment, the greatest comfort for hysterical neurotics is the religious assurance (3748). This religious assurance maintains that they will not die alone and their unfulfilled wishes will be awarded in after-life, "in a new kind of existence which lies on the path of development into something higher", or as Catherine says "beyond and above" all (Freud, "Future" 4429-31). Heathcliff's three-year-departure enhances her death wish and makes

Catherine oddly alienated from the world around her. Frustrated by the traumatic experiences of abandonment, Catherine musingly utters,

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. Nelly, you think you are better and more fortunate than I; in full health and strength. You are sorry for me—very soon that will be altered. I shall be sorry for *you*. I shall be incomparably beyond and above you all. I *wonder* he won't be near me! (125; ch. xv)

2.3.4 Isabella

Isabella's emotional and consequently physical decline corresponds that of Catherine's. Like Catherine, having lost her parents, she loses her only brother's attention, too. Assuming that she will find her lost self in Heathcliff, she elopes with him, "I had sought shelter at W.H., almost gladly, because I was secured by that arrangement from living alone with him" (109; ch. xiii). Yet, she confronts Heathcliff's inattentiveness and negligence, "you'll not be surprised, Ellen, at my feeling particularly cheerless, seated in worse than solitude on that inhospitable hearth, and remembering that four miles distant lay my delightful home" (108; ch. xiii). Her feelings of loss and hence melancholia stem from Heathcliff's rejection and abandonment, "I gave him my heart, and he took and pinched it to death; and flung it back to me" (134; ch. xvii). Talking to Nelly, Isabella exhibits somewhat hysterical behavior desiring to flee from the two houses whose residents are accustomed to misanthropic behavior.

2.3.5 Frances

Emily Brontë continues to afflict her characters with the pattern of abandonment, melancholia and hysteria. Frances is yet another character who is introduced into the novel with apparently no family background, "she had neither money nor name to recommend her" (35; ch. vi). Frances is probably suffering from a trauma, since it is revealed that the reenactment of a dead body's burial reawakens in her, painful memories that provoke hysterical symptoms. "[While] the preparing for the burial, and the presence of the mourners [...] went on [...] she ran into her chamber [...] and there she sat shivering and clasping her hands and asking repeatedly 'Are they gone?'" (36; ch. vi). Obviously, Frances has a fear of death, which is further exposed by her dread of black color which is associated with dead bodies; "then she began describing with hysterical emotion the effect it produced to see black; and started, and trembled, and at last fell a weeping" (36; ch. vi). As a phobic neurotic, Frances is unreasonably afraid of death and whatever is linked with it, either actually or symbolically. "When I asked what was the matter? [Frances] answered, she didn't know; but she felt so afraid of dying"(36; ch. vi). Psychologically wounded, she develops ill-health and physical frailties and finally her hysterical condition succumbs to death. Frances's death, in turn, reawakens in Hindley the traumatic experience of parents' loss and a little brother's death.

2.3.6 Hindley

In his teens, Hindley's Oedipal complex is stirred up by his father's adoption of Heathcliff as a family member. Soon, he sublimates his jealousy of his father to Heathcliff, calling him a "beggarly interloper", who "wheedle[s] his father out of all he has" (32; ch. iv). Unable to admit the "unconscious hatred that is felt for the loved one who has abandoned" him, Hindley redirects his hatred at Heathcliff. Having lost his parents' attention and love to Heathcliff, Hindley sinks into animality, "he falls into drink, opium, addiction, idleness, depression, and finally death" and starts torturing Heathcliff by 'thrashings', 'knocking', 'threatening' and wishing him dead

(Lamonica 25).

The desire to patricide, i.e. the unwitting longing of murdering the father and demolition of whoever and whatever is associated with him, further brings to light Hindley's Oedipal fixation which is originated by a feeling of abandonment and a loss, i.e. loss of the mother figure. On Oedipus complex, Freud states

[when] the boy deals with his father by identifying himself with him. For a time these two relationships proceed side by side, until the boy's sexual wishes in regard to his mother become more intense and his father is perceived as an obstacle to them; from this the Oedipus complex originates. His identification with his father then takes on a hostile colouring and changes into a wish to get rid of his father in order to take his place with his mother. ("Ego" 3965)

Hindley's unconscious wish is revealed when he desires the day when he would be able to get rid of his obstacles. Heathcliff threatens "I'll tell how you [Hindley] boasted that you would turn me out of doors as soon as he [Mr.Earnshaw] died" (31; ch. iv). He is psychologically scarred by learning "to regard his father as an oppressor rather than a friend, and Heathcliff as a usurper of his privileges, and he [Hindley] grew bitter with brooding over these injuries" (31; ch. iv). Having been deserted by his mother, Hindley is exiled to another city and he is detached from other family members, too.

Afraid of the reenactment of the painful losses he had experienced, Hindley defensively denies his wife's ill-health. By insisting that the problem does not exist and the unpleasant incident—Frances's abandonment—will never happen, he unconsciously attempts to keep the repressed repressed in order to avoid knowing what he feels he cannot handle knowing; "damn the doctor [...] Frances is quite right—she'll be perfectly well by this time next week" (51; ch. viii). However, when doctor Kenneth warns him that at this stage of malady "his medicines were useless", he retorts, "I know you need not—she's well—she does not want any more attendance

from you! She never was in a consumption. It was a fever; and it is gone—her pulse is as slow as mine now, and her cheek as cool" (51; ch. viii).

Hindley's wife's death precipitates and aggravates his psychological abnormalities. When she dies, quite unsurprisingly, Hindley is profoundly injured and he falls into a state of depression and melancholia; "for himself, he grew desperate; his sorrow was of that kind that will not lament. He neither wept nor prayed—he cursed and defied—execrated God and man, and gave himself up to reckless dissipation" (51; ch. viii). Hindley's addiction to heavy drinking could be explained as a form of escape from the actual world to the symbolic one. The escape enabled him to detach himself from the outside world in order to turn away from any activity that is not connected with the thoughts of the lost loved ones. He is no more able to adopt 'any new object

of love', which would almost certainly abandon him again (Tyson 21-4). Hopeless, he sinks into animality and a delusional expectation of punishment. He "has shown himself sadly the worse and the weaker man. When his ship struck, the captain abandoned his post" (143; ch. xvii).

2.3.7 Young Linton

In a similar way, Emily Brontë displays such pathological attitudes in young Linton as well. Linton Heathcliff is brought into the novel as an abandoned, "ailing and peevish creature", who is always on the verge of choking. His feelings of self-reproach and low self-esteem, which is originated by lack of father, is reinforced by his mother's early death, "its mother died before the time arrived" (142; ch. xvii). His normal process of mourning for a dead mother takes the pathological condition of depression and a cessation of interest in the others. His self-absorption is so complete that he is only conscious of himself. Day by day, he develops hysterical symptoms, especially in a form of hypochondria. His introverted nature and fake illness isolate

him from others. He "does not want Cathy to kiss him because he is afraid of losing his breath" (Miller, "Isolation" 97). Nelly angrily calls him "the worst tempered bit of a sickly sip" that "the kinder he was treated, the more tedious and selfish he'd be" (186; ch. xxiv).

Linton's interpersonal relations provide clues that low self-esteem is his major core issue. This issue triggers in him fear of abandonment and accordingly fear of intimacy. Linton believes he is less worthy than other people. Such a belief leads him to keep others at an emotional distance in the hope that they will not find out that he is unworthy of them. He is consciously aware of his low self-esteem which forms the basis of his feeling dejected, his "hysteria", and his "cessation of interest in the outside world". He says,

you [Cathy] are so much happier than I am, you ought to be better. Papa talks enough of my defects, and shows enough scorn of me, to make it natural I should doubt myself. I doubt whether I am not altogether as worthless as he calls me, frequently; and then I feel so cross and bitter, I hate everybody! I *am* worthless, and bad in temper, and bad in spirit, almost always—and if you choose, you *may* say goodbye. You'll get rid of an annoyance. (194; ch. xxiv)

Linton's hysterical symptoms parallel those of Catherine Earnshaw's. Like her, his mood changes rapidly. At one moment, he displays "selfishness and spite"; in the other, he shows "suffering", which is wholly demonstrated in his hysterical fear of Heathcliff, "with streaming face and an expression of agony, Linton had thrown his nerveless frame along the ground; he seemed convulsed with exquisite terror" (203; ch. xxvii).

2.3.8 Heathcliff

The recurrent pattern of abandonment and the consequent destructive behavior is also applied to shape Heathcliff's personality. Similar to nearly all of the other characters, Heathcliff, I declare, has the core issue of fears of abandonment and betrayal, too. His aversion to emotional attachments is a reaction to "constant tormenting" traumas he had endured. As a seven-year-old boy, Heathcliff has no family. When he is brought into the Earnshaw home, "Mrs Earnshaw's first reaction is to 'fling it out of doors'" (Thompson, "Infanticide" 95-6). He finds himself in a fierce struggle for survival against the actively misanthropic people who, as I stress, have already been suffering from common core issues. Indeed, Heathcliff's own misanthropic tendencies stem partly from the painful experiences of loss and partly from hostile treatment he had received from the people around. Having lost his only benefactor and guardian—Mr. Earnshaw—he is frightened by the thought of being also abandoned by his only friend Catherine. As a marginal part of the Earnshaw family, who is apprehended by all and who is put on the landing in the hope that "it [Heathcliff] might be gone on the morrow", Heathcliff spontaneously believes he is less worthy than others and deserves to be punished. He "proves to be so self-possessed that he too is beyond the intimidation by pain or suffering" (98). Catherine's progression to Thrushcross Grange and her negligence of Heathcliff, leaves him "lonely, like the devil, and envious like him" (219; ch. xxix). Her so-called "infernal" betrayal strengthens Heathcliff's anguish of irremediable loss which in turn makes him feel insecure and develop an unstable sense of self.

The recurrent pattern of abandonment and hysteria strikes Heathcliff, too. Traumatized by Catherine's death, he "dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and, lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast getting goaded to death with knives and spears" (130; ch. xvi). Heathcliff falls into the state of melancholia and becomes "an alien and outcast from all world" (Miller, "Isolation" 105). The world around him has nothing more to offer; for instance, in chapter thirty-three of the novel, Heathcliff exclaims,

I have a single wish, and my whole being and faculties are yearning to attain it. They have yearned towards it so long, and so unwaveringly, that I'm convinced it *will* be reached—and *soon*—because it has devoured my existence. I am swallowed in the anticipation of its fulfillment. (248, ch. xxxiii)

Like Catherine Earnshaw, the world for Heathcliff has turned into a shattered prison that he is yearning to be released from. He becomes laconic in company and has increasingly turned into a "fonder of continued solitude" (248; ch. xxxiii).

3. Conclusion

A Freudian analysis of *Wuthering Heights* reveals that Emily Brontë peoples her imaginative world with figures marked with mother fixation. The Freudian conviction that a work of art is a fictive wish fulfillment of the creative writer's unconscious, elucidates how Emily Brontë projects her own fixation onto a dead mother and the consequent core issues onto her characters. The people in *Wuthering Heights*, one by one, suffer the "anguish of irremediable loss" (Miller, "Isolation" 102). Having lost the mother figure, they develop fears of intimacy, betrayal and abandonment. Similarly, they feel insecure, unstable and worthless. These people become depressed and melancholic and shun every possibility that might lead to reenactment of such a loss. However, Emily Brontë seems to be obsessed with the concept of dejection and she inflicts the characters of the novel with a feeling of being deserted. Consequently, the reappearance of abandonment reawakens in the characters the pathological condition of melancholia which leads them to display hysterical fits. Lockwood, Catherine, Isabella, Frances, Hindley, Linton, and Heathcliff all go through the processes of dejection, melancholia, reenactment, and hysteria. This process, indeed, is a replica of Emily Brontë's personal life. She underwent the traumatic experience of mother's early death, siblings' loss, father and brother's death, and social inequality. Finally, it is easy to conclude that the repetition of her obsessional thoughts in her novel functions as an assuagement of her psychological wounds.

Lastly, the principle recommendation to be made is an in-depth study of Emily Brontë's other phantasy worlds. Admittedly, there are other areas of study that could benefit prospective researchers. For example, further research could focus on areas that were not touched on in this study, such as Emily Brontë's poems. It should also be acknowledged that the examination of her poems in the context of Freudian psychoanalysis, which deals with literary works as the outward manifestation of the artist's suppressed wishes, would have added further richness to the study.

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