

## **Depiction of Id, Ego and Superego in ‘Wuthering Heights’ by Emile Bronte**

**Dr Kiran Mamgain<sup>1</sup>, Ms Lajwanti M.<sup>2</sup>, Ms Aakshi Chhetri<sup>3</sup>**

*Asso. Prof, Christ University, Astt. Prof, Christ University, Independent Researcher*

### **Abstract**

Attempts to analyse the mind has always been a curious but intricate study. The present paper based on ‘Wuthering Heights’ by Emile Bronte, discusses the human behaviour with respect to the society. Likewise, it can be taken as a portrayal of society where circumstances and perspectives influence the thinking and mental processes of individuals. The paper applies certain Freudian theories and examines Brontë’s work in *Wuthering Heights*, analyzing various characters and their implications for society.

The paper discusses the major characters of the present novel through the concept of Id, Ego and Superego as classified by Sigmund Freud, and it also looks at the various defense mechanisms that a person adopts to overshadow his/ her flaws. The key-characters of the novel Heathcliff, Catherine and Edgar delineate the Id, Ego and Superego respectively. The relationships of Heathcliff and Catherine, Edgar and Catherine, Heathcliff and Isabella build a strong plot for the novel but make the lives painful and complex for these characters. The paper also looks into the interrelativeness of the characters and its impact on their destinies ultimately. Bronte’s work also supports Freud’s psychological theories, despite the novel being published in 1847, nearly a century before Freud’s theories emerged in the 1960s.

**Keywords:** Id, Ego, Superego Love, Selection, Personal Unconscious, Projection, Repression

### **Introduction**

Literature and psychological theories, regardless of whether created in various time-frames or one preceding the other, may resemble in view of both a writer and analyst’s capacity to understand the human mind. Since the emergence of the psychoanalytic theory, many works of literature have been analyzed in this light. Similarly, this paper will analyse ‘Wuthering Heights’ using the Psychoanalytic Theory which is based on the belief that each individual’s unconscious, as well as childhood experiences play a vital role in building up his/her personality.

Sigmund Freud was an Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis who lived from 1856 to 1939. He is best known for the importance of repressed memories, sexual drives, and dreams on psychological behavior. Freud’s work still influences how we as a culture view world events, literature, and everyday life. His theory of the three parts of the psyche, the id, ego, and super ego, reflects the three characters of Catherine, Heathcliff, and Edgar from the novel *Wuthering Heights* by Emile Bronte. With Freud’s concept of comparing human psyche with an iceberg, the top being the conscious mind, the part where the iceberg touches the surface of water, the sub-conscious and the part deep in the water as unconscious mind, the behaviour of characters can be observed.

Emily Bronte was not a psychologist and had written the novel a very long time before Freud's hypotheses were established, yet her capacity to portray the human psyche as an essayist led to her novel reflecting the ideas of quite possibly the most celebrated psychoanalysts in history. Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, developed a three-part personality theory comprising the id, ego, and superego. Although this theory (1960) was formulated long after the publication of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), it remains relevant to the novel. Three central characters—Heathcliff, Edgar, and Catherine—embody the id, ego, and superego, respectively, in Freud's framework. The id governs instinct and desire, remaining unaffected by reality, reason, or morality—traits reflected in Heathcliff, whose actions are driven by impulse and lack moral restraint. The superego represents the internalization of societal norms and adherence to an ethical code, exemplified by Edgar, who is focused on acting in a socially appropriate manner and making moral decisions. Lastly, the ego is responsible for maintaining a balance between the other components by considering reality and Catherine endeavors to do this in the novel, yet comes up short and eventually bites the dust.

### **Psychoanalysis of the Characters of '*Wuthering Heights*'**

Many of the characters of Emily Brontë's 1847 novel, *Wuthering Heights*, reflect the personality theory of Sigmund Freud. The novel has two families, one living in a house called Wuthering Heights and the other in the Thrushcross Grange, beginning from the time that a little fellow named Heathcliff is welcomed at Wuthering Heights. The epic depicts the passionate story of Heathcliff, Catherine, Edgar, and others as they develop from small kids, through adulthood, and other incidents till their death. Heathcliff, Edgar and Catherine are depicted not as three individual personas, but rather as three aspects of a solitary mind, what Sigmund Freud, classifies as the id, ego and superego.

Several Victorian critics, perhaps most famously Sydney Dobell (1850), saw the exciting possibilities of considering the text as a study in 'abnormal psychology'. Freudian psychoanalytic theory provides critics with a more precise vocabulary and a more robust explanation for the obsessive and conflicted psyches that we see in Heathcliff and Catherine.

The 'id' controls fundamental and generally subliminal motivations, the superego controls adherence to social qualities and ethics as a component of the conscious, and the ego adjusts the two by understanding the norms of the real world. Engaging with the society, Heathcliff follows his own carnal cravings as the id, declining to surrender to social directs. As the superego, Edgar explains the English cultural statutes, curbing the normal impulses of an individual. Catherine, the ego, continually battles between her id and superego while Heathcliff and Edgar, look for the equilibrium. The cooperation between these characters makes the plot and analysis does not exclusively builds the novel, but also adds reflection to the psyche.

### **Heathcliff: Representation of id**

Heathcliff from *Wuthering Heights* embodies the id in Sigmund Freud's personality theory. Freud portrayed the id as crude and instinctual, existing in the latent part of the psyche. The id compels an individual to seek immediate gratification of impulses, remaining unaffected by reason or morality. Heathcliff as a character is profoundly forceful, rash, and fails to represent any kind of morals. After Heathcliff flees, he returns years after the fact with a solitary objective:

to look for retribution on his stepbrother, Hindley, and to be with Catherine. He enlightens Catherine concerning his return by saying,

*"I heard of your marriage, Cathy, not long since; and, while waiting in the yard below, I meditated this plan—just to have one glimpse of your face—a stare of surprise, perhaps, and pretended pleasure; afterwards settle my score with Hindley;"* (Wuthering Heights, Ch 10)

Heathcliff leaves *Wuthering Heights* and has no genuine motivation to return in the wake of being away for a very long time. He is driven by the id, seeking only to satisfy his impulses through revenge and his desire to be with Catherine. Heathcliff does not represent his super self-image, for he does not mind that Catherine is hitched and that attempting to be with her would be socially unsatisfactory. He does not consider that these endeavors are ridiculous by not representing his inner self. In another scene, Isabella, Heathcliff's significant other, says that Heathcliff has revealed to her that she will endure so long that his genuine affection, Catherine, is sick. Isabella expresses,

*"He [Heathcliff] advised me of Catherine's disease, and blamed my sibling [Edgar] for causing it; promising that I ought to be Edgar's intermediary in torment, till he could get hold of him."* (Wuthering Heights, Ch 15)

Isabella's guiltlessness in Catherine's disease is unessential to Heathcliff; his hostility and absence of interest in reasonable reasoning drives him to mishandle anybody he chooses. Regardless of whether it is relating his hunger for retribution, saying he would play out a vivisection for delight, mishandling blameless individuals, or executing little creatures, Heathcliff's id driven character is his most distinctive trademark.

One of the contemporary critics of Bronte, H F Chorley says "In spite of much power and cleverness; in spite of its truth to life in the remote nooks and corners of England, *Wuthering Heights* is a disagreeable story."

Heathcliff exemplifies the clouded side of the mind. At his first prologue to society, he is depicted as dull as though it came from Satan. The quick relationship of Heathcliff with Satan builds him up, similar to Satan, as the absolute opposite of society, battling the directs and ethics set by the encompassing society. With unique sin, man is inalienably detestable, making his natural impulses, which make the id, inverse to those that are educated by society.

The essential qualities Freud would attribute to the Heathcliff (id) a wellspring of clairvoyant energy; the seat of senses and the quintessence of dreams; the antiquated establishment of personality: egotistical, asocial, imprudent.

Heathcliff is viewed as an "ethical toxin" by Edgar, the epitome of society. Just as the id exists within the inner world, separate from the external universe of the superego, Heathcliff exists beyond the confines of society. While showing up at Thrushcross Grange after his all-encompassing nonattendance, we see Heathcliff outside of the entryway with his fingers on the hook as though planning to open it for himself.

His behaviour even with Catherine, his most loved soul, he shows an aggressive and hostile behaviour to her when she questions him marrying Isabella. He resembles the protagonist of a contemporary novel *When I Hit You* by Meena Kandasamy. It seems that hitting the woman in life, whether it is your girlfriend, wife or live-in partner, is a routine affair. Kandasamy writes "*He beats her brutally in the initial days of marriage and it is a great surprise to notice that how can the most important relationship begin with brutality and cruelty instead of love, respect and care.*

The idea of being violent is taken as a masculine essential trait by a particular section of the society, though Heathcliff had his own reasons for it.

Since his preferences are based on pleasure principle, he needs to face social implications sometimes. For example, the arrangement of Heathcliff outside of the entryway is allegorical for his prohibition from society; in any event, when he attempts to give himself access, he is bolted out and impeded from entering the general public contained inside Thrushcross Grange.

### **Edgar: Representation of Superego**

Edgar Linton from '*Wuthering Heights*' reflects the super ego and underscores the significance of virtues, the disguise of social principles, and adherence to socially suitable traditions. In particular, Edgar stands straightforwardly in struggle with the *id* of the novel, Heathcliff. While Catherine is hitched to Edgar, she keeps a degree of closeness with Heathcliff. Edgar requests saying,

*"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." (Wuthering Heights, Ch 15)*

Edgar, reflecting the super ego, is fixated on keeping up adherence to social principles and social standards. Therefore, Edgar is exceptionally unsatisfied that Catherine has not shown full faithfulness to him, so he essentially requests Catherine picks between him and Heathcliff. In another attempt to keep everything under control and cling to social norms, Edgar totally removes his relations with his sister, Isabella, after she weds Heathcliff. He won't see her, expressing,

*"It is impossible my going to see her, notwithstanding: we are endlessly divided; and should she truly wish to oblige me, let her convince the scalawag she has hitched to leave the country...My correspondence with Heathcliff's family will be pretty much as saving as his with mine. It will not exist!" (Wuthering Heights, Ch 17)*

Edgar exemplifies social ideals as the superego. "Kind, and trustful, and good". Edgar is contrary to Heathcliff, continually following "his obligation and humankind", however never his feelings. Edgar distances himself from "his significant other's occupations", which are the most expressive piece of his life. At the point when Catherine secures herself in her chamber, Edgar doesn't engage her or beg her to come out, yet rather he "is constantly among his books, since he has no other society".

*Graham's Lady Magazine* wrote: '*How a human being could have attempted such a book as the present without committing suicide before he had finished a dozen chapters, is a mystery. It is a compound of vulgar depravity and unnatural horrors'*

All through the novel, books are related with profound quality; Edgar's inundation in his books represents his immersion in the standards of society, avoiding the energy of his better half's scene, however more critically the enthusiasm of life. Edgar arises himself in the public arena to turn away access of feeling during Catherine's incident, yet throughout the novel, including after Catherine's demise he takes Cathy's "*instruction totally on himself*". As Cathy develops, he "*trust her to nobody else*", cautiously instructing her to make her a researcher in the public arena. By not letting Cathy "*past the scope of the recreation centre without anyone else*". Edgar goes about as the superego, forcing the cultural ideology as he subdues her normal senses to investigate. Edgar attempts to make a Cathy that is unique in relation to her mom, one without enthusiasm

and want, similar as the superego attempts to guide the ego away from the inside universe of the id.

### Catherine: Representation of Ego

Catherine Earnshaw Linton is the ego representation of Freud's character theory in '*Wuthering Heights*' as she adjusts the id and super ego. The motivation behind the ego is to go about as the harmony between super ego and id by representing the requests of the id, super ego, and reality; basically, it is presence of mind and judgment. It works on the truth rule, deferring the delight of prompt requirements to make one capacity successful in the public eye. Catherine attempts to go about as the ego, however she comes up short since she can't adjust Heathcliff (id) and Edgar (super ego). At the point when Edgar requests Catherine for marriage, she actually feels a solid love for Heathcliff, yet should adjust the restricting powers. She says,

*"did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I wedded, we ought to be bums? Though, in the event that I wed Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my sibling's force." (Wuthering Heights, Ch 19)*

This assertion shows how Catherine accepts she can adjust Heathcliff and Edgar (restricting powers in a real sense and psychoanalytically) by wedding Edgar and afterward helping Heathcliff. She knows that wedding Edgar is more reasonable, in spite of the requests of the id. Furthermore, she realizes that she adores Heathcliff (the id drawing in her), yet in addition comprehends that it is all the more socially worthy to wed Edgar (the super ego pulling in her). She even says, when inquired as to why she cherishes Edgar,

*"And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband." (Wuthering Heights, Ch 9)*

She gets affectionate with Heathcliff while Edgar is at Church. Living in an orthodox society, Catherine is continually compelled to pick between her heart and her brain, her interior and her exterior. Catherine battles to soothe the contention with reason, yet can't stop the conflict between one hand on her temple and the other on her bosom. In which at any point place the spirit lives.

While trying to adjust herself, Catherine extends herself between the inside and the outside, never effectively tracking down the middle plane. While they don't generally concede that they are indivisible, Catherine recognizes herself to be Heathcliff. Similarly Heathcliff perceives after Catherine's passing that he, "*can't live without [his] life! [He] can't live without [his] soul.*" (*Wuthering Heights, Chapter 2*)

As a youngster, Catherine at first attempted to remove herself from Heathcliff, as she however the two perfect partners immediately turned out to be close.

As she arrives at development, Catherine endeavors to isolate herself from the id to turn into an element of the ego-ideal in the outer world, starting the relapse of their relationship. At the point when she gets back to Wuthering Heights subsequent to going through five weeks at the Linton's Thrushcross Grange, the centre of legitimate society, she requests Heathcliff while she is "pulling off her gloves, and showing fingers magnificently brightened with sitting idle, and remaining inside". As the id is the wellspring of all movement, her five weeks of "sitting idle" demonstrates that she has gotten some distance from Heathcliff's dynamic quality and energy, towards the direct existence of the ego-ideal.

At the point when Heathcliff shows up, as they shake hands, Catherine looks "concernedly at the dim fingers she held in her own". The differentiation between Catherine's "superbly brightened" hands and Heathcliff's "dim fingers" portrays the widening gap between them in the outer world, yet the association of their two hands shows the excess interior bond. In spite of her distance, Catherine fears that she had acquired no frivolity from contact with Heathcliff, showing her interminable connection with Heathcliff.

Catherine's return in the job of a youngster satisfies her longing to recapture her youth strength, it additionally sells out the way that just as a kid was she ever able to adore Heathcliff. After pubescence, she is always unable to change her childish enthusiasm for identity into an energy for the association of alternate extremes. Her union with Linton, a feeble, good, undemanding individual, is essentially an escape. As far as she might be concerned, Heathcliff is, and consistently will be her wild 'childhood' lover; Linton is her decent 'grown-up' sweetheart. She just considers her 'love' for Heathcliff as completely not the same as her 'adoration' for Linton. The 'love' she can offer Heathcliff is communicated in torment.

The complexities of characters would have certainly been a torment to the characters but it converted novel to be a masterpiece. A reader also goes through a lot of emotional turmoil alongwith the characters. As rightly captured by Virginia Woolf affirming the greatness of *Wuthering Heights* in 1925:

*"Wuthering Heights" is a more difficult book to understand than 'Jane Eyre', because Emily was a greater poet than Charlotte. ... She looked out upon a world cleft into gigantic disorder and felt within her the power to unite it in a book. That gigantic ambition is to be felt throughout the novel ... It is this suggestion of power underlying the apparitions of human nature and lifting them up into the presence of greatness that gives the book its huge stature among other novels."* (Woolf, 1925)

Catherine creates her own hopelessness by separating herself from Heathcliff in order to be in the eyes of the masses. In her reality without Heathcliff, Catherine bears an extremely, harsh hopelessness and it was graciousness for him which actuated the desolation as often as possible felt. Further isolating herself from her id, Heathcliff, Catherine mortally isolates herself to be a piece of acknowledged society, she quells her common cravings, ultimately prompting her demise. After Heathcliff leaves her deathbed, she "perceived no one". The take-off of Heathcliff represented the total flight of her id; this partition ends up being lethal.

Maybe it is for the sake of cultural interests that Catherine separates herself from her own 'manly' guideline, to wed and acquire access to the cultural awards to be a 'sophisticated' lady. In showing that Cathy bites the dust of this partition, this being cut from her halfway manly soul. Brontë accordingly subverts what is, maybe, the most remarkable of every single double resistance that among male and female to divide the two has 'unnatural' results.

At the point when Catherine enters Edgar's reality, she relinquishes the interior, hiding her feelings, yet as the ego, Catherine can never totally eliminate the id from her reality, leaving her in an in-between state between the outside society and the inward longing. Catherine considers herself in both and neither universes as she crosses out and changes, *Catherine Earnshaw*; to a great extent shifted to *Catherine Heathcliff*, and afterward again to *Catherine Linton* on her windowsill.

However Isabella listens to her first thought, her heart. After marrying Heathcliff, Isabella visits Thrushcross Grange to collect her belongings before leaving for London. Catherine as of now is dead, in the wake of bringing forth her little girl Catherine-or Cathy, as she gets known. Isabella knows from Nelly that Edgar has excused her for her slip-up in wedding Heathcliff, and that she can return to live in Thrushcross Grange as in the past. Isabella rejects the offer guaranteeing that Heathcliff won't quit following her to order retribution on Edgar. It is clear that Isabella neither needs to see the baby, nor needs to hear it. This kid is the thing that helps her to remember her opponent Catherine, the person who has caught Heathcliff's heart.

In this way, when Isabella attempts to avoid seeing and hearing Catherine's youngster it is an illustration of repression in that it is an attempt not to see the picture of Catherine around there. Accordingly, since Isabella avoids seeing and hearing the kid in that brief time frame which is just 60 minutes in Thrushcross Grange, it is outlandish for her to acknowledge her sibling's offer concerning her living in the house, as she did before her marriage. Accordingly, her repression is a reason enough to make her decide to live in London, what which makes her unfit to see her sibling for the remainder of her life. Hence, majorly repression has driven Heathcliff, Catherine and Isabella to pick the approaches in their lives. It has solid impact upon their choices, even unconsciously. In different words, repression has an incredible effect on their destiny.

## Conclusion

The id, ego and superego can not exist alone nor calmly together. Catherine, Heathcliff and Edgar battle in their lives, frequently depending upon each other to accomplish some type of solidness. Catherine and Heathcliff are mutually dependent, discovering steadiness in the inside circle, outside of society, however Catherine battles with Heathcliff in the outer world. To discover dauntlessness inside society, Catherine should rely on Edgar's enthusiastic restriction, while then again Edgar depends upon Catherine's passionate openness to avoid communicating his own. Edgar's absence of feeling stifles Catherine's common energy as she tries to accommodate his ideal.

“*Wuthering Heights*” likewise shows the 'variation of age quality', for example in the future all the characters and their personas are modified. In the following generation, young Catherine has now evolved to superego, Linton shifts from superego to ego and Hareton represents id. Just about 100 years after the composition of novel, Freud depicts suppression as the component by which inborn longings are hidden in the obviousness since they are incongruent with cultural conduct. Living in an oppressive nineteenth century English society, Bronte in the same way as other ladies, experienced a similar conflicting id, ego, and superego in *Wuthering Heights*, yet most had no source for articulation. Therefore despite it is ourselves we find in the mirror, the experience can strangely be considered as a model for our creative mind of being very unique in relation to ourselves. ‘*Wuthering Heights*’ represents the danger of being spooky by outsider forms of oneself. Through the characters of ‘*Wuthering Heights*’, Bronte echoes the stifled mind of herself, in nineteenth century, however the conflict remains eternal.

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