

The independence of
women in a thousand
splendid suns and
wuthering heights



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How Independence in women is shown in Wuthering Heights and A Thousand Splendid Suns The two books I am comparing are Wuthering Heights and A Thousand Splendid Suns. Wuthering Heights is a novel written by Emily Bronte, her only novel which was first published in 1847 and was not well received at first as it was so dark compared to any other books in that era, many found the story " unlikeable and ambiguous. " It is set in the Yorkshire Moors.

The basic idea of the story is a narrative of the events at Wuthering Heights in which a passionate love between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff occurs and how it destroys everything around them. These two are one person, their minds are entwined. They will do anything to be with each other. Catherine, a free spirited, arrogant, spoilt woman. She is greedy in the way that she wants the best of both worlds in the way of men. She marries Edgar Linton so that she can have the status that she has always wanted " he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighborhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband. but whilst still being married to Edgar she believes that she can still have a relationship with Heathcliff who has been reduced to the status of a servant, she tells Nelly " It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff. " She is torn between Social ambition and her wild passion for Heathcliff, which brings misery to all of them. Living in the 18th century at the social background of middle class meant she is expected to marry someone of the same status as her or higher, anything below is deemed as unacceptable.

As males inherit everything, if she married Heathcliff she would have nothing, and would be a social outcast. So really she has to marry Edgar is

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she wants to have an adequate life. She loves Heathcliff more than is imaginable “ Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He’s always, always in my mind. ” It will never change she will always long for him unlike her love for Edgar “ My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods; time will change it, I’m well aware, as winter changes the trees”. But she can’t have the both of them as that would be seen as unacceptable.

However in *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, Rasheed is allowed to have two wives and that isn’t even looked upon as not being normal and is accepted in that culture, so he has the best of both worlds, something which Catherine has always dreamed of. *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, this novel is written by Khaled Hosseini, his second book following a best seller *The Kite Runner*. This book is set in Afghanistan in which it focuses on the lives of two women and how war and devastation brings them together, through a man who treats them in a very unkind way.

The main character who I’ll be comparing with Catherine is Laila who is an intelligent girl who loses Tariq her lover and also her parents, so is forced into a marriage as she is pregnant with Tariq’s child. She has to marry just so that she’ll survive. At a first read these two characters seem to have nothing in common as they are both from very different backgrounds. One the Yorkshire moors the other Afghanistan. But when delving deeper into their lives, they do but just in different ways, one seems to make the choice that the other wishes to have.

All the women in these stories seem to be victims of a Patriarchal Society; some suffer more in it, especially those who are too frightened to stand up

for themselves. Catherine and Laila are not the examples of an everyday woman unlike Isabella and Mariam, who are more the norm, traditional. They are both controlled by men whom are very cruel mentally and physically to them and seem to accept that they are always to blame if anything goes wrong “ Like a compass needle that points north, a man’s accusing finger always finds a woman. For both these characters they both try to break out, but sadly it doesn’t go well for them. Their lives both end very sadly, with both characters wishing to die so that they’ll escape the cruel hands of their husbands. Isabella “ I’ll die first. The single pleasure I can imagine is to die, or see him dead. ” She leaves the world unhappy, with many regrets. Like being disowned by her brother and then stuck in an abusive relationship with Heathcliff in which she has a child. She is subject to violence as she is just a tool in Heathcliff’s revenge on her brother.

Isabella knows this and believes “ If Cathy died... I might begin to live. ” This is unlike Mariam who died so that she could save others; she shows so much courage, as this is her first break for freedom, Independence. “ She was leaving the world as a woman who had loved and been loved back. She was leaving it as a friend, a companion, a guardian. A mother. ” She doesn’t appear to be the bravest or most courageous women out of the either books, but what she does at the end in order to save the lives of her ‘ Family.

Catherine is also similar to is Mariam in the way they both chose to die. But Catherine dies for only one reason and that was that she believed she would get her own way by making herself ill, in a very childish, selfish fashion. It was her form of a passive protest, as she believed it was the only thing she could do with the little power she had. ‘ Well, if I cannot keep Heathcliff for

my friend—if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own. That will be a prompt way of finishing all, when I am pushed to extremity! This resulted in her own death. Whereas Mariam showed courage as she stepped up to the mark and killed her husband who would probably have killed her and her best friend, Laila. She takes the whole blame for the incident so that Laila can continue her life. These two characters both chose to die, but one is very selfish and the other does it so others can live. We see two types of women in these novels, the traditional 'Isabella and Mariam' and the women who want to be different have more of a choice in what they do, 'Catherine and Laila. Catherine and Laila, strong willed and minded which led them into trouble but often let them achieve what they wanted. Catherine did not die happy, she left many books unturned and could not rest when she actually died. But eventually she is reunited with Heathcliff and that is the books close and she can rest in peace. Laila didn't die, but her best friend did, for her in order for her to have a lovely life with her family. Bibliography * A thousand splendid suns. By Khaled Hosseini, 2007 * Wuthering Heights. By Emily Bronte, 1847 * Wikipedia