

Degree - 2 (Honours)
Paper - 4

By: Arshad Khan
Dept. of English
J.N. College Madhubani

(Lecture - 2)

"The Structure of Wuthering Heights"

Heathcliff's Marriage to Isabella

Catherine, in due course marries Edgar and goes to live at Thrushcross Grange. After six months of their happiness, Heathcliff, who has meanwhile mysteriously got some education and money, reappears. He sets himself to ruin Hindley, who gambles and drinks. Heathcliff also finds that Isabella is in love with him, and he decides to marry her in order to get her money. One day, after a violent scene between Heathcliff and Edgar, Catherine goes on hunger strike and gets brain fever. Isabella elopes with Heathcliff, who treats her very badly and finally brings her back to Wuthering Heights. One Sunday while Edgar is at church and Heathcliff comes to see Catherine. There is a passionate scene between the two. That night Catherine gives birth to a daughter and dies. On the night after the funeral, Hindley tries to kill Heathcliff but is nearly killed by him. Isabella escapes from Wuthering Heights and goes to the south of England where she gives birth to a sickly child named Linton Heathcliff. Soon after this, Hindley dies of drinking and Heathcliff is left in possession of Wuth

ing Heights, with Hareton whom he brings up as a mere brute out of a desire for revenge for the way he himself was treated as a boy by Hindley. At this stage there is a long gap in the story. Edgar's daughter, whose name is also Catherine, lives with him at Thrushcross Grange. Isabella's son, Linton, lives in the south of England with her. Catherine is kept in ignorance of both her cousins, Linton and Hareton.

A Forced Marriage, and Subsequent Developments

Edgar hears that Isabella is dying, and he goes to see her. Catherine in his absence goes to Penistone Crag, and in doing so has to pass Wuthering Heights where she sees Hareton. On Isabella's death, Edgar comes home with Linton, but Heathcliff claims the boy, and he is therefore taken to Wuthering Heights. Catherine is not allowed by her father, Edgar to go to Wuthering Heights. One day, after some time, Catherine on a walk meets Heathcliff and Hareton and goes with them to Wuthering Heights where she sees her cousin Linton. Catherine and Linton begin to correspond secretly. The correspondence is detected and stopped. Catherine's father Edgar becomes ill. Heathcliff meets Catherine and tells her that Linton is seriously ill. She goes to see him, and then visits him many times secretly. One day just before her father dies, she is kidnapped by Heathcliff and forced to marry Linton. Soon afterwards Linton dies, having made a will leaving all his personal property to his father, Heathcliff. Heathcliff takes possession of Thrushcross Grange, and lets it out to Mrs. Lockwood on rent who tells the story. Heathcliff dies soon after, and Hareton and Catherine get married.

The Author's Problem in Telling This Long Story

The telling of such a long story presented several problems to the author. The reader's interest had to be excited and maintained. The tale had to be kept together. The reader was to be made to feel the passage of time without being bothered about dates. The author had accurately to visualize the ages of the characters in the different incidents. the topography, etc. Heathcliff was to be shown as having managed to get the entire property of both the families.