

Lesson II. (P.H.H.)

EDGAR LINTON - WUTHERING HEIGHTS

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Edgar Linton is an antithesis to Hindley in Wuthering Heights in several respects. Unlike Hindley, he is sensitive. He has faith in God and religion. He understands his duty towards his sister, wife and daughter. There are two distinct groups of primitive and civilized persons in Wuthering Heights and Edgar Linton is the head of the latter group. Hindley is cruel, stupid and reckless, while Edgar is thoughtful, kind and considerate. Wuthering Heights, says Dorothy Van, reflects a tension between two kinds of reality - amorphous reality - between civilized habits and elemental cosmic forces. The novel presents a conflict between the two worlds of civilization - wild and mature.

Edgar loves his wife, Catherine, sincerely, and is a devoted husband by nature. He is not capable of loving as intensely as Heathcliff. But it does not mean that he is not true and sincere in his love. His love is calm and gentle like himself and it aims at domestic bliss. It is his misfortune that domestic bliss eludes his grasp. Perhaps it is due to the fact that he marries a woman whose nature is dissimilar to his own. He does all that he possibly can to make Catherine happy. During her illness, he nurses her with tender care, and his greatest concern and sincere desire is her recovery. When she dies, he is overpowered by grief for some time. But loss of his wife does not make him desperate like Hindley. His faith in God and religion consoles him in his bereavement. He realizes that though his wife is dead, those alive in his family have a claim on his care and affection, and that he must overcome his grief and rouse again his interest in life for their sake. The elder Catherine leaves behind a little helpless baby, who has full claim of his care and attention. So, his former love and devotion to the mother is now turned to the daughter. Hindley absorbed in his grief for the dead neglects his the living. After his wife's death, he actually neglects his son, Hareton. But Edgar after his wife's death does not lose sense of his duty towards his daughter.

A tender love exists between father and daughter. Edgar is anxious not only to provide her all physical comforts, but is equally desirous of her mental improvement. So, he takes upon him the responsibility

of educating her, and develops her love for learning. Even during his illness he does not neglect her education & it is constantly her welfare that is present in his mind. If he agrees to her marriage with Linton Heathcliff, he is ignorant of the reality about the young man. Had he not fallen ill and been confined to bed, perhaps he would have saved his daughter from falling into the trap of Heathcliff. Edgar dies peacefully like a good Christian. He lived a good life and died a good death.

But despite of his goodness, Edgar is weak willed. He lacks manly qualities, and when annoyed, finds relief in shedding tears. There is a scene in the novel in which he visits Catherine whom he has not married. Nelly disobeys Catherine with the result that she flares up and anger strikes Edgar. After that it was impossible for him to stay in the house any longer. So, telling Catherine that he would never return to her, he left the room. He should have that as a self-representing man. But he persisted in his resolution only as far as up to the court, where he lost his determination and returned to Catherine. He had neither Heathcliff's physical strength nor his strength of will. He can lead a comfortable life, and is unfit for bearing hardships. To Heathcliff, sweet are the uses of a durnity, but Edgar cannot endure adversity.