

WOMEN IN LOVE

D. H. LAWRENCE

*With an Introduction and Notes
by Norman Loftis*

GEORGE STADE
CONSULTING EDITORIAL DIRECTOR



BARNES & NOBLE CLASSICS
NEW YORK

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INSPIRED BY D. H. LAWRENCE AND WOMEN IN LOVE

COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

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FROM THE PAGES OF *WOMEN IN LOVE*

There was a long pause, whilst Ursula stitched and Gudrun went on with her sketch. The sisters were women. Ursula twenty-six, and Gudrun twenty-five. But both had the remote, virgin look of modern girls, sisters of Artemis rather than of Hebe.

(page 6)

She craved for Rupert Birkin. When he was there, she felt complete, she was sufficient, whole. For the rest of time she was established on the sand, built over a chasm, and, in spite of all her vanity and securities, any common maid-servant of positive, robust temper could fling her down this bottomless pit of insufficiency, by the slightest movement of jeering or contempt. And all the while the pensively tortured woman piled up her own defences of aesthetic knowledge, and culture, and world-visions, and disinterestedness. Yet she could never stop up the terrible gap of insufficiency.

(page 15)

“Humanity doesn’t embody the utterance of the incomprehensible any more. Humanity is a dead letter. There will be a new embodiment, in a new way. Let humanity disappear as quick as possible.”

(pages 56-57)

Really, what a mistake he had made, thinking he wanted people, thinking he wanted a woman.

(page 106)

“Love isn’t a desideratum—it is an emotion you feel or you don’t feel, according to circumstance.”

(page 128)

His soul was arrested in wonder. She was enkindled in her own living fire. Arrested in wonder and pure, perfect attraction, he moved towards her. She sat like a strange queen, almost supernatural in her glowing smiling richness.

(page 129)

Ursula was deeply and passionately in love with Birkin, and she was capable of nothing.

(page 189)

It was intolerable, this possession at the hands of woman. Always a man must be considered as the broken-off fragment of a woman, and the sex was the still aching scar of the laceration. Man must be added on to a woman, before he had any real place or wholeness.

(page 200)

She believed that love was *everything*. Man must render himself up to her. He must be quaffed to the dregs by her. Let him be *her man* utterly, and she in return would be his humble slave—whether she wanted it or not.

(page 265)

“There *is* such a thing as two people being in love for the whole of their lives—perhaps. But marriage is neither here nor there, even then. If they are in love, well and good. If not—why break eggs about it!”

(page 290)

“One should avoid this *home* instinct. It’s not an instinct, it’s a habit of cowardliness. One should never have a *home*.”

(page 354)

“Why *does* every woman think her aim in life is to have a hubby and a little grey home in the west?”

(page 377)

She lay and looked at him, as he slept. He was sheerly beautiful, he was a perfect instrument. To her mind, he was a pure, inhuman, almost superhuman instrument. His instrumentality appealed so strongly to her, she wished she were God, to use him as a tool.

(page 419)

“Aren’t I enough for you?”

(page 484)

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D. H. LAWRENCE

David Herbert Lawrence was born on September 11, 1885, in Eastwood, a coal-mining town in Nottinghamshire, England, the fourth child of a couple whose marriage Lawrence later described as “one carnal, bloody fight.” Lawrence’s psychologically intimate relationship with his mother would serve as the grounds for many of his novels. Lawrence studied to be a teacher but became interested in the arts. Jessie Chambers, a school love interest, submitted a number of Lawrence’s early poems to Ford Hermann Hueffer [Ford Madox Ford], editor of the *English Review*, and he published them. This first exposure would prove to be fruitful, and Lawrence soon published several novels, including *The White Peacock* (1911) and *The Trespasser* (1912), as well as *Love Poems and Others* (1913).

Lawrence gained fame and notoriety in 1913 with the publication of *Sons and Lovers*, a novel that was criticized by some as being too overtly sexual. *Sons and Lovers* was followed by *The Rainbow* (1915), a story of two sisters growing up in northern England that was banned upon its publication for its alleged obscenity. *Women in Love*, the sequel to *The Rainbow*, was published in 1920. His novel *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* (1928) was pronounced obscene and banned in the United Kingdom and America. Despite the censorship, Lawrence remained unapologetic for creating “art for my sake.” His personal life, including his elopement with Frieda von Richthofen Weekley, wife of one of his professors and the mother of three children, fueled the aura of scandal that followed him throughout his career.

Despite censorship and other setbacks, in his exceptionally prolific literary career Lawrence authored more than a dozen novels, three volumes of stories and three volumes of novellas, an immense collection of poetry, and numerous works of nonfiction. He also wrote eight plays, most of which have been forgotten. The Lawrences traveled widely, but as Lawrence’s health worsened they settled in the south of France, where the author died on March 2, 1930. His ashes lie in a memorial chapel at his ranch in New Mexico.

THE WORLD OF D. H. LAWRENCE

AND WOMEN IN LOVE

- 1885** David Herbert Lawrence is born on September 11 in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, a working-class mining town in central England. The sickly Lawrence is confined to bed for much of his early childhood and grows close to his mother, who tends to him.
- 1898-1901** Lawrence attends Nottingham High School on a scholarship, then takes a job as a clerk in a surgical appliance factory. His brother, William Ernest, dies in October 1901. Lawrence suffers an attack of pneumonia and leaves his job.
- 1902-1906** Lawrence takes a part-time teaching job at the British Schools in Eastwood and attends a teacher-training center in Ilkeston.
- 1906** Lawrence enrolls at University College, Nottingham, to get his teacher's certificate; he leaves after two years.
- 1909-1910** The *English Review* publishes several of Lawrence's poems. His mother, Lydia, dies in December 1910; Lawrence assists her by administering an overdose of morphine.
- 1911** Lawrence's first novel, *The White Peacock*, is published.
- 1912** Lawrence and Frieda von Richthofen, the wife of Lawrence's former Nottingham professor Ernest Weekley and cousin of famous aviator Manfred von Richthofen (also known as the "Red Baron"), run away to Germany and Italy. Lawrence's second novel, *The Trespasser*, is published.
- 1913** Rejected at first by Heinemann Publishers, the autobiographical *Sons and Lovers* is published. Criticized for his graphic depiction of sexual relations, Lawrence defends himself by stating that "whatever the blood feels, and believes, and says, is always true."
- 1914** World War I breaks out. Lawrence and Frieda marry on July 13. Unable to obtain passports for the duration of the war they are forced to live in various places in England, including Cornwall and Derbyshire, where they share a house with John Middleton Murry and the writer Katherine Mansfield.
- 1915** Upon the publication of *The Rainbow*, Lawrence is prosecuted for his graphic descriptions of sex, and the novel is suppressed. More than 1,000 copies of the book are burned.
- 1916** Lawrence is introduced to Lady Ottoline Morrell, the wife of a liberal member of Parliament, and she becomes one of his most important patrons. Through her, Lawrence forms acquaintanceships with Aldous Huxley, E. M. Forster, and Bertrand Russell. Lawrence writes *Women in Love*, the sequel to *The Rainbow*.
- 1917** Lawrence and Frieda are suspected of being spies for the Germans.

- 1919** The Lawrences journey throughout Europe, stopping in Sicily, Sardinia, and Switzerland.
-
- 1920** Lawrence publishes *The Lost Girl* and also publishes *Women in Love* in New York.
- 1921** *Women in Love* is published in London. *Movements in European History*, Lawrence's first major nonfiction work, is published, as is his *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*.
- 1922** *Aaron's Rod*, a novel that reflects the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche on Lawrence, is published. The Lawrences travel to Ceylon and Australia, where *Aaron's Rod* is set. James Joyce's *Ulysses* and T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* are published.
- 1923** Lawrence publishes his novel *Kangaroo*. He and Frieda visit Mexico as well as New York and Los Angeles. *Studies in Classic American Literature*—in which Lawrence considers Benjamin Franklin, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, and others—is published.
- 1924-1925** Mabel Dodge Luhan, a New York socialite, gives the Lawrences her Kiowa Ranch in Taos, New Mexico, in return for the original manuscript of *Sons and Lovers*. Lawrence's father, Arthur, dies. While visiting Mexico City, Lawrence falls ill with tuberculosis and is forced to return to England.
- 1925-1926** The Lawrences settle near Florence. Frieda begins an affair with Angelino Ravagli, a former Italian infantry officer whom she will marry in 1950. Lawrence visits his hometown of Eastwood for the last time. *The Plumed Serpent*, a political novel about Mexico and a revival of its ancient Aztec religion, is published.
- 1928** *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is published; it is banned in the United Kingdom and the United States, creating a great demand for the book.
- 1929** Lawrence's Expressionist paintings, for which he gains posthumous renown, are declared obscene and confiscated from an exhibition at London's Warren Gallery.
- 1930** Lawrence succumbs to tuberculosis on March 2 in Vence, France. Frieda moves to Kiowa Ranch, New Mexico, where she builds a small memorial chapel that houses Lawrence's ashes.
- 1960** An unexpurgated version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is published after Penguin Books is acquitted of obscenity charges brought under the Obscene Publications Act. The trial lasts six days; the thirty-five expert witnesses called to testify include E. M. Forster.

INTRODUCTION

The Reinvention of Love

According to theologian and scholar C. S. Lewis, in his book *The Allegory of Love*, the history of romantic love dates back only to about the year 1000 A.D. Even if Lewis is just referencing the origin of true love as a tradition, it is still quite an extravagant claim. After all, we know from history, early literature, and even the Bible that the emotion we call love certainly existed as far back as we can document. Even certain animals, like some birds, mate for life, a fact that cannot be accounted for by reproductive instincts alone. Yet love, as portrayed in classical literature, is a very disruptive emotion, often linked, as it is in *Hamlet*, with madness. In earlier times, it would have been unthinkable, as it still is in some regions of the world even today, for one to marry just because one claimed to be in love. According to Lewis, the troubadours, medieval poets from southern France and northern Spain and Italy, began the process of validating romantic love. They went from castle to castle serenading the ladies of the place with poems that begged for “mercy” that their “suffering” might be eased.

Italian poet Dante Alighieri was a great exponent of romantic love. In *The Divine Comedy*, Dante literally goes through Hell for Beatrice, the woman he loves. Then he goes through Purgatory and Heaven. At the end of this emotional and spiritual journey, the poet is rewarded with a vision of a blinding sun, symbolizing God and perfect understanding. It is not unfair to say that, after the appearance of *The Divine Comedy*, romantic love began to take on a new status in the Western world. It eventually became acceptable to marry on the basis of one’s emotions for a particular person, though of course this did not happen overnight. The tradition of true love during Dante’s time remained essentially an adulterous one. Dante never married Beatrice, and he himself was married to somebody else. Even three centuries later, Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet were having a hard time of it, though thanks to an amiable priest who took pity on the young lovers, they succeeded in marrying. Predictably, they experienced tragedy afterward.

Gradually, however, romantic love triumphed, and its influence remains very much intact to this day. This is not to say that everyone has been in perfect agreement with the progress of romantic love. During the twentieth century, in particular, some of the components of true love began to be called into question. Danish theologian Søren Kierkegaard, in his existentialist masterwork *Either/Or*, begins to question the sincerity of an eternal love. May it not, Kierkegaard enquired, be more sincere, instead of pledging to love your beloved forever and forever and forever, to vow to love her until Easter or May Day, and if that works out, to renew the vow until Christmas? In contemporary popular culture, Tina Turner takes this a step further by asking, in her wildly successful song, “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” However, this does not necessarily mean that true love has fallen from its pedestal but only that it has had to contend with certain heresies and palace uprisings.

As with any tradition, things can become a bit stale. As Samuel Beckett put it, “Habit is a great deadener.” D. H. Lawrence completed *Women in Love* in 1916, just about the time romantic love was getting a little frayed around the edges. There are several things that influenced Lawrence in writing this novel. One major factor was that Lawrence himself was very much in love. In 1912 he had married Frieda Weekley, then married to Ernest Weekley, Lawrence’s former professor, to whom Lawrence

had gone for help in finding a teaching position abroad. Lawrence and Frieda fell in love, and Lawrence convinced her to go away with him—for life. Another influence was England itself, which Lawrence found repressive, its traditions worn out, its emotional, spiritual, and political life stale and unedifying. There was yet another influence, which does not appear to be recorded, nor is it clear the extent to which Lawrence himself was aware of it. We know from Lawrence's friend Jessie Chambers that the two read Symbolist poetry together. When Lawrence was working for his teaching degree, he studied French literature at the University of Nottingham under Ernest Weekley. Lawrence mentions specifically the poetry of Paul Verlaine in *Sons and Lovers*. Nowhere, though, it seems, does Lawrence speak directly of the poetry of Arthur Rimbaud, and yet among all the Symbolists, it is Rimbaud's ideas that seem closest to those of Lawrence. Rimbaud wrote these lines, which coincide with Lawrence's attitude about modern love, particularly as it relates to his own writing of *Women in Love*: "I do not like women: love must be reinvented, that's obvious. A secure position is all they're capable of desiring now. Security once gained, heart and beauty are set aside: cold disdain alone is left, the food of marriage today" (Rimbaud, "Delirium I," p. 39; see "For Further Reading").

Women in Love is Lawrence's manifesto on the reinvention of modern love, and it was in many ways as much of a bombshell as was *The Communist Manifesto*, by Karl Marx. Afterward, there would be many modern and contemporary writers who would rival Lawrence, but none who surpassed him in this area. F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* shows the undeniable influence of Lawrence in its treatment of the jaded rich, symbolized by Tom, and their dangerous ideas about race and culture, which are opposed by Gatsby, the symbol of romantic love. However, one could not imagine Gatsby questioning the meaning of modern love nor the tradition from which it sprang.

David Herbert Lawrence was born on September 11, 1885, near Nottingham, England, in the small mining town of Eastwood. His father, Arthur, was a coal miner, the kind of man, typical of workers the world over, who found himself in a dangerous, dead-end job, and even as a miner's butty, a foreman of sorts, he could barely make a living. He drank to mask his frustration, his pain, and his fears, and he transferred his aggressions to his family in the form of a violence that, while mostly verbal, made their lives at times a living hell. Lawrence thought his mother, Lydia, a saint. However, she was no more a saint than the father was a devil. Like Arthur Lawrence, she, too, was frustrated by poverty and the ugliness of her surroundings. Like him, she transferred her blind hostility against her marginalization to her spouse, falling out of love with him and using his drinking as an excuse to hold him directly responsible for her unhappiness and the lack of opportunity for her children. The fact that her husband was risking his life in the mines every day to provide for her and the children meant nothing to her, and she inoculated her children with her contempt for her husband. No one loved Arthur. No one ever talked to him. No one cared if he lived or died, except as it affected their welfare, and this in turn hardened his attitude toward his family and made him an even more frequent visitor to the pubs. Lawrence duly documents all this in *Sons and Lovers*, and it is difficult not to feel a measured contempt for the mother and the children who hated their father, while at the same time driving him harder to provide more for them. Lawrence apparently never matured enough to gain perspective on how unfairly his father was treated, flawed though he certainly was.

Lawrence's biographer, Harry T. Moore, writes about Mrs. Lawrence:

She was proud of these children, and fought fiercely to give them good lives: her sons would not go into the mines, her daughters would not become servants. And through the galling poverty of those

years she made intense sacrifices for them, particularly in furthering the education of David Herbert—or Bert, as the family called him.

Unfortunately, this is only part of the story. The intensity of love that was in this woman's being drove itself outwardly in two directions: she hated her husband and, just as extravagantly, she loved her children. These children became a battleground in the parents' war (Moore, *The Priest of Love*, 11).

Lawrence began his primary education at the Beauvale Board School, as did all the other children in his family. Frail, sickly, sensitive, uninspired by his environment, picked on by the other boys because he could not play games, but encouraged by his clinging mother, whose aspirations for him set him apart, Lawrence does not appear to have been an especially brilliant student, but one who worked hard. In his teacher W. W. Whitehead, Lawrence would eventually find a supporter. Whitehead tutored him for the County Council Scholarship, which Lawrence won at the age of twelve. This scholarship allowed him to attend the Nottingham High School and receive an excellent secondary education. It literally changed the course of his life.

After high school, Lawrence worked as a clerk in Haywood's, a manufacturer of surgical and orthopedic implements in Nottingham, selling elastic stockings and support bandages. It was during this relatively happy period that a tragic event shattered the Lawrence household and left his mother in a state of chronic depression, alienated even from her beloved children, with little will to live. William Ernest, Lydia Lawrence's favorite child, died of pneumonia in London, apparently from overwork. During the mother's grieving depression, Lawrence, who had been at the Haywood position for only three months, also came down with pneumonia and was on the verge of death. The threat of Lawrence's imminent death caused the mother to throw off her grief and immerse herself in saving the son who was still barely alive. It not only saved Lawrence's life, but it created a bond between mother and son for which Oedipal may be too weak a term and which Anthony Burgess, in his book on Lawrence, *Flame into Being*, aptly describes as "morbid."

By the time Lawrence recuperated, he was seventeen years old. He decided he did not want to go back to Haywood's, where he might overwork himself and suffer the same fate as his brother. His experience at Haywood's, though brief, had been a vital one. It gave him experience, and eventually provided an important setting for Paul, Lawrence's stand-in in *Sons and Lovers*. Now, though, it was time for Lawrence to move on. His health had become a serious issue. Whether we believe Lawrence's claim that the pneumonia permanently impaired his health, or believe Lawrence's doctor that he was already tubercular and that the pneumonia had nothing to do with his future health problems, Lawrence's health would from that point on partially determine how he lived his life. Thus, faced with the problem of earning a living, Lawrence settled on teaching. In 1902 Lawrence began his teaching career at the British Schools in Eastwood as a pupil-teacher—that is, as a schoolmaster to lower-level students who receives instruction himself later in the day. The following year, Lawrence was transferred to the Pupil—Teacher Centre at Ilkeston, along with another pupil-teacher intern from the region, Jessie Chambers, Lawrence's first love, whom Lawrence immortalizes as Miriam in *Sons and Lovers*. Four years later Lawrence and Jessie both entered the University of Nottingham in a two-year program for a teaching certificate.

After receiving his certificate, Lawrence took a position as a schoolmaster in south London. Here he came in contact with Ford Hermann Hueffer, the novelist, editor, and critic now better known as Ford Madox Ford, the name he adopted in 1919. After reading Lawrence's poetry, Hueffer decided to

publish it. He also helped Lawrence publish his first novel, *The White Peacock*, in 1911. It was, according to Hueffer, “a flawed work of genius.” A serious blow in Lawrence’s personal life counteracted this great leap forward in his career: his mother’s death from cancer. Before she died, Lawrence was able to give her an advance copy of *The White Peacock*, apparently hoping that she would know that her love and advocacy on his behalf had not been wasted. The following year, reeling from his mother’s death and worn out by teaching, Lawrence became seriously ill and depressed, and wrote little.

In 1912 Lawrence made up his mind to stop teaching, at least in England. In his book, Burge suggests that this decision was forced on him by the school authorities, who did not want Lawrence infecting the children with his illness. It was in this context that he visited his former professor Ernest Weekley to ask for assistance in securing a position abroad. Weekley’s wife, Frieda von Richthofen, daughter of a German baron, and Lawrence were immediately drawn to each other. Not long after their first meeting, Frieda invited Lawrence to her home when her husband was away. Rather than have an affair with Frieda, Lawrence insisted that she tell her husband about them. Frieda did not do so immediately, but Lawrence joined her when Frieda traveled to her native Germany to visit her family. It was during this visit that Lawrence helped Frieda compose a letter to Weekley, informing him of the couple’s intent to stay together. It was obviously a momentous event for them both. For Lawrence, in particular, eloping with Frieda marked a turning point in his creative as well as his social and spiritual life. In Italy, where Lawrence and Frieda finally settled, the two found, if not complete harmony (Frieda admitted publicly that they “fought like hell”) certainly a life of travel and interesting friends. Lawrence entered then into one of his most fertile periods of work—beginning in 1912 when Lawrence began *Sons and Lovers* and culminating in 1920 with the publication of *Women in Love*—that ranks as one of the greatest and most fertile periods of any writer in the twentieth century.

In Germany, the miner’s son, Bert of Eastwood, having stolen the wife of a respected professor, was rubbing shoulders with a German aristocracy that only a few months before could have existed only as a figment of his imagination, and above all, having found love, had certainly arrived. “I am living here with a lady whom I love, and whom I shall marry when I come to England, if possible...,” Lawrence wrote Louie Burrows, a former girlfriend, trying desperately to mask his pride in his new circumstance. “We have been together as man and wife for six months, nearly, now, and I hope we shall always remain man and wife.” In Germany he received a copy of his second novel, *The Trespasser*, which Hueffer also helped publish, though he felt it was an even more flawed work of genius than *The White Peacock*. It speaks well of Hueffer that he was able to judge Lawrence’s genius and assist him, even though he later claimed not to have liked Lawrence. Lawrence and Frieda settled in Gargnano, Italy, where over the next two years, Lawrence completed *Sons and Lovers*, began the novel he originally called *The Sisters*, published *Love Poems and Others*, and wrote perhaps his greatest short story, “The Prussian Officer.”

In 1914 Lawrence and Frieda were back in England. Weekley had stopped stalling over the divorce from Frieda, which was finalized in July, making it possible for Lawrence and Frieda to wed. Their marriage took place on July 13, at the South Kensington Registry Office. They did not have long to celebrate: Two weeks later war broke out, and Lawrence and Frieda were prevented from obtaining passports and forced to spend the war years in England. Critics and biographers often portray the war years in England as an unmitigated disaster that left Lawrence an all but broken man. This is given credence to some extent by Lawrence himself, who in his writing after the war fumed against the

democratic system that he felt had abused and humiliated him and made it all but impossible for him to work. The truth is that, despite significant difficulties, these were the most productive years of Lawrence's life. The incredible output of quality writing that seemed to have reached its apogee in Italy under the inspiration of Frieda not only continued in England, but reached a new zenith. Lawrence was again hard at work on *The Sisters*. In February 1915 he reported that he had already revised it seven times. Lawrence would eventually divide the novel in two. The first part became *The Rainbow*, which traces the lives of the Brangwens, a prosperous family of farmers, through four generations. When it was published in 1915, it was banned for obscenity, and the courts ordered that all the publisher's copies be destroyed, with little or no protest from the publisher himself. In 1916 the second part of *The Sisters* novel was completed. Its new title was *Women in Love* and it would become one of the masterpieces of twentieth-century literature.

One theory about why *The Rainbow* was banned is that it was done for political reasons and had little or nothing to do with obscenity. This is possible, given the lack of graphic obscenity in the novel. According to this point of view, Lawrence with his candor and irritability angered people who were in a position to do him harm. For instance, in 1915 the Lawrences took a cottage lent them by Violet Meynell, daughter of the poet Alice Meynell, which brought him into contact with Lady Ottoline Morrell, a patron of the arts, Bertrand Russell, and other members of the Cambridge-Bloomsbury group. Lawrence soon wore out his welcome by mercilessly satirizing Lady Morrell (as Hermione in *Women in Love*) and lecturing her and Russell on their moral shortcomings. No one in this group may have directly been responsible for aiding in the banning of *The Rainbow*. On the other hand, no one lifted a finger to stop it either.

A clear and more present hostility presented itself in 1916 when Lawrence moved to Cornwall. He invited John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield to join him and Frieda. Lawrence romanticized the locals, to whom he talked freely, airing his antiwar philosophy. Presently, his home was searched by the locals and the authorities, and he and Frieda were treated like spies. It did not help that Frieda's cousin was the German ace, Manfred von Richthofen, known as the Red Baron. The Lawrences were given three days to clear out of Cornwall and for the rest of the war were subject to surveillance and persecution. It is, therefore, not surprising that at the end of the war, the Lawrences left England to live in a virtually permanent exile.

In 1919, as soon as they could get visas, the Lawrences immediately returned to Italy, eventually settling in Taormina, Sicily. Lawrence's novel *The Lost Girl* was published in 1920 and won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize in Edinburgh, which brought with it a sum of one hundred pounds. Lawrence was still productive, but he never regained that brilliance of the early days in Italy and the war years in England. 1921 saw Lawrence shifting his talents to nonfiction. He published *Sea and Sardinia*, a travel book, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, his answer to Freud, and *Movements in History*, a high school text. At the urging of his friend Earl H. Brewster and his wife, in 1922 Lawrence and Frieda sailed for Ceylon. The Brewsters, both Buddhists, were versed in Eastern philosophy. For years Lawrence had talked about leading a spiritual utopia of enlightened souls, which he called Rananim, so one would think that his landing in the east would have been manna to his soul. Instead, it was poison. Lawrence did not take well to either Ceylon or Buddhism. After a short stay, the Lawrences went for six weeks to Australia, which provided the setting for his novel *Kangaroo*. *Aarons Rod*, begun in 1918 and put aside, was published in 1922, along with *England, My England*, a collection of stories, and *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, a sequel to Lawrence's book on psychoanalysis published the previous year.

One unexpected event occurred during the Lawrence's trip east: A rich American woman looking to establish her own utopia in New Mexico read a serialized version of *Sea and Sardinia* in *The Dial* magazine; she decided that the spiritually inclined Lawrence would be the glue to make her community adhere. The woman's name was Mabel Dodge Sterne (she was later known as Mabel Dodge Luhan). She had noble and sincere ideas, not only about forming a spiritual community, but about protecting Native Americans. After much negotiating, Lawrence sailed to America and settled in New Mexico on Mabel Dodge's estate. It's fair to say that this move had a major impact on Lawrence's remaining work. Certainly, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923), which placed American literature on the map as a literature to be taken seriously, would not have been written if Lawrence had not made this voyage to America. At a time when America's "Lost Generation" was still escaping the United States to find inspiration and culture in Europe, Lawrence escaped Europe to find inspiration in America's people and writers. *Kangaroo* and *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, a new volume of poetry, were also published in that year. However, *The Plumed Serpent*, published in 1925 in which Lawrence explores the will to power and Native American culture, is the most important work of Lawrence's American experience, highly flawed aesthetically and politically dangerous though it may be.

The same year *The Plumed Serpent* was published, Lawrence was back in Florence beginning his last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. When it was published in 1928, it was banned in both America and England. Lawrence had by then begun painting; at an exhibition in London on July 5, 1929, the police confiscated his paintings of frontal nudity. That same day, Lawrence suffered a massive tubercular hemorrhage. Earlier efforts at finding a cure in Germany and France had been unsuccessful. At the end of 1929, Lawrence moved to the south of France, and he died on March 2, 1930, in Vence. Almost until the end he was writing and taking care of his correspondence.

Many consider *Women in Love* the most important work by the most important twentieth-century English novelist (Joyce was Irish). The novel, as Joyce Carol Oates points out, is neither exclusively about women in love nor even exclusively about women. *Women in Love* could as easily be entitled *Men in Love*, for it deals as much with its two male heroes, Gerald and Birkin, as it does with the three central female characters. Whether or not *Women in Love* sets out to answer consciously Rimbaud's dictum that love must be reinvented, is a matter for debate. What is beyond debate is that Lawrence, using the moods and, to a degree, the methods of the Symbolist poets, does in fact set out to address the question of modern love and to reinvent roles and attitudes, to revolutionize modern man's emotional life.

Lawrence appears acutely aware that love cannot be reinvented in the rigid formalism of traditional society. The liberation of love requires to some extent the general liberation of mankind. To this end Lawrence opens *Women in Love* with the sisters Ursula and Gudrun having a frank discussion about marriage. Cleverly, Lawrence has Gudrun, the colder of the two sisters, whose relationship with Gerald will end in disaster, initiate the conversation about marriage:

"Ursula," said Gudrun, "don't you *really* want to get married?" Ursula laid her embroidery in her lap and looked up. Her face was calm and considerate.

"I don't know," she replied. "It depends how you mean."

Gudrun was slightly taken aback. She watched her sister for some moments.

“Well,” she said, ironically, “it usually means one thing! But don’t you think anyhow, you’d be— she darkened slightly—“in a better position than you are in now?”

A shadow came over Ursula’s face.

“I might,” she said. “But I’m not sure.”

Again Gudrun paused, slightly irritated. She wanted to be quite definite.

“You don’t think one needs the *experience* of having been married?” she asked.

“Do you think it need *be* an experience?” replied Ursula.

“Bound to be, in some way or other,” said Gudrun, coolly. “Possibly undesirable, but bound to be a experience of some sort.”

“Not really,” said Ursula. “More likely to be the end of experience” (p.5).

It is not lost on us that Ursula is embroidering, the symbol of the traditional woman. Lawrence uses this symbol to sharply contrast Ursula’s thoughts on marriage with those of most women in her time. Right from the beginning the reader is disabused of the notion that this will be a conventional novel. Lawrence establishes from the start that both sisters are distinctly modern women in their thoughts and feelings, despite their Edwardian surroundings. Ursula, for her part, does not reject the concept of marriage outright but merely the idea of marriage as it is traditionally conceived. Hence, her questions about what precisely Gudrun means by marriage. For her part, Gudrun raises the issue of marriage in its practical aspects, whether it would be worth considering if it were financially beneficial, whether one should consider it as a grand experience that might prove to be favorable or unfavorable. The question of love is never raised by Gudrun, but it is implicit in Ursula’s questioning of Gudrun’s specific definition of matrimony.

If the personalities of the two sisters are contrasted from the outset of the novel, Lawrence teases us as to who, in fact, is the more modern of the two without ever answering the question during the course of the novel in any definitive way. True, Gudrun initiates the discussion, which would at first make her appear the more traditional of the two. Gudrun seems to consider marriage as a practical institution unencumbered by love. However, we soon find out that Gudrun is anything but traditional in most of her thinking. She has gone off to live the life of a painter in London, an extremely radical act for a woman at that time and a bold one even today. Nor is her daring confined to London. She steals away to the local red-light district to be picked up by a working-class young man. In other words, she not only challenges the existing concepts of what a young woman should be, she seems interested in shattering those standards; yet she is willing to consider marriage for her own purposes.

Critics have noted that Gudrun’s name is that of a goddess in Norse mythology. Indeed, the whole of *Women in Love* has a Wagnerian flavor to it. Like a goddess, Gudrun appropriates for herself a freedom that apparently is beyond love or at least not subject to it. At the same time, she does not at first seem inclined to detach herself completely from traditional ways of doing things, even if she rebels. We are forced to ask whether Gudrun, who has moved beyond love as a defining principle and a condition for male and female relationships, is more modern than her sister, who renounces love and marriage as they are presently and would revolutionize men and society in order to achieve happiness. Ursula is not looking for an expedient relationship. The sisters, Ursula and Gudrun, are really two sides of the same project of breaking with the past, and their relationship with Birkin and Gerald respectively, explore from two different perspectives the possibilities of modern love.

If Gudrun is the embodiment of a German ice-queen detached from family and not quite believing

love, she finds in Gerald her corresponding Nordic ice-king. The son of the mine owner to whom responsibility now falls for directing the mine operations due to his father's illness, Gerald is of the exalted regions of Valhalla, and Gudrun, despite herself, is appropriately drawn to him:

But about him also was the strange, guarded look, the unconscious glisten, as if he did not belong to the same creation as the people about him. Gudrun lighted on him at once. There was something northern about him that magnetised her. In his clear northern flesh and his fair hair was a glisten like sunshine refracted through crystals of ice. And he looked so new, unbroached, pure as an arctic thing (p. 12).

Despite the mutual attraction they have for each other, they are as doomed as characters in a Greek tragedy. It is a measure of Lawrence's genius as a writer that Gerald and Gudrun move with the ritual of destiny toward their predetermined end without violating the sense of realism that is the strength of the work. In the chapter entitled "Water-Party," Lawrence reveals Gudrun's contempt and fearlessness of males when she rushes heedlessly toward a herd of dangerous longhorn steers. When Gerald questions her as to why she did it, as an answer she smacks him soundly across the face. "You have struck the first blow," says Gerald. "And I shall strike the last," Gudrun replies prophetically (p. 170).

Gudrun, then, represents modern woman in her hatred of men. It is not that she sets out to despise Gerald, or men in general. On the contrary, she sees in Gerald a possible mate. "I shall know more of that man," she says when she sees him in church at his sister's wedding. She even goes so far as to ask herself, "Am I *really* singled out for him in some way, is there really some pale gold, arctic light that envelopes only us two?" (p. 13). However, as a modern woman trapped in a traditional society still under the sway of Victorianism, she is drawn to the expression of her freedom but does not know how or does not wish, to integrate it with the love of men. We have already noted that she went off to London to pursue an art career and that she allows herself to be picked up by workers. But the desire for freedom is evident in her everyday life. "She wears her clothes in pure defiance." She gives "her word like a man" (p. 163) and insists on rowing Ursula and herself at the water party. She insists on Ursula singing while she dances a wild, ritualistic, and sexual celebration to her freedom that eventually attracts the cattle that she fearlessly charges. When Gerald accuses her of trying to drive them mad, he is unwittingly speaking of himself also. "God, what it is to be a man!" she exclaims after she and Ursula witness Gerald swimming naked. "The freedom, the liberty, the mobility! You're a man, you want to do a thing, you do it" (p. 45). Lawrence's surrogate, Birkin, spells it out for us. Gudrun and Gerald are "born in the process of destructive creation," the river of darkness that is the "inverse process" of Aphrodite (p. 171).

Far more than Ursula and Birkin, Gudrun and Gerald symbolize Lawrence's personal worldview of the Western man as he presently exists. Blonde-haired, blue-eyed Nordic beings such as Gerald are not only out of touch with their sensibility, they lack the knowledge of the blood, which for Lawrence is an intuitive knowledge that surpasses knowledge of the brain. In the chapter entitled "Totem," Gerald sees an African sculpture that symbolizes the bohemian nature of Halliday's flat where he views it. Lawrence writes:

He saw vividly with his spirit the grey, forward-stretching face of the negro woman, African and tense, abstracted in utter physical stress. It was a terrible face, void, peaked, abstracted almost into meaninglessness by the weight of sensation beneath....

"Why is it art?" Gerald asked, shocked, resentful.

"It conveys a complete truth," said Birkin. "It contains the whole truth of that state, whatever you

feel about it.” ...

“Pure culture in sensation, culture in the physical consciousness, really ultimate *physic* consciousness, mindless, utterly sensual. It is so sensual as to be final, supreme” (p. 77).

Later, in the chapter entitled “Moony,” Birkin reflects on the statue he saw in Halliday’s apartment and its meaning crystallizes for him:

She knew what he himself did not know. She had thousands of years of purely sensual, pure unspiritual knowledge behind her. It must have been thousands of years since her race had died mystically: that is, since the relation between the senses and the outspoken mind had broken, leaving the experience all in one sort, mystically sensual. Thousands of years ago, that which was imminent in himself must have taken place in these Africans: the goodness, the holiness, the desire for creation and productive happiness must have lapsed, leaving the single impulse for knowledge in one sort, mindless progressive knowledge through the senses, knowledge arrested and ending in the sense of mystic knowledge in disintegration and dissolution, knowledge such as the beetles have, which lives purely within the world of corruption and cold dissolution (p. 253).

Birkin thought of Gerald. He was one of these strange white wonderful demons from the north fulfilled in the destructive frost mystery. And was he fated to pass away in this knowledge, this on the process of frost-knowledge, death by perfect cold? (p. 254).

Thus, for Lawrence, the ancient darker races have a knowledge that is the pure sensuality of the blood. The Nordic races, in supplanting the darker, southern ones, have failed to connect with the sensuality of the innermost self that brings blood-knowledge and are thus left with ice-knowledge that lacks the immediacy and depth of the latter. It is Gerald who most embodies this ice-knowledge, and it is he who is, therefore, fated to die a symbolic arctic death.

Early in the novel Birkin identifies Gerald as Cain because Gerald had accidentally killed his brother. Significantly, Lawrence dismisses accidental behavior, suggesting several times throughout the novel that accidents are conscious acts. “He did not believe that there was any such thing as an accident,” Lawrence writes of his surrogate. “It all hung together, in the deepest sense” (p. 24). This idea anticipates Sartre’s concept in *Being and Nothingness* that there is no hidden subconscious behavior and that man is responsible for all his actions. In both cases, man is given credit for having more control over the universe than he actually does. In Sartre, this concept results in the romantic tenet of existentialism that man must be the destiny of man. However, for Lawrence, it takes an ugly turn in his later work, which suggests that certain people have the right to control the world by assuming their own destiny on the backs and at the expense of others. In any case, the brother that Gerald-Cain kills is symbolic of Gerald’s ice-destructiveness. Birkin tells Minette, who Lawrence virtually everywhere refers to as the Pussum, that Gerald is a former soldier who explored the Amazon, thus linking him with further physical destruction and with the ancient Native American past, which Lawrence will explore in later works.

The Pussum is identified with the African statue, which resembles a black beetle. What the Pussum fears most is self-discovery, being aware of herself—that is, as a black beetle. Together she and Gerald are a temporary union of opposites. This contrasts sharply with Gerald’s infatuation with Gudrun, the snow-queen to his snow-king. Gudrun and Gerald’s connection is at its most evident in the chapter “Love and Death,” in which Gerald goes to Gudrun after his father’s death and empties himself. A relationship that finds its ultimate satisfaction in death will end in death. Appropriately,

Lawrence chooses the snow-abstraction of Switzerland as the setting for Gerald and Gudrun's ultimate confrontation. Gerald's death is presided over by Loerke, whose name is intended to suggest the Norse god, Loki, the trickster whom Wagner uses to good effect in the Ringgold cycle. Gerald despises Loerke, and this fact causes us to sympathize with Gerald, who, one feels, does not deserve the fate which he is destined and against which he struggles. He searches for love and feeling, and if in the end he is disappointed in his inability to find either, it is a tragic fate, not an act of evil. He is ultimately a victim of Gudrun, who represents for Lawrence the type of modern woman who attempts to reinvent love by destroying both it and the man unlucky enough to offer it to her.

If for Dante the most despised of sins is fraud against art—though its cause is thoroughly human—precisely because only human beings can engage in it—for Lawrence it was largely the same. Loerke prostitutes his art, and Lawrence shows us that this is a form of perversion by associating Loerke with a cold and indifferent bisexuality. That Lawrence does not condemn homosexuality per se is obvious from his sympathetic treatment of the relationship between Birkin and Gerald. On the other hand, the fact that Gudrun is identified with Loerke makes it clear that Lawrence sees in her an active perversion—this is, a turning away from the natural order of true love. In the larger sense, Gudrun symbolizes the snow-destruction that is, in Lawrence's view, the essence of the Nordic, or Western, world and its lack, as in Gudrun, of an ability to feel. "Not a word, not a tear—ha!" reflects the woman who informs Gudrun of Gerald's death. "Gudrun was cold, a cold woman" (p. 478). It is the triumph of the snow-goddess.

The relationship between Birkin and Hermione represents another failed attempt of modern man and woman to reinvent love. The character Hermione was drawn from Lady Ottoline Morrell, with whom Lawrence had an intense friendship, if not a torrid love affair, as is the case with Hermione and Birkin. The Madame de Staël of the Bloomsbury group and the wife of a wealthy member of Parliament, Lady Morrell cut quite a figure. She was immortalized both by T. S. Eliot in "Portrait of a Lady" and by Ezra Pound in "Portrait d'une Femme." In both, the American poets are on the outside looking in at Lady Morrell and the doings of her literary circle. Lawrence, on the other hand, is an intimate, at least to the extent that he chooses to be. If Gudrun is the ultimate ice-queen, Hermione shares with her the Nordic inclination toward ice-knowledge, in her attempt to reduce the world to what can be apprehended by the brain, without sharing Gudrun's hatred of men or Gudrun's inability to love. "But knowing is everything to you, it is your life" (p. 37), Birkin reproaches Hermione in the "Class-Room" chapter. Birkin's comment is reminiscent of a letter Lawrence wrote to Lady Morrell, "Why must you always use your will so much, why can't you let things be, without always grasping and trying to know and to dominate. I'm too much like this myself."

In "Breadalby," the chapter that Lawrence places strategically after "Totem," the author creates a sharp contrast between Hermione, the ultimate in northern European civilized being, and the African statue, symbolic of man's vital primitive past, to the latter's advantage. Hermione has invited her lover, Birkin, and Ursula, Gudrun, and Gerald to Breadalby, where everything is exquisite and civilized. It is not just that Hermione wishes to live life in her head. She uses her wealth and position to orchestrate the lives of others. She marshals her guests about in activities that she has chosen for them. It is no wonder that Ursula and Gudrun, forceful women in their own right, instinctively rebel, refusing to go swimming. The highlight of the scene is the argument Birkin and Hermione have regarding democracy—a scene that ends with Hermione striking Birkin with a lapis lazuli ball, almost killing him. Even if she is in love with Birkin, and is correct in her support of democracy as opposed to Birkin, who advocates ideas that are the seeds of fascism, Hermione, like Gudrun, nevertheless

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