



Women in Love

D. H. LAWRENCE

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EDITED WITH AN
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY CHARLES L. ROSS

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WOMEN IN LOVE

DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE was born at Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, in 1885, fourth of the five children of a miner and his middle-class wife. He attended Nottingham High School and Nottingham University College. His first novel, *The White Peacock*, was published in 1911, just a few weeks after the death of his mother to whom he had been abnormally close. At this time he finally ended his relationship with Jessie Chambers (the Miriam of *Sons and Lovers*) and became engaged to Louie Burrows. His career as a schoolteacher was ended in 1911 by the illness which was ultimately diagnosed as tuberculosis. In 1912 Lawrence eloped to Germany with Frieda Weekley, the German wife of his former modern languages tutor. They were married on their return to England in 1914. Lawrence was now living, precariously, by his writing. His greatest novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, were completed in 1915 and 1916. The former was suppressed, and he could not find a publisher for the latter.

After the war Lawrence began his 'savage pilgrimage' in search of a more fulfilling mode of life than industrial Western civilization could offer. This took him to Sicily, Ceylon, Australia and, finally, New Mexico. The Lawrences returned to Europe in 1925. Lawrence's last novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, was banned in 1928, and his paintings confiscated in 1929. He died in Venice in 1930 at the age of 44.

Lawrence spent most of his short life living. Nevertheless he produced an amazing quantity of work – novels, stories, poems, plays, essays, travel books, translations and letters . . . After his death Frieda wrote: 'What he had seen and felt and known he gave in his writing to his fellow men, the splendour of living, the hope of more and more life . . . a heroic and immeasurable gift.'

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Contents

| | |
|--|-----|
| Lawrence's Life and Works: a Chronology | 7 |
| A Chronology of <i>The Sisters</i> , 1913-20 | 11 |
| Introduction | 13 |
| WOMEN IN LOVE | 51 |
| Notes | 585 |
| Select Bibliography | 595 |

Lawrence's Life and Works: a Chronology

- 1885 David Herbert Richards Lawrence born in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, the fourth child of Arthur Lawrence, miner, and Lydia, *née* Beardsall, formerly a schoolmistress.
- 1891-8 He attends Beauvale Board School and becomes the first boy from that school to win a County Council Scholarship to Nottingham High School, which he attended until 1901.
- 1898-1901 Begins frequent visits to Chambers family at Haggs Farm, and his relationship with Jessie Chambers (the Miriam of *Sons and Lovers*) which was to develop into an 'unofficial engagement'.
- 1901-2 Works as a clerk at Haywood's surgical appliances factory. Has to leave after severe attack of pneumonia.
- 1902-6 Pupil-teacher at British School, Eastwood. Sits the King's Scholarship examination in December 1904 and is placed in the first division of the first class. A few months later he matriculates and qualifies himself to take a two-year teachers' certificate course at Nottingham University College, beginning in September 1906.
- 1906-8 Writes his first poems and stories and begins his first novel *Laetitia* (later *The White Peacock*). Wins *Nottinghamshire Guardian* Christmas 1907 short story competition with 'A Prelude'. Loses his faith in 'a personal, human God'.
- 1908-11 Teaches at Davidson Road School, Croydon. Meets Ford Madox Hueffer who begins to publish his poems and stories in the *English Review* and introduces him to the London literary world. In 1910 he writes his second novel, *The Trespasser*, in conjunction with Helen Corke, and begins *Paul Morel* (later *Sons and Lovers*). His relationship with Jessie Chambers comes to an end. He has a brief affair with Alice Dax, wife of an Eastwood chemist, then becomes engaged to Louie Burrows, who had been a fellow-student at college. In December 1910 Mrs Lawrence dies of cancer. In January 1911 *The White Peacock* is published by Heinemann. Edward Garnett becomes Lawrence's mentor. Lawrence becomes seriously ill with pneumonia and has to give up schoolteaching.
- 1912 In March Lawrence meets Frieda Weekley, wife of his former modern languages tutor, and six weeks later elopes with her to Germany. Lawrence records the vicissitudes of their relationship in '*Look! We Have Come Through!*'. They

- walk over the Alps into Italy and settle at Gargnano, where Lawrence finishes *Sons and Lovers* and begins *The Insurrection of Miss Houghton* (later to be rewritten as *The Lost Girl*).
- 1913 Begins *The Sisters*, eventually to be split into *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, and *Italian Sketches* (later *Twilight in Italy*). They return to England in June and begin friendship with John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield. They return to Italy (Lerici) in September. Lawrence works mainly on *The Sisters* until June, when they return to England to marry (Frieda having at last obtained her divorce) and to find a publisher for *The Rainbow*. The wedding takes place at Kensington Registry Office on 13 July 1914. Lawrence works on revising his short stories for *The Prussian Officer*. The outbreak of war the following month prevents the Lawrences from returning to Italy. At Chesham and Greatham during the next six months, Lawrence rewrites *The Rainbow*. He begins important friendships with Lady Cynthia Asquith, Lady Ottoline Morrell, Bertrand Russell and E. M. Forster. In August they move to Hampstead. Lawrence develops his idea of an ideal community, Ranim, envisaged, at this stage, in Florida. His plans to form a revolutionary anti-war party with Russell and Murry collapse. *The Rainbow* is published by Methuen and immediately suppressed. This blow, together with the war, ill-health, increasing poverty, the defection of several friends, humiliating examinations for military service, and his inability to get permission to leave the country, brings Lawrence close to despair and misanthropy – his 'nightmare'.
- 1915 The Lawrences move to Cornwall where Lawrence writes *Women in Love*.
- 1916 He begins *Studies in Classic American Literature*. The Lawrences are evicted from Cornwall on suspicion of spying. In London Lawrence begins *Aaron's Rod*.
- 1917 They move to Newbury, in Berkshire, then to Mountain Cottage, Middleton-by-Wirksworth, Derbyshire. Lawrence writes *Movements in European History*.
- 1918 Lawrence is very ill with influenza. Moves back to Berkshire. In November the Lawrences leave for Italy and settle in Capri.
- 1919 Moves to Fontana Vecchia, Taormina, Sicily. Visits Maurice Magnus at Monte Cassino.
- 1920–21 Writes *The Lost Girl*, *Mr Noon*, *Sea and Sardinia* and the two psychoanalysis books; begins *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*; finishes *Aaron's Rod*.
- 1922 Translates Verga. Visits the Brewsters in Ceylon on the way to

- Australia, where he spends the summer at Thirroul, N.S.W., writing *Kangaroo*. Goes to New Mexico in September at the invitation of Mabel Dodge Luhan. In December settles at Del Monte ranch, Questa, near Taos. Finishes *Studies in Classic American Literature*.
- 1923 Finishes *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*. Spends the summer at Chapala in Mexico where he writes *Quetzalcoatl* (the first version of *The Plumed Serpent*). Rewrites Mollie Skinner's novel *The House of Ellis* as *The Boy in the Bush*. Frieda returns to England in August; Lawrence follows in December.
- 1924 Dinner at the Café Royal where Lawrence invites his friends to form a community at the ranch in Taos. Only Dorothy Brett accepts and accompanies the Lawrences to New Mexico in March. Frieda acquires Lobo ranch, later renamed Kiowa, from Mabel in exchange for the manuscript of *Sons and Lovers*. That summer at the ranch Lawrence writes *The Woman Who Rode Away*, *St Mawr*, *The Princess* and the New Mexico sections of *Mornings in Mexico*. Lawrence's father dies. In November the Lawrences move to Oaxaca, Mexico, where Lawrence writes the Mexican sections of *Mornings in Mexico* and rewrites *Quetzalcoatl*.
- 1925 In February Lawrence almost dies of malaria. In Mexico City a doctor tells Frieda that he is dying of consumption. He puts rouge on his cheeks to get back across the border. Recuperates at the ranch and writes *David* and *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*. In September the Lawrences return to Europe and settle at Spotorno in Italy, where Lawrence writes *Sun*.
- 1926 Writes *The Virgin and the Gipsy*. Quarrels with Frieda and leaves her for several weeks. Has an abortive affair with Dorothy Brett. In May the Lawrences move to the Villa Mirenda, Scandicci, near Florence. In the late summer Lawrence makes his last visit to England. On his return he writes *The First Lady Chatterley*. Takes up painting seriously.
- 1927 Writes second version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Makes Etruscan pilgrimage with Earl Brewster. Writes *The Escaped Cock* and *Etruscan Places*. Begins final version of *Lady Chatterley*.
- 1928 In June the Lawrences move to Switzerland and settle at Gsteig. Lawrence is too weak to work, except on newspaper articles and paintings. In October he visits Richard Aldington on Port Cros, then settles in Bandol. Begins *Pansies*. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* published, with consequent furore.
- 1929 Visits Paris in the spring, then Mallorca. Lawrence's paint-

- ings exhibited at the Warren Gallery in London. On the day the show is raided by the police Lawrence collapses at Forte dei Marmi. He goes to Bavaria for treatment, but returns, no better, to Bandol in September. Writes *Nettles* and *Last Poems*. Begins *Apocalypse*.
- 1930 On Dr Morland's recommendation Lawrence enters Ad Astra sanatorium at Vence in February. After three weeks with no improvement, he is moved by Frieda and Aldous and Maria Huxley to a nearby villa where he dies the following night. He is buried at Vence.
- 1935 Lawrence's body exhumed, cremated, and the ashes taken to Taos where Frieda's third husband, Angelo Ravagli, has built a small shrine above the ranch.
- 1956 Frieda dies and is buried outside the shrine.

KEITH SAGAR

*A Chronology of The Sisters, 1913-20**

- 1912 Finishes *Sons and Lovers* (November).
- 1913 Starts and abandons a fictional 'life' of Robert Burns (January). Writes two hundred pages of *The Insurrection of Miss Houghton* (February-March) before beginning *The Sisters* (March 22). *Sons and Lovers* published (May). Finishes *Sisters I* (June). Begins *Sisters II* (September).
- 1914 Finishes *Sisters II* (January). Begins third draft of *The Sisters*, now called *The Wedding Ring* (February) and submits typescript to the publishers Methuen in late May. *The Wedding Ring* rejected as 'impossible for publication in its existing form' (August). Begins fourth draft of *The Sisters* or *The Rainbow* (December).
- 1915 Finishes holograph MS of *The Rainbow* (March 2). Revises typescript of novel (March-May). Corrects and revises proof (July-August). *The Rainbow* published (September 30) and suppressed by police (November).
- 1916 Begins *Women in Love* (April). Writes a fragmentary beginning, 'The Prologue', and one complete draft by June. Writes penultimate draft (July-October).
- 1917 Writes final draft of *Women in Love* (May-December).
- 1919 Puts finishing touches to typescript of novel (August-September). Writes Foreword for America (September).
- 1920 *Women in Love* published privately in New York (November 9).

*For historical and textual evidence of dating, see Charles L. Ross, *The Composition of 'The Rainbow' and 'Women in Love': A History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979), pp. 15-57, 97-123.

Introduction

IT is a truth less than universally acknowledged that the most revealing biography of an artist is the biography of his art. The genesis and fortunes of *Women in Love*, in any case, make one of the more complex and diverting stories in modern letters. As a 'sequel' to *The Rainbow*, *Women in Love* forms an 'organic artistic whole' with its twin.* Both were products of an ambitious project called *The Sisters* on which Lawrence embarked after *Sons and Lovers*. In the seven-year gestation between the conception of *The Sisters* and the publication of *Women in Love* Lawrence found that in fictional terms his end had been in his beginning.

Lawrence mastered his Oedipal emotions in *Sons and Lovers* by repeating and presenting them. The story of Paul Morel became 'the tragedy of thousands of young men in England'. Lawrence's new-found love for Frieda Weekley (*née* von Richthofen), with whom he eloped in May 1912, gave him the courage to recast his 'autobiography'. Life and art were mutually sustaining. Just before leaving for the continent and his destiny with Frieda, Lawrence spoke of feeling 'helpless and rudderless', words he would later use to describe Paul - 'left in the end naked of everything, with the drift toward death'. Frieda arrested the drift, and during the first months of the 'terrible' and 'great' experience of marriage, Lawrence 'slaved' at rewriting the novel whose protagonist he had come to 'loathe'. The strain of re-living his youth in the novel while working at his marriage with Frieda, who felt keen remorse over the abandonment of her children, left Lawrence exhausted by the time he sent the manuscript of *Sons and Lovers* to Edward Garnett in November of 1912. As he remarked,

* To avoid cluttering the text, I have not cited the sources of quotations from the novels and letters. All words within quotation marks are by Lawrence, unless otherwise noted.

ruefully, 'it's easier to write history than to make it, even in such a mild way as mine'.

Recuperating between December and March, Lawrence cast around for a new subject. He briefly thought of doing a life of Robert Burns transplanted to the Midlands. Then he wrote two hundred pages of *The Insurrection of Miss Houghton*, later to become *The Lost Girl*, before putting it aside in favour of a 'pot-boiler' that quickly developed into 'an earnest and painful work'. This was the first version of *The Sisters* or *Sisters I*, 'the first crude fermenting of the book', finished in June. He had boasted that he would 'do a novel about Love Triumphant one day . . . my work for women, better than the suffrage', but he found it difficult 'to find exactly the form one's passion . . . wants to take'. Its writing was largely a matter of intuition: 'Damn its eyes, there I am at page 145, and I've no notion what it's about.'

Since the surviving fragment comes from the second half of *Sisters I*, we must rely on letters to gain an inkling of the subject matter in the first half, which was the story of Ella (Ursula) and her Mr Birkin. It was to be about 'the problem of today, the establishment of a new relation, or the readjustment of the old one, between man and woman'. Lawrence would draw on his 'awe-inspired' notion of woman, embodied in Frieda, who put him 'in direct communication with the unknown'. Previous literature wouldn't help because, as he assured the initially disapproving Garnett, 'you *don't* know her, from literature, no, how can you, *I don't*'. Nor would his youthful love for Jessie Chambers, transmuted into the love of Paul Morel and Miriam Leivers in *Sons and Lovers*, provide a model. According to Frieda, Jessie had 'never understood anything out of herself, no inner activity'. Frieda even agreed with some reviewers that the second half of *Sons and Lovers* was a lapse and that, as Lawrence reported, 'Miriam and Clara and Paul's love affairs weren't worth writing about'. Hence the impulsion to write a book whose 'germ' would be the theme of 'woman becoming individual, self-responsible, taking her own initiative' may have come from the desire to make amends to 'woman' and especially to the free-spirited, formidable Frieda.

Formidable indeed. Another motive for writing was 'to depict Frieda's God Almighty in all its glory'. Frieda alludes to her habit of sweeping generalization as 'Ella-ing', implying that the character through whom the 'God Almighty' was projected was named Ella. We can see what they meant in the same letter where Frieda delivers the *ex cathedra* opinion that Lawrence, like Paul Morel and other sons and lovers, was 'amazingly brutal' to his mother, willing her to die, 'in spite of Christianity, of the two thousand years'. The outlines were emerging of a novel which would translate this domestic contention into the spirited debating of Ella and her Mr Birkin.

The surviving fragment is a scene between Gudrun, Gerald, and Loerke. Gerald has made up his mind, after six weeks of vacillation, to marry Gudrun, who is pregnant with his child. Meanwhile, humiliated and desperate, Gudrun has turned to Loerke, a German sculptor, as a possible father for the child. Loerke is with her when Gerald arrives to propose. Stunned by her passionate resentment Gerald can muster only the lame excuse that he didn't 'know' – of his love for her? of her pregnancy? The competition between Gerald and Loerke for the silent woman mounts until Gerald threatens the sculptor and then subsides in shame. Loerke, realizing Gudrun has chosen, leaves. Gerald's cry of shame and admission moves Gudrun, although his actions have killed much of her love for him. The fragment ends on this note of ambiguous resolution with Gerald vowing to himself that he will submit to suffering and win Gudrun's love. Mrs Crich and Gerald's sister Winifred also make brief appearances, a fact that has led Mark Kinkead-Weekes to call *Sisters I* the 'Ur-Women in Love'.*

After a summer's respite Lawrence announced in September 1913 that '*The Sisters* has quite a new beginning – a new basis altogether'. He was delving into Ella's past, going back in fictional time, and temporarily abandoning the story of Gerald and Gudrun. Although the first half of *Sisters II* is lost, we learn in a letter that it included Ella's affair with Ben

*Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'The Marble and the Statue: The Exploratory Imagination of D. H. Lawrence', in *Imagined Worlds*, ed. Ian Gregor and Maynard Mack (Methuen, 1968), p. 375.

Templeman, evidently the forerunner of Anton Skrebensky. The second half, from which our fragment survives, is the story of Ella and Birkin: 'I agree with you [Edward Garnett] about the Templeman episode. In the scheme of the novel, however, I *must* have Ella get some experience before she meets her Mr Birkin.' The inspiration was transparently autobiographical, as a précis will show.

The fragment opens with Ella leaving Birkin's rooms barely in control of herself, drawn to Birkin but still recovering from her failed affair with Ben Templeman. Later Birkin calls on Ella, who is alone at home singing sentimental songs and mulling over their relationship. An unexpected embrace stirs in Ella memories of her failed affair with Templeman, and she collapses in tears. Shaken out of his gentlemanly reserve, Birkin avows love, which Ella considers a proposal. Several days later they exchange letters, foreshadowing the growth of their love. But Ella can still be disconcerted by the sight of Templeman walking with a woman. Thus Lawrence translated the world-shattering effect of love for Frieda together with his struggle for full possession of her against the pull of her aristocratic family in Germany, her children in England, and her past lovers.

Edward Garnett, who had cut and shaped *Sons and Lovers*, stringently criticized *Sisters II*. Lawrence conceded the truth of strictures on the conception, but defended the evolving style:

To your two main criticisms, that the Templeman episode is wrong, and that the character of Ella is incoherent, I agree. Then about the artistic side being in the background. It is that which troubles me most. I have no longer the joy in creating vivid scenes, that I had in *Sons and Lovers*. I don't care much more about accumulating objects in the powerful light of emotion, and making a scene of them. I have to write differently.

Garnett wanted more of the vividly traditional realism of *Sons and Lovers*, despite Lawrence's warning that 'I shall not write in that style any more. It's the end of my youthful period.' In *Sisters II* he experimented with a more poetic and repetitive