

约克文学作品辅导丛书

YORK NOTES ON

# WOMEN IN LOVE

恋爱中的女人

D. H. Lawrence



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# YORK NOTES

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D.H. Lawrence

# WOMEN IN LOVE

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## 《约克文学作品辅导丛书》介绍

《约克文学作品辅导丛书》(York Notes)系 Longman 集团有限公司(英国)出版。本丛书覆盖了世界各国历代文学名著,原意是辅导英国中学生准备文学课的高级会考或供英国大学生自学参考。因此,它很适合我国高校英语专业学生研读文学作品时参考。

丛书由 A. N. Jeffares 和 S. Bushrui 两位教授任总编。每册的编写者大都是研究有关作家的专家学者,他们又都有在大学讲授文学的经验,比较了解学生理解上的难点。本丛书自问世以来,始终畅销不衰,被使用者普遍认为是英美出版的同类书中质量较高的一种。

丛书每一册都按统一格式对一部作品进行介绍和分析。每一册都有下列五个部分。

① 导言。主要介绍:作者生平,作品产生的社会、历史背景,有关的文学传统或文艺思潮等。

② 内容提要。一般分为两部分:a. 全书的内容概述;b. 每章的内容提要及难词、难句注释,如方言、典故、圣经或文学作品的引语、有关社会文化习俗等。注释恰到好处,对于读懂原作很有帮助。

③ 评论。结合作品的特点,对结构、人物塑造、叙述角度、语言风格、主题思想等进行分析 and 评论。论述深入浅出,分析力求客观,意在挖掘作品内涵和展示其艺术性。

④ 学习提示。提出学习要点、重要引语和思考题(附参考答案或答案要点)。

⑤ 进一步研读指导。介绍该作品的最佳版本;版本中是否有重大改动;列出供进一步研读的参考书目(包括作者传记、研究有关作品的专著和评论文章等)。

总之,丛书既提供必要的背景知识,又注意启发学生思考;既重视在吃透作品的基础上进行分析,又对进一步研究提供具体指导;因此是一套理想的英语文学辅导材料。



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# Introduction

## The author's life

David Herbert Richards Lawrence was born at Eastwood, a colliery town in the Nottinghamshire countryside, in 1885. His father was a coal-miner, uneducated but a good story-teller, a dancer and nature-lover, and a man of energy and warmth. His mother, a former teacher, had married for love but soon came to resent her husband's coarseness. The five children grew up in a divided, often violent home. David Herbert (the fourth child) was impressed by his father's stories of the mines, but was closer to his mother, especially in adolescence after she nursed him through an illness. *Sons and Lovers* (1913), Lawrence's third novel, portrays, in the hero's love for his mother and her inhibiting possessiveness, the author's own experience.

He owed much to Mrs Lawrence's ambition for her children. Regular attendance at chapel and Sunday-school gave him a thorough knowledge of the Bible, whose style and imagery influenced all his later writing. The chapel's Protestant, Nonconformist tradition helped to form Lawrence's blend of moral seriousness and unconventionality, and—as he recognised—a tendency to preach. At twelve, urged on by his mother, he won a scholarship to Nottingham High School. He became a pupil-teacher in 1902, and, after two years (1906–8) at Nottingham University College, a schoolmaster in Croydon.

He read widely during these years and discussed what he read with friends, including Jessie Chambers, a friend from a farm near his home; she encouraged him and helped with his earliest stories and poems. He lost his faith in Christianity and began to develop his own religion—venerating 'all gods' and the 'true nature' of Man; it was to inspire his whole life and work. His first novel, *The White Peacock*, came out in 1911, full of faults, yet impressive—and, Lawrence said, 'all about love'.

In 1912 he met the wife of a Nottingham professor; she left her husband and children for Lawrence and they married in 1914. Frieda came from an aristocratic German family (the von Richthofens). Their marriage was troubled but secure. After the appearance of *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence found recognition and friends in literary London. Ford Madox Ford (formerly Ford Madox Hueffer, 1873–1939), who



published Lawrence's earliest pieces in his monthly *The English Review*, had already announced him as a 'big genius'. By 1914, having given up teaching because of illness, Lawrence was a professional writer.

The outbreak of war, which almost demoralised him, brought practical problems: he returned from Germany (where he had been living with Frieda) and moved through various parts of England, unfit for military service, but suspected by the police, partly because his wife was German. He hoped to go to America to found a new type of community—a project called 'Rananim' which interested him all his life; but in 1917 he was refused a passport.

He planned a novel which would be more original, in method and approach to character, than his previous work. Provisionally called 'The Sisters', this became *The Rainbow* (published in 1915) and *Women in Love* (written in 1916). The first edition of *The Rainbow*, considered obscene by most reviewers, was destroyed by court-order. Undeterred, Lawrence wrote and rewrote *Women in Love*, using characters and settings from *The Rainbow* but producing a novel complete in itself and not a sequel in the usual sense. The first English edition was brought out, despite attempts to suppress it, in 1921.

After the war the Lawrences travelled abroad, moving from Florence and Sicily to Ceylon, Australia, and New Mexico; he died of tuberculosis in France in 1930.

His later books continued to study relations between the sexes (with a boldness that often offended). The best later novels are *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, which was not published unexpurgated in England until 1960. *Kangaroo* (1923) is concerned with social and political problems. Lawrence thought *Women in Love* his best novel, and so do many readers. His output was prolific: he published over fifty books—poems, short stories, essays, travel books, and polemic. He was a painter with a flair for colour, an able teacher, a talker, and a keen observer. He was intrigued and inspired by exotic and ancient cultures (Aztec and Etruscan), though his imagination was dominated by the English Midland scenes of his early life.

Lawrence could be infuriating in his dogmatism and combativeness; but his energy and charm, humour and courage were always attractive. He could be naive (as he was in dismissing most philosophy and science) in advancing his own creed of 'the blood', 'the dark gods', and 'the man alive'; he was at his best a visionary, but at worst tedious. Lawrence has divided critical opinion, finding impassioned disciples and detractors. He believed in his own talents and was dedicated to the full use of them. He made himself a part of modern culture.

## General background

*The Rainbow* traces the industrial transformation of a rural community in the course of the nineteenth century; the earlier novel helps to explain the background to *Women in Love*. For generations the Brangwens have lived close to the land they work as farmers; in early Victorian days, squire and vicar were figures of absolute authority in a country village. The coming of railways and mines brings new kinds of hardship and ugliness to the Brangwens' world. (Lawrence considered the worst offence of the Victorian industrialists that of forcing ugliness on the lives of ordinary people.) It also extends the possibilities of life: Ursula leaves home to become a teacher. Her independence and knowledge of life, before marriage, would have been incomprehensible to earlier generations of Brangwens.

Lawrence hated the effects of English industrial and urban growth. He loathed vulgarity in all social classes, and the materialism and conventionality which he thought had enfeebled 'the tough old England that made us'. In *Women in Love* he attacked—in Gerald and his father—two generations of colliery-owners who had lost touch with life. He also ridiculed modernist intellectuals, such as Hermione Roddice and Halliday in the novel. These characters are familiar with radical ideas: with the theory of evolution in the *Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin (1809–82), with the psychology of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), and with the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900)—anti-Christian and 'Dionysian', supporting the 'animal instincts' of Man against 'Apollonian' rationalism. Lawrence, like Birkin in *Women in Love*, was influenced by these writers. But just as Birkin attacks Hermione for shallow intellectualism, Lawrence despised all ideologies and systems which led people away from morality as he understood it: truth to one's own manhood or womanhood. What that meant took Lawrence—like Birkin—time and confusion of mind to work out. But from the start of his career he was dissatisfied not only with modern social conditions but also with much of modern thought.

Socialism was one creed popular among intellectuals and Lawrence was infatuated with it for a time. In 1915 he wrote to the philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) that the framework of society must be 'smashed' and everything nationalised. (The Russian Revolution was about to begin when he was writing *Women in Love*.) But he quickly became impatient with socialism. The First World War disillusioned him. 'In 1915 the old world ended', he wrote later in *Kangaroo*. Man-kind had fallen into a shameful hatred, he felt; belief in progress was discredited. Birkin's pessimism about human destiny reflects Law-

rence's own doubts. Birkin's ideas, like the author's, are more concerned with how to live than with how to organise society.

Lawrence's life and work were shaped by these historical developments. Although it had always been possible for an able young man to free himself through writing from a background of poverty, it was easier for Lawrence, after the 1870 Education Act and the advance of free schooling, to escape from a life of trivial labour. The gradual 'breaking down of social barriers' referred to in *Women in Love* allowed him to move relatively easily through English society, as do Ursula and Gudrun in the novel. Their freedom to choose jobs, friends and styles of life was not achieved by most English girls until later in the century.

In some ways Lawrence was fortunate in living when he did. He had troubles with censors but he managed to publish most of his work and to find a readership. Travel—except during the war—was relatively easy. He lived in circles where freedom of thought was taken for granted. It was unfortunate, however, that he reached his maturity as a writer during the First World War when English public opinion was at its most narrow-minded.

'His problems were central to a main current of growth and difficulty in our society and our culture', writes Raymond Williams.\* The emancipation of women, the effects of industrialism, education in a democratic society, personal freedom in a modern state—issues which the characters face in *Women in Love*—are still growing problems, and not only in English society. Lawrence is more widely read today than ever before.

## Literary background

Lawrence's critical writings show a broad knowledge of English, French, German, Russian and American literature, and also an impatience with almost all earlier novelists. Because he learned from so many other writers and because he was determined to obey his own instincts as a writer and not produce 'imitations' of other people's books, it is difficult to point to precise influences. As a young teacher, Lawrence admired *Anna Karenina* (1875-6) by the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) more than any other novel, but he later spoke slightly of Tolstoy and of another Russian novelist, Feodor Dostoevsky (1821-81), whom he thought morbid. *Buddenbrooks* (1901) by the German Thomas Mann (1875-1955) may have inspired 'The Sisters', but Lawrence attacked Mann's preoccupation with formal beauty,

\* *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*, Chatto & Windus, 1970, Chapter 8.

a 'complaint' which he attributed to the French novelist Gustave Flaubert (1821-80). He is clearly indebted to these European writers, and to English novelists from Jane Austen (1775-1817) to Henry James (1843-1916)—both of whom he disparaged at times. Some critics maintain that his strong moral sense derives from the English tradition in fiction; others that his awareness of social relations was acquired from English novels. It was necessary, though, for Lawrence to disown traditions in order to clarify what he wanted to write.

Many nineteenth-century English novelists, with a large public to entertain, relied on complicated plots, melodrama and sentiment; they were carefully reticent about sexual relations. These conventions were accepted by the most serious and imaginative writers. The master of such popular fiction was Charles Dickens (1812-70), whom Lawrence sometimes recalls in his power to create minor characters. Lawrence called these conventions 'childish', although he recognised their power; he saw too that he could not excel the Victorians as a story-teller. Towards the end of the century Henry James, following French and Russian models, brought an artistry to the English novel which Lawrence suspected: the danger was of putting art before life (as the sculptor Loerke does in *Women in Love*). James would, justifiably, have denied that; but Lawrence, who claimed to be bored by plots like Dickens's, also wanted to avoid James's contrived elegance.

George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans, 1819-80) and Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) are the English novelists with whom he has most in common. Both came from the provinces; both made themselves familiar with European culture; both put intellectual discussions into their stories. They shared a love of nature and a sympathy with uneducated people; they could see historical processes in English life, and show private acts against a social and universal background. Lawrence resembles them in these respects; but, in reading him, there is no sense of imitation.

Lawrence was not alone among his contemporaries in wanting to make a fresh start in fiction. He admired (with reservations) Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), and he read Marcel Proust (1871-1922) and James Joyce (1882-1941)—both more radical in technical innovation than Lawrence himself. But he kept apart from literary movements. When *Sons and Lovers* brought success, he came to know Katherine Mansfield (1888-1923), John Middleton Murry (1889-1957), E.M. Forster (1879-1970), and other literary figures, some of whom he portrayed unflatteringly in *Women in Love*. He remained his own man.

English poetry is part of the literary background to the novels. His characters are readers of poetry. John Keats (1795-1821), P.B. Shelley (1792-1822), S.T. Coleridge (1772-1834), and Robert Browning (1812-

89), are quoted in *Women in Love*. Imagery, mood and rhythm show the author's familiarity with Romantic poetry. Lawrence's own verse improved when he discovered the American Walt Whitman (1819-92). He wrote only a few entirely successful poems, but his imagination was that of a poet.

## A note on the text

*Women in Love* was written between April and November, 1916. It was privately printed in New York in 1920 and published in London in 1921 by Martin Secker. There is an edition by William Heinemann, London, 1954. A paperback edition was issued by Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, in 1960; this has been constantly reprinted. Page references in these Notes are to the Penguin edition.

## Part 2

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# Summaries

of WOMEN IN LOVE

### A general summary

Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen are dissatisfied with their lives at home as unmarried schoolteachers in a small mining town in the Midlands of England. At a wedding in the neighbourhood, each notices a young man. Ursula is intrigued by Rupert Birkin, a school-inspector. She has met him briefly and would like to know him better. Gudrun is attracted by Gerald Crich, the handsome, hard-working son of the local colliery-owner.

Birkin is under the sway of his mistress, Hermione Roddice, a baronet's daughter, a woman of strong will and advanced opinions. With Birkin she visits Ursula's school and invites the sisters to the country house—Breadalby—which she shares with her brother. At the house-party Birkin becomes interested in Ursula. His relationship with Hermione has become highly strained and quarrelsome. Overwrought, Hermione strikes him with a paperweight, and he escapes from her demanding dependence on him. Gerald Crich, who is tiring of the kind of girl he can pay for during trips to London, is attracted by Gudrun. He thinks of her as a social inferior, but she is beautiful, unusual—and an artist.

Birkin is filled with a despairing contempt for the modern industrialised world in which his friend Gerald has flourished by bringing new technology to the mines. Birkin believes in spontaneity, sensuality, and society's need for a fresh start; he has little hope for mankind, but retains a private faith in 'ultimate' marriage and ideal friendship. He elaborates his views with Gerald and with Ursula. She finds his 'preaching' tiresome; a feminine grasp of reality tells her that much of his talk about humanity's doom is wrong; but she likes him. Though frail and sickly, he has energy, liveliness and integrity.

Gudrun is fascinated by Gerald. When the sisters watch him forcing his mare (terrified by the noise of a passing train) to stand at a railway-crossing, Ursula is horrified at his cruelty. Gudrun is excited.

Ursula is jealous of Hermione, who is trying to recover her power over Birkin. Birkin abandons his belief in sensuality and develops a theory of marriage as a union beyond love in which the partners are

like two stars in harmony: independent, but committed to each other. He wants to combine such a relationship with an ideal friendship with Gerald. Ursula simply wants him to love her. He fears the 'Great Mother' instinct of a woman which makes her want to dominate a man.

The two relationships intensify and the contrast between them becomes clearer during a lake-party given by old Mr Crich at Shortlands, the family home. Birkin is still beset by problems—intellectual, sexual and spiritual—while Ursula hopes for uncomplicated happiness; but their partnership comes to seem healthier and more promising than that of Gerald and Gudrun which increasingly appears limited, perverse, and perhaps even deadly.

The lake-party ends with the drowning of Gerald's sister and her would-be rescuer. (Gerald, ominously, killed his brother in a childhood accident.) Mr Crich is dying. Frequent mention of death creates a sombre background to the courtship. An incident in which Gerald ruthlessly subdues a boisterous pet rabbit (belonging to the youngest Crich child, Winifred, who is now Gudrun's pupil) implies that a pleasure in cruelty and wilfulness is a part of the bond between them.

Birkin is trying to accept the prospect of marriage. One night he throws stones into the moon's reflection in a pool, seeing there the power of ancient goddesses and the dominating urge which he fears in women. Another evening he wrestles naked with Gerald, pursuing inward health through bodily contact. He emerges more stable from these encounters. After difficulties and quarrels, he and Ursula become lovers, resign from their jobs, and agree to marry when Ursula is ready. Their first night together, spent out in the forest, leaves them mystically united. Ursula delays the marriage, however, until she is 'ready in herself'; then quarrels with her parents when he announces it too abruptly. The marriage takes place and Birkin, who now believes that Ursula has saved him from the desperate confusion of his past life, insists that she write to her parents.

Mr Crich dies. A few nights later Gerald visits his father's grave and then makes his way to Gudrun's bedroom. Although he is comforted and reassured after their night together, Gudrun is not. There is no mystic union here. When Birkin renews his offer of sacred friendship it is implied that Gerald, in refusing, shows himself too inhibited to make the restless Gudrun happy as a wife.

The two couples (Gerald and Gudrun not yet married) spend a Christmas holiday in Austria. Departure from England brings Ursula and Birkin closer, but Gudrun is unable to return Gerald's passion. When the Birkins go south to Italy, Gudrun decides that she will not marry Gerald and they become trapped in a dreadful conflict. She flirts

with another guest at the hostel—a gnome-like sculptor—until Gerald, in a rage, attempts to kill her. He then walks to his death in the mountains. Gudrun is unmoved. Birkin regrets the friendship, and with it the completeness of life that he might have known.

## Detailed summaries

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### Chapter 1. Sisters

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Ursula Brangwen, at twenty-six, and her sister Gudrun, at twenty-five, are unmarried and living at home, teaching at a grammar school. Gudrun, who has been an art student in London, observes that marriage is the next step. Both are nervous of the subject. They set out to see a wedding taking place at Willey Green near their Midland mining town of Beldover.

Smartly dressed (Gudrun likes brightly-coloured stockings), they appear out of place on their walk; Gudrun hates the way the mines spoil the countryside. At the wedding, Gudrun is attracted by the bride's brother, Gerald Crich, the son of the colliery-owner. Handsome and successful, he looks an upright English gentleman. Ursula wonders about Rupert Birkin, whom she knows slightly as a school-inspector. Slight and pale and unconventional, he hides his awkwardness; she is irritated and charmed by him. She watches, too, the striking, aristocratic figure of Hermione Roddice, a remarkable woman and an intellectual of radical views. Beneath her imposing public figure Hermione feels vulnerable; she depends on her relationship with Birkin and dreads losing him.

There is a cheer from the crowd when the bridegroom arrives late and chases after the bride. The girls' father, Will Brangwen, a school handicraft instructor, plays the wedding march. When the guests leave the church Hermione possessively seeks out Birkin. Gudrun is deeply disturbed by the sight of Gerald Crich.

#### NOTES AND GLOSSARY:

- Artemis:** Greek goddess of hunting and chastity  
**Hebe:** Greek goddess of youth and cupbearer to the gods  
**reculer pour mieux sauter:** (*French*) stepping back in order to jump further ahead  
**Chelsea:** a district of south-west London which is frequented by artists  
**Sussex:** a pleasant, rural county in the south of England, quite different from Beldover



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## Chapter 2. Shortlands

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The Criches' home, 'a sort of manor farm', is in the country but within sight of smoke from the mines. Gerald is host after the wedding because his father is ill. Skirts rustle and servants hurry. Birkin and the eccentric Mrs Crich talk about people: people don't matter, Birkin says. She speaks enigmatically about her children (she has many). Gerald is really the weakest, although he seems strong. She would like him to have a friend.

During lunch the talk becomes general and theoretical. Hermione and Birkin are opposed to 'a spirit of emulation' in society; Gerald thinks it a spur to productivity and progress. After the meal Birkin and Gerald discuss the bride's conduct in racing with the groom at the church this morning. Birkin defends spontaneous individuality. He accuses the conventional Gerald of cynicism, based on unhappiness. There is a tension between the two men, who are attracted despite their differences.

### NOTES AND GLOSSARY:

- Cain:** he killed his brother and was cursed (see the Bible, Genesis 4:8-16)
- Gerald as a boy:** this is based on a real accident in similar circumstances, at a colliery-owner's house near Eastwood

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## Chapter 3. Class-room

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Birkin visits Ursula at school while she is giving a nature lesson on hazel catkins. As they examine the flowers (he wants the children to colour the red stigmas and yellow catkins in their sketch-books), Ursula begins to feel the excitement of love and Birkin looks at her 'with a new pleasure'.

Hermione now intrudes, having spotted Birkin's car. They discuss the reproduction of flowers, and Hermione (who admires the small wood-carvings that Gudrun specialises in) invites the sisters to stay at Breadalby, her father's country-house. Ursula is wary of Hermione, surprised by her bullying and yet intimate manner.

Birkin is furious with Hermione when (misinterpreting his own views) she suggests that education develops consciousness at the expense of spontaneity. Her claim to value 'animal instincts', he tells her, is only a form of intellectualism. He accuses her of a lust for power. Ursula, listening, is frightened by the hatred between them. Birkin tells Ursula that sensuality is all he values now as a key to living. She senses a 'rich-