

约克文学作品辅导丛书

YORK NOTES ON  
**SONS AND  
LOVERS**

儿子与情人

D. H. Lawrence



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NOTE: NOTE ON

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D. H. LAWRENCE



LONGMAN  
LITERATURE  
CLASSICS

# YORK NOTES

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D.H. Lawrence

# SONS AND LOVERS

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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和评论。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。

北京师范大学外文系教授

钱 瑗

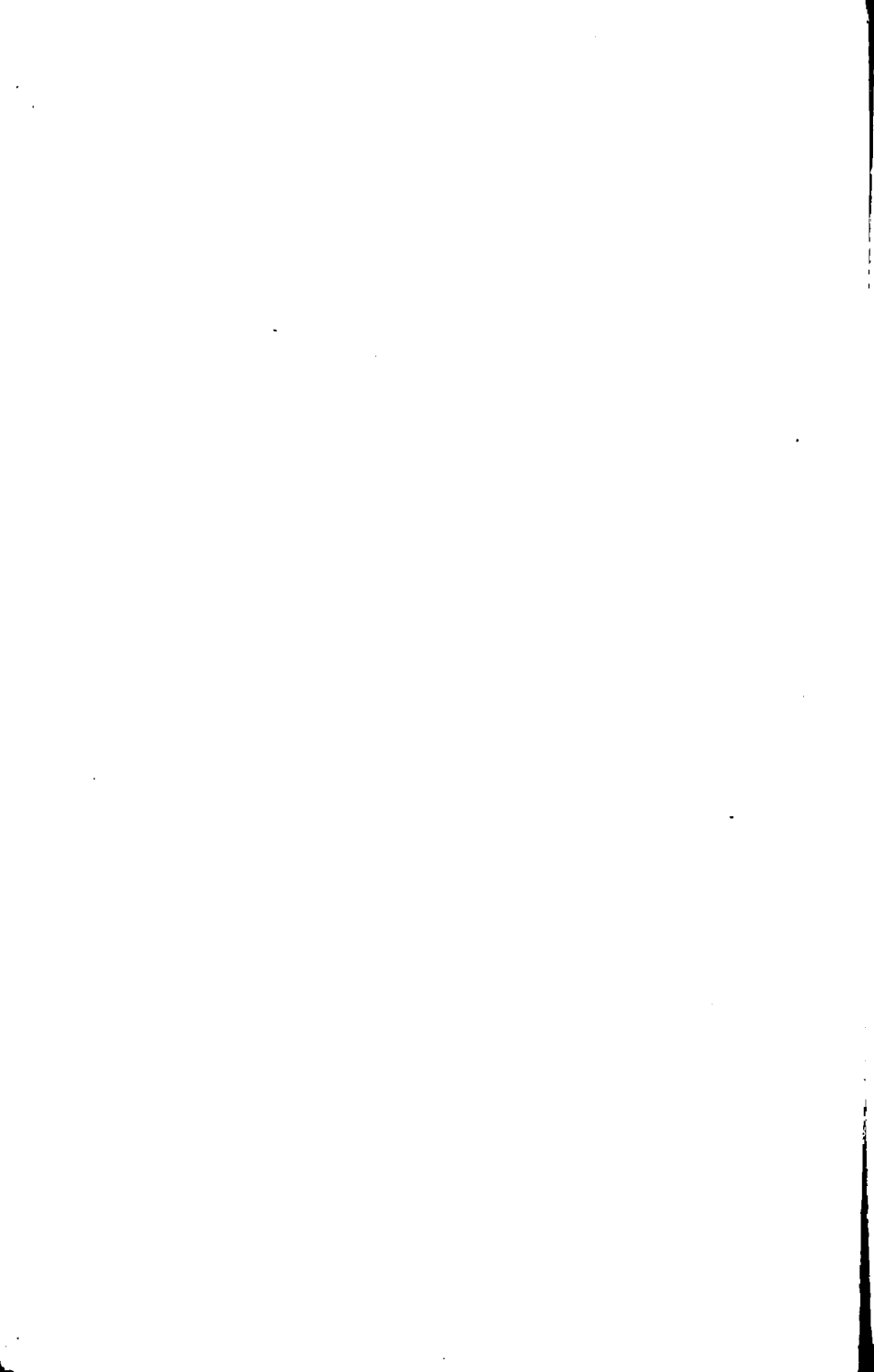
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## Part 1

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# Introduction

### D.H. Lawrence

The life of any great novelist is interesting but the life of D.H. Lawrence, for a student of *Sons and Lovers*, is almost an essential study. *Sons and Lovers* is a fictional version of Lawrence's own childhood and adolescence; the fiction follows the reality so closely that the novel almost seems to be an autobiography.

Like Paul Morel, David Herbert Lawrence was a younger child in a mining family living in a large village near Nottingham. He was born in 1885 in Eastwood (the 'Bestwood' of the novel). His mother, Lydia, was a proud and relatively refined and educated woman who came from a background somewhat superior to the mining community into which she married. She was not happy in her marriage and, once the energy and vitality of her husband had ceased to attract her, she seems to have found life with him very limited and unsatisfying.

Lawrence's father was perhaps not quite as rough as Morel in *Sons and Lovers*. Later in his life Lawrence saw that he had perhaps misjudged his father in the novel; after all, one of Lawrence's main beliefs was that the living and warm is better than the dead and cold, and his father was a vital and attractive character who seems to have been a good dancer as well as a great drinker of beer. However, there is no doubt that Lydia Lawrence was disappointed in her miner husband and that they had noisy arguments which frightened their children.

Lawrence's mother exerted a great influence on him. She encouraged his intellectual and artistic pursuits and helped him to go into the High School in Nottingham where he stayed until he was sixteen. In that year he met a girl called Jessie Chambers who is clearly the original of Miriam. Jessie lived with her parents and brothers on a farm, read romantic literature, attended chapel and had an idealised intellectual affair with young Lawrence which probably did not involve the physical love-making that occurs between Paul and Miriam in the novel.

After school Lawrence worked for a while in Haywood's surgical goods factory, on which Jordan's is based, and then decided to become a schoolmaster. He spent the four years 1902 to 1906 as a trainee teacher and then the two years 1906 to 1908 at Nottingham University College where he finally qualified as a teacher. His early interests were kept up during this training and he studied drawing and music (in which

his mother had encouraged him), botany (Mrs Morel's pride in her garden and Paul's interest in flowers are marked in *Sons and Lovers*) and French (we are reminded of the French literature which Paul and Miriam study together).

In 1908 Lawrence accepted a job in a school in London and therefore, at the age of twenty-three, he left his home for almost the first time. This long period of close attachment to his mother, to his home and to the Eastwood mining community was crucial in Lawrence's development. He went on to write novels about all sorts of people and places, including Australia (*Kangaroo*) and Mexico (*The Plumed Serpent*), but his most successful and convincing work is undoubtedly that which has its roots in his English Midlands background. Perhaps of all his great English novels, including *Women in Love*, *The Rainbow* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, the greatest is *Sons and Lovers* because it is the closest to its author's own experience.

*Sons and Lovers* ends at the point where young Paul decides to go away from home: the end of the novel implies that at last his adolescence is coming to a close. In telling the story of Lawrence's life after his move to London, therefore, I am beginning to go beyond the limits of our novel.

Lawrence's first publication was in 1909 when the *English Review* printed some of his poems. Then in 1911 his first novel, *The White Peacock*, appeared. It was something of a success although neither of Lawrence's parents appreciated this: his mother was dying of cancer, in circumstances very similar to those of Mrs Morel, and only lived long enough to have a copy of the novel placed in her hands. His father was shocked by the amount of money the publishers had paid for the book (£50) and complained that his son had hardly worked hard enough to deserve this much. But while his novel, together with his poems and some short stories, were earning Lawrence some slight literary fame his bad health brought his career as a teacher to an end. He had pneumonia while at the school in London (he was ultimately to die of a related disease, consumption) and suffered from neuritis. From 1912 onwards he gave up working as a teacher and supported himself by his pen.

Although Lawrence left Eastwood for London in 1908 it took him years to break all those ties with his home which form the subject of *Sons and Lovers*. His mother did not die until 1910; he kept up a personal relationship with Jessie Chambers until 1912; he had other women friends in the Midlands and in London who were the originals of Clara Dawes; he frequently revisited Nottingham. Only in 1912 did the final break come. In that year he met Frieda, a German woman married to an English professor in Nottingham, with whom he soon went abroad and with whom he was to spend the rest of his life. Paul

Morel's repeated threats to go abroad at the end of *Sons and Lovers* are autobiographical. Appropriately enough Lawrence, who had begun this novel in 1910, was able to finish it, with Frieda's help, while living abroad. It was published in 1913.

*Sons and Lovers* is the final testament of Lawrence's background and its profound influence on him. From this point onwards his life followed a quite different pattern. Instead of the situation portrayed in the novel Lawrence's later life was characterised by his permanent relationship with Frieda, his virtual self-exile from Britain and by his status as a full-time writer. It was also marked by ill-health and, at times, by poverty.

- In 1912 Lawrence went first to Germany, where he was joined by Frieda. They walked over the Alps together and settled for a time in Italy. Apart from some time spent in Germany and a few months in England, during which Frieda tried to arrange a divorce from her husband, Lawrence stayed in Italy while he wrote *The Rainbow*. His self-exile, however, was interrupted by the First World War which forced him to return to England. With a German wife he was a natural object of suspicion to the British authorities and for this, as well as for ideological reasons, the war years were a nightmare to him.

To make matters worse *The Rainbow* was declared obscene and suppressed soon after it was published in 1915; after that Lawrence had difficulty in getting his other work published in Britain. *Women in Love*, although completed in 1916, was not published until 1920 and then it appeared privately in New York.

After the war the Lawrences travelled to Italy and settled for some time in Sicily. In 1922 they started a long journey round the world during which they stopped for extensive periods in Ceylon, Australia, Mexico and the United States. During this trip, and in fact throughout this period 1918 to 1925, Lawrence wrote an immense amount including travel books, poetry, essays, short stories, history and, of course, his novels *The Lost Girl*, *Aaron's Rod*, *Kangaroo* and *The Plumed Serpent*. All of these reflect his main philosophy (which will be discussed in a later section) and the last two novels mentioned have a political theme. Lawrence had by this time become an idealist who believed in the possibility of creating a better world and his restless travelling is partly explained by his desire to observe other forms of culture which might be superior to the culture of war-torn northern Europe.

The last part of Lawrence's life was spent in Europe, however. With Frieda he spent the years 1925 to 1930 in Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Germany and France. He died in the south of France in 1930. During this period he worked hard when illness permitted and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was only one of the many results.

Lawrence was only 45 when he died. During the last twenty years of

his life he travelled and wrote about as much as was humanly possible. This gives us a clue to his personality and to his philosophy: he was an intensely energetic person and his religion was the energy and intensity of life.

## Lawrence's literary and cultural background

Lawrence's life and work represent a revolt against the values and ideals of the nineteenth century. We can consider this from a social and psychological point of view and from a literary point of view.

Nineteenth-century England, the England of Queen Victoria (who reigned from 1837 to 1901) was, in Lawrence's view, unsatisfactory. He felt that the society of that period (and the values of that society persisted until at least 1914) was lifeless and artificial. The barriers between classes he found to be obstacles to real, living relationships between people. The industrialisation of Britain had produced a breed of men who were too mechanical and uniform for his taste. The Christianity which was very much the public religion of the nineteenth century was a cold religion full of prohibitions and feelings of guilt. Above all the simple passion of man and woman was not allowed to take its natural course in this rather rigid society.

All this is important to *Sons and Lovers*. There the class conflict is apparent in the relationship between Mr and Mrs Morel. The evils of industrialisation are apparent in the gloomy rows of miners' houses; and in Paul himself we see the struggles of a man emerging from a rather narrow form of Christianity and coming to terms with his own sexuality.

From a psychological point of view Lawrence's revolt against the world in which he grew up is an extreme version of the revolt of many young people against the standards of their parents. Paul Morel's dislike of his father is evident in *Sons and Lovers* and although he clearly loves his mother and needs her the novel is to a large extent the story of his escaping from her influence.

From a literary point of view Lawrence was also a rebel like his contemporaries James Joyce and, in poetry, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. This generation of writers, sometimes called 'Modernist', rebelled against traditional methods of writing novels and poems. In the case of Lawrence this rebellion took various forms: he felt that the novel could become more personal and less objective; he saw the possibility that language could describe in detail the personal experiences of emotion and passion as it were 'from the inside'. His prose often feels as though it were trying to come out of the page and force the reader to agree with it and to feel as its author felt. Lawrence pours his heart and soul into his writing and is passionate and subjective in a way that was not usual in earlier fiction. Instead of the 'broad canvas' on which Dickens

painted, where characters and incidents crowd together in lively confusion. Lawrence concentrates on just a few individuals and explores their souls. At the same time he feels free to express his own ideas directly to the reader, commenting on the action, teaching lessons, even preaching.

James Joyce experimented with a similar concentration on the individual and during the years when Lawrence was conceiving and writing *Sons and Lovers* Joyce was working on his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (finally published in 1916). The 'Artist' in this title is Joyce himself just as Paul Morel is Lawrence himself. At the same time, in France, Marcel Proust was writing the deeply autobiographical *A la recherche du temps perdu* of which the first volume was published in the same year as *Sons and Lovers*, 1913. This subjective tendency in the novel did not stop there. Joyce went on to write a novel in what amounted to a private language (*Finnegans Wake*, 1939) while others, such as Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner, developed a technique of writing novels so subjective that they consist only of the immediate stream of thoughts passing through a character's mind. This is called the 'stream-of-consciousness' method.

Lawrence was not quite as extreme as Joyce but his work always has a personal tone and often (as in *Kangaroo* for instance) his novels are very close indeed to being unchanged accounts of his own experiences.

Another feature of Lawrence's literary background was the influence on him of the novelist and poet Thomas Hardy (1840–1928). Lawrence wrote a long critical study of Hardy but even without this evidence we would know that Hardy had influenced him. Hardy is a great novelist of the countryside and he sets his plots against an intense natural background which is not merely scenery but plays an important element in his novels. Lawrence also has a concentration on nature that is immediately obvious in *Sons and Lovers*. Moments of emotion are often preceded by a detailed description of the scene in which they are set and some of the strongest writing in the novel concerns flowers, trees, hills and the weather.

The Victorian age really came to an end with the First World War (1914–1918) and Lawrence's career developed swiftly after this world-shaking event. In a sense Lawrence was 'proved right'. His increasing rebelliousness and his increasing outspokenness on the subject of sexual relations were less unusual in the 1920s and 1930s than they would have been before the war. However, his most outspoken novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (written between 1926 and 1930), was banned in Britain and in America until 1960. Thus we can see Lawrence as a pioneer of the modern novel, exploring hitherto forbidden territory and opening up a new, frank approach to life.

## Lawrence as a poet

Lawrence was a very prolific writer indeed. Beside his published work (at least fifty different volumes) he wrote letters constantly to all sorts of friends and acquaintances, translated works from the Italian, and at his death left some twenty partly completed works. This is not the place to discuss this work but it is essential for the reader of *Sons and Lovers* to have some idea of Lawrence the poet.

His first complete volume of poetry was published in 1913, the same year as *Sons and Lovers*, and it was followed by nearly a dozen other volumes. His verse is direct, jerky, personal, rather 'unpoetic'. It does not have the regular rhyme and rhythm schemes of traditional verse. Lawrence preferred an irregular, almost conversational tone to the quality we associate with many of the great poets of the past. Lawrence's verse, in fact, has some of the quality of his prose and its concerns are very similar to those of the novels. In our case we can profitably look at the poems that correspond to the period of Lawrence's adolescence. In these early poems the themes of Paul Morel's development are traced in a variety of ways. One poem is even called 'Last Words to Miriam' as though Miriam were a real person.

As a poet Lawrence is interested in nature and in man's physical relationships with nature and with women. He writes of flowers and animals, of fish and insects, of moments of insight into the physical world which he always found so miraculous. There are also satirical poems and mystical religious poems which remind the reader of those elements in his novels.

It has been said that Lawrence was more of a poet in his prose than he was in his poetry. We will see this working in the analysis of *Sons and Lovers*.

## The writing of *Sons and Lovers*

As early as 1910 Lawrence was working on *Sons and Lovers*. At that time it was to be called *Paul Morel* and Lawrence wrote to the publisher in October 1910 that 'about one-eighth' of it was written and that it was 'plotted out very interestingly (to me)'. That 'to me' hints at the novel's autobiographical status.

In 1912, when Lawrence had met Frieda and eloped with her to Germany, he continued writing the novel and was able to finish it by the end of the year. However, Lawrence was almost never satisfied with his work after he had written the first draft and the book which was sent to London at the end of 1912 was a much revised version of the *Paul Morel* book. As late as August 1912 he set about writing the final version, first published in 1913. This demonstrates that Lawrence,

although he was beginning to break away from the more traditional and well-ordered way of writing novels, did not simply pour out his feelings in a formless mass but revised carefully.

## A note on the text

*Sons and Lovers*, in its final version, was published in 1913 in London by Duckworth & Co.; it was the third of Lawrence's novels to appear. Since 1948 it has been available in a paperback edition published by Penguin Books. The hardback edition is published by William Heinemann.



## Part 2

# Summaries

of SONS AND LOVERS

### A general summary

The novel is divided into two parts. In the first part Paul Morel is only one element in the story, in the second part he emerges to dominate it.

The novel opens with a description and analysis of the marriage of Paul's mother and father. Their life together in Bestwood is summarised and explained so that the reader gets a strong impression of the background against which the children are to grow up. Mrs Morel is the central figure and it is she who wins the battle with her husband. The chapter titles make this clear: 'Early married life . . . Another battle . . . Casting off of Morel.' The third chapter is in fact entitled 'The casting off of Morel—The taking on of William'. This 'casting off' and 'taking on' are done by Mrs Morel who, deciding that her husband is no good, turns to her eldest son, William, and gives him the affection and interest that could have been his father's.

Paul comes on the scene first as a baby, then as a schoolboy, and very much as a second son. His mother is proud of him and helps him to develop intellectually and to get his first job, but her chief love is William. William goes away to London, which upsets Mrs Morel, and there meets a pretty but shallow girl whom he brings home to Bestwood for some rather awkward visits. Quite suddenly William develops pneumonia in London and dies, to his mother's great grief. After a period of emotional withdrawal she begins to turn her affections towards Paul.

Thus in the first part of the novel (Chapters 1 to 6) we have been given all the information necessary for an understanding of the main interest of the second part, which is twice as long. This main interest is the development, emotional and intellectual, of Paul. In the first part there has really been very little *story*. We have seen Mr and Mrs Morel moving house and we have witnessed William's emergence from home; we have also seen his death and Paul's first steps in the big world. None of this 'story' is as significant as the emotional conflicts and developments which have taken place. Lawrence is really concerned with the battle between man and woman (Mr and Mrs Morel) and with the inability of William to find a satisfactory woman because he is under his mother's influence. We have also been given a clear picture of the things which are important to young Paul: the fascination and horror