



Women in Love

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Continuing the saga of the last generation of Brangwens in a sequel to *THE RAINBOW*, this novel narrates the tragic involvement among four characters, Rupert Birkin, Ursula Brangwen, Gudrun Brangwen, and Gerald Critch. Gerald's seething passion for Gudrun culminates in his own suicide as he wanders into the Alpine snow where he will freeze to death. Rupert's love for Ursula, equally violent and potentially destructive at times, achieves an uneasy equilibrium that is upset by the death of his close friend Gerald, whom Rupert has loved as much as he has Ursula.

The novel opens with the wedding of Gerald's younger sister and with the boredom experienced by the Brangwen sisters, who are bound to tedious work in the small northern England town of their birth. Rupert's involvement with a willful, domineering aristocratic woman ceases as he becomes increasingly attached to Ursula. In turn, Gerald pursues and captures the mercurial artist Gudrun, and the four decide to vacation together in the Alps. Gerald's untimely end is occasioned by Gudrun's cruel rejection of his affection after the departure of Ursula and Rupert.

In part a roman a clef of Lawrence's relations with Frieda von Richtofen and their friends Katherine Mansfield and Middleton Murry, the novel is also an allegorical representation of the social crisis of Britain in the years immediately following the Great War. Less obviously salacious than *LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER*, the novel is a more sober and philosophical assessment of the decline of Britain's ruling classes.

Bibliography:

Draper, R. P. *D. H. Lawrence*. New York: Twayne, 1964. An accessible introduction to Lawrence's chief works, including useful biographical background and extensive commentary on *Women in Love*.

Kermode, Frank. *D. H. Lawrence*. New York: Viking Press, 1973. Sheds light on the novel's philosophical concerns.

Leavis, F. R. *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968. Includes a lengthy chapter on *Women in Love* that draws attention to overlooked themes. Reassesses the novel's importance.

Miko, Stephen J., ed. and comp. *Twentieth Century Interpretations of "Women in Love."* Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969. Does not cover recent studies, but provides convenient access to a range of important earlier essays and opinions.

Oates, Joyce Carol. "Lawrence's Götterdämmerung: The Apocalyptic Vision of *Women in Love*." In *Critical Essays on D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Dennis Jackson and Fleda Brown Jackson. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1988. A brilliant discussion of symbolism and eschatology in *Women in Love*, informed by Oates's own experience as a novelist.

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Women in Love: Women in Love

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