
A Censorious and Judicious Study of D.H Lawrence's Novel Women in Love

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Abstract:

This research paper which is based on the novel of D.H Lawrence (David et al.) is a thought -provoking research work which is a shadow of Lawrence's writing techniques & his prose humor. The novel "Women in Love" is a spectacular novel that explores literary themes like feminism, stream of consciousness, modernism, autobiographical features & queer theory. There are four major characters in the novel: Ursula Brangwen, Gurdun Brangwen, Rupert Berkin, and Gerald Crich. This novel portrays the journey of love and romance, which is filled with dramatic and psychological fiction. The male characters, Rupert and Gerald, explored themselves mentally and emotionally. These events in the novels reflect the common real-life challenges of people and signify how complicated life is in the dynamic modern era. This paper will deeply analyze the romantic and dramatic fiction of both couples to signify a moral message that before being in love with another human, firstly, an individual should truly love himself and should be open to his own self mentally, emotionally, and psychologically.

Keywords: D.H Lawrence, Love, romance, relationship, stream of consciousness, sisterhood, homosexuality, autobiography.

Introduction

David Herbert Lawrence, commonly known as D.H. Lawrence, was born on 11th Sept. 1885 in Eastwood, Nottinghamshire, England. D.H. Lawrence was purely a British writer because his nationality was British. Lawrence started and finished his all-educational journey in England, United Kingdom. Lawrence started his schooling at Nottingham High School in England when he was around 5 to 6 years old. After his schooling, Lawrence went to the University of Nottingham in his early

twenties. He pursued a Bachelor of Arts in English (known as English Honours today) from the University. Lawrence, in childhood, was deeply interested in literature, reading, and writing, which is why he chose his career path in literature after graduating with a B.A in English. D.H. Lawrence tied the knot with "Frieda von Richthofen" on 13th July 1914. The couple, after the wedding, shifted to France in 1922 due to various reasons. D.H. Lawrence's writings were often controversial in nature, which always challenged the conservativeness of society. Lawrence's wife, Frieda, was also a spectacular writer of the modern era. Lawrence's works never focused on society's norms, which people of the U.K. and their U.K. cultural beliefs were bound by in the 20th century. Lawrence reconnoitered human feelings, psychology, his lifestyle by challenging the patriarchal societal norms of the U.K. Name of some famous novels of D.H Lawrence are "Sons and Lovers" (1913), "The Rainbow" (1915), "The White Peacock" (1911), "The Lost Girl" (1920). The novel "Women in Love" is the sequel to the novel "The Rainbow." "The Rainbow" novel by Lawrence was quite a controversial novel because it included themes like homosexuality which explored themes like queer theory & same-sex relationships. "The Rainbow" novel was supposed to be published originally in the year 1915, but unfortunately, it was published in 1959 (late 20th century) after Lawrence passed away. In the late 20th century, the people of England developed their mindset and thought process regarding human emotions; as a result, in the year 1959, the govt. Of England diminished its ban on this novel. This unfortunate event happened due to its controversial themes, which are mentioned above. Readers of "The Rainbow" novel are aware that the content is related to the childhood of the Brangwen sisters "Ursula" and "Gurdun." They are not biological sisters by blood, but they are very close friends who share a deep emotional bond with each other, so they are referred to as sisters in the novel.

They used to live together in a house owned by Ursula Brangwen. They loved each other's company and bond, so Gurdun lived happily with Ursula. The "Women in Love" novel is called a sequel to this novel because it continues further with the content of "The Rainbow." "Women in Love" portrays the adult life of the Brangwen sisters and their romantic relationships with two men "Rupert Berkin" & and "Gerald Crich." In 1920, when the "Women in Love" novel was introduced, it focused on the complex relationships of Ursula and Rupert and Gurdun and Gerald. The prose also focuses on Rupert and Gerald's sexual orientations according to their feelings and emotions presented in the novel. There is also the reference to Gurdun's sexual attraction towards Ursula because Gurdun was never emotionally satisfied with men in her life, and her character showed few symptoms of homosexuality, which will be analyzed further. Although it cannot be generalized for everyone to believe the

homoerotic characteristics of Gurdun because of his own perceptions, Lawrence himself declared that this novel will present a variety of social and philosophical themes about human nature. "Women in Love," a classical novel that includes themes like romantic fiction and psychological fiction, shows an image of gender standards in England. Till the early 20th century, the people of the U.K. were not very open-minded about human psychology, emotions, and romantic views. D.H Lawrence, for the very first time, named this novel "The Sisters," but since Ursula Gurdun was not their biological sister, he again changed the name to "The Wedding Ring." Then again, to avoid any rumor or controversy about his work, he finally kept the novel's name as "Women in Love."

There was a prologue in this novel, which was published after 1968 as Phoenix II: Uncollected, Unpublished, and Other Prose Works. "Women in Love" has few symptoms of autobiography, too, because critics say that Rupert (the character in the novel) has many characteristics of the author D.H Lawrence. It is believed because, like Rupert, Lawrence also faced complications in his relationships, and and, Lawrence also did a soul search to know his own feelings, emotions, and sexuality. There are also some glooms of the First World War in the novel because the setting of the novel is during the First World War. In this paper, the whole adult literature of these four main characters, Gerald, Rupert, Ursula, and Gurdun, will be discussed and analyzed to get the moral sayings of D.H Lawrence.

Critical Assessment of the Novel

The novel is set in the town of Beldover, a small town best known for the coal mining business in the middle of England, U.K. The novel is set around the First World War in the 1910s. There is a reference to the spring season during these events. In the first scene of the novel, both the Brangwen sisters (not biological sisters as mentioned in the intro) are shown up talking about a wedding ceremony happening in their colony. The wedding was of a wealthy neighbor, Laura Crich. Gurdun was a painter who had just returned from London after completion of her course, and Ursula was a school teacher in a local school. They both are grown-up adults presently as a sequel to "The Rainbow" novel. When Ursula returned from school in the evening, she and Gurdun started discussing attending the wedding ceremony in their neighborhood. When they go to the wedding ceremony, then, two male characters are introduced in the novel. The two men were Rupert Berkin and Gerald Crich. These two boys are related to each other as family friends. Rupert worked as a school inspector, and Gerald was a coal miner in a coal mining factory. Their personalities were completely opposite to each other in reality. Rupert is a light-hearted person with average looks and a high level of patience. On the other hand, Gerald's character

in the novel is referred to as a Herculean, handsome, and tender-hearted man. At the beginning of the novel, Gerald and Rupert have a sour relationship because, once in childhood, Gerald accidentally shoots Rupert's brother, which leads to the tragic demise of Rupert's brother. As the novel proceeds further, their relationship will grow healthier, and they will be emotionally and sexually close to each other.

In the wedding ceremony, when Ursula and Gudrun meet Rupert and Gerald accidentally, they are infatuated in their minds. Their adult mind attracted each other sexually and emotionally. Ursula found Rupert charming, whereas Gurdun was attracted to Gerald. Romanticism theory is reflected in this event from these four characters. As an adult, they develop romantic feelings towards each other, which will be further traversed in the novel. Rupert was already in a toxic relationship with a woman named 'Hermione Roddice.' This woman was aggressive, toxic, and insecure in nature. Due to her insecurity, she had Rupert's life hell. She had always fought with him because of her doubt that Rupert had an affair with any other girl. Rupert tolerated her for some mysterious reason, which will be explored further in this research. After this ceremony, one morning, the Brangwen sisters were taking a walk near a lake named Willey Water (a lake at Shortlands). They saw Gerald enjoying swimming and being naked in the lake. When Gurdun saw Gerald enjoying his swim and being naked, she was envious of him. She thought in her mind that as a female, she could not do the same act as Gerald in the Lake because society has created traditional norms for a woman.

Women were always judged for fulfilling their choices according to them. The U.K. was not supportive of gender equality in that era around the First World War. As a feminist, readers can relate to the jealousy of Gurdun because females from centuries till the present era too compromise with their emotional and adult choices. This is a controversial topic even in European countries today. The lack of feminism is clearly reflected in this event of the novel, which is also a feature of the early modern era in U.K. Further in the scene, Ursula makes a metaphorical biblical reference to symbolize Gerald's sinful act. In the Bible, Cain is referred to as the first killer of his brother Abel, and God punished him with a unique sign to refer to him as a "murderer." Cain was guilty of murdering his own brother. Similarly, Gerald was carrying blameworthiness of killing his own brother accidentally. So, Ursula, as a true friend of Gurdun, metaphorically portrays her concern about Gerald's character because Gurdun is attracted to Gerald. Ursula even said Gurdun has "worn the mark of Cain" to symbolically relate Gerald's act to Cain. According to the Bible, if anyone falls in love with a person who has killed someone like Cain, then he or she is also an equal contributor to that sin. Despite this fact, Gurdun has the same romantic feelings

for Gerald. Through Gurdun's behavior, the "lustfulness" theme is reflected. Gurdun's quality portrays the immaturity and blind want of thrust of adult people who do not do a soul search to awaken what exactly they want from their mind, which leads them to consequences. One day, Rupert and Gerald were traveling by train. Ursula & Gurdun, Rupert & Gerald were traveling separately to Hermione Roddice's estate named 'Breadalby' for the weekend. Now in this scene, a shadow of homosexuality (queer theory) is reflected through the non-verbal communication of the two boys. Rupert suddenly decides to forget their unpleasant past, and he commences a conversation with Gerald. He (Rupert) was reading a newspaper, and then suddenly, he started a chat about the need to reform society for its development through good values.

Rupert also said about his marriage that he is planning to create a new definition of marriage in his life. Rupert was trying to convey a moral message to Gerald that, according to him (Rupert) wanted a world of marriage where no one would be judged for his/her choices. At this present moment in the train, through the body language of the boys (non-verbal communication as mentioned above), the want of physical or sexual desire for each other is reflected clearly. Although Rupert and Gerald had nothing said verbally, their eye contact and posture signified clearly the sexual passion. These events signify how complicated relationships are in this novel. It is not as simple as it looks that Rupert and Ursula, Gerald, and Gurdun are only attracted to each other because Gerald and Rupert's non-verbal communication is filled with lust, too. The genre of this novel is romantic fiction because of these major romantic events between the characters. The hidden queerness of Rupert and Gerald can be analyzed here and in upcoming sections, too. As it was referred to in the introduction, "Women in Love" is a novel that explores deep human connection, emotions, and desires. These are the various acts by which readers can grasp the true meaning of human relationships.

Humans need to explore themselves first emotionally, sexually, and psychologically to fulfill their desires, and this novel signifies this message. As the novel proceeds further, Ursula, Rupert, Gerald, and Gurdun spend the weekend trip on Hermione Roddice's estate. At the dinner, the attractions between Rupert and Ursula and Gerald and Gurdun develop. This is a very complex novel, as mentioned earlier because Rupert and Gerald are not aware of their desires and preferences as life partners. It will not be ethically and morally correct if sexual orientation is generalized to Rupert and Gerald based on one gender. What is on their mind is a mystery to grasp; either they are exploring themselves in sexuality, or they are just hiding their queerness from society by being in a relationship with the opposite

gender. On noticing the rising closeness between Rupert and Ursula, Rupert's present mistress, Hermione, hits Rupert with a lapis lazuli paperweight. Due to this, Rupert runs into the forest out of frustration and does not return to Breadalby; he has had enough of Hermione's nonsense. Now, at Willey Water Lake, Gurdun's skit topples over water, and after seeing Gurdun upset, Gerald suddenly dives in and gets her skit to her. After this care of Gerald, love grows between Gurdun and Gerald. There is also a shadow of animal cruelty when Gerald treats his horse ill to prevent making a noise. Ursula opposes Gerald's behavior, but Gurdun acts neutral. Later, there is again a feeling of romantic development between Rupert and Ursula, which forms their official relationship. Surprisingly, this becomes a reason for jealousy of Gurdun.

Ursula visits Rupert because she cares for him. They both came close because of a deep emotional talk. Rupert portrays his wish for a romantic life to Ursula, saying that he wants a relationship that is not just limited to love and physicality, and he does not want himself to be superior to a male. Ursula understands her feelings and explains to him that he should not think too much about life. After all, life is unpredictable. She finally confesses her love to him, and they both officially become a couple. When Rupert and Ursula returned to Breadalby by holding hands, their closeness was enough to clarify that now they were dating each other. When Gurdun saw their closeness of Ursula towards Rupert, she seemed to be nervous and insecure. Gurdun does not want to share Ursula's care and attention with anyone. She is kind of possessive of Ursula. She is totally emotionally dependent on Ursula for her life. These are the various reasons why it was said in the introduction that some shades of homosexuality will be visible from Gurdun's side, too. Further, Gerald's family throws one summer outdoor party on Saturday. The scene is set in Criches' estate 'Shortland.' Now, two more characters are introduced in the novel. At the party, a scream is heard, which is of Gerald's sister, 'Diana Crich' (she was a teenager), who had drowned in Willey Water. Unfortunately, she dies due to drowning. A young doctor named 'Doctor Brindell' courageously went to save her, but sadly, he drowned himself. He died, too. This was such a sorrowful moment for the Crich family, especially for Gerald.

Gerald has been very attached to his sister since childhood. The whole village was in sorrow, and Gerald was insanely still diving repeatedly to find a clue about his sister. Rupert was not able to tolerate Gerald's unstable condition. So, he himself, too, drains the water, but still, the bodies are not found. Now, in the upcoming scene, there will be a theme of exploitation of the poor by the rich. This happens because Gerald started running his own coal mining business after his father's declining health. His father was not able to bear the tragic demise of his

daughter, so his health was imbalanced. Hence, Gerald took over the business. He handled the factory completely immorally. His father used to handle the business with professionalism and business ethics, but unfortunately, Gerald just thought about the factory's profit by exploiting the workers through unsatisfactory payment. The exploitation of the working class by upper-class theme is portrayed here. This was also the theme of the early modern era, which is reflected in the novel. Gerald had a sister younger sister named 'Winifred;' she was in her twenties. Gerald wanted Gurdun to be his sister's governess for her ethical and well-mannered upbringing. He offered Gurdun this responsibility, and she delightedly accepted it. She accepted this work because she wanted to increase the romantic closeness between her and Gerald. Now, there will be some philosophical talks between Rupert and Gerald in Willey Green at a pond named 'millpond.' They both discuss love, nature, and their beauty. When the love is in the air, Rupert Birkin proposes to Ursula; Ursula is willing to say yes, but her father is the fiction in marriage. Ursula's father would never agree to the marriage of her and Birkin. Ursula's father 'Will Brangwen' reference is given properly in "The Rainbow."

Till the end of the novel, Birkin and Ursula are in a relationship that is unnamed by marriage because of Will Brangwen. Lawrence uses a tremendous quote to narrate the romantic discussion between Birkin and Ursula. The quote is, "They were together in perfect intimacy. He was her intimate, and she his. They were beyond the touch of time and change." This quote considers the infinite love of Birkin and Ursula. At this level of their relationship, it's clear that they are one soul in different bodies. Their words are from the heart, and they both can understand each other sayings even through their eyes. They both were enormously connected with each other emotionally and mentally. Lawrence, by "beyond the touch of time & change," meant that Birkin and Ursula's relationship is unbreakable by the restriction of time and the curb of circumstances, and neither their love is just limited to physicality. Their love is eternal, not just a feeling of lust for physical intimacy. T

he words were pearls in this quote. This was the best moment for Rupert to propose to Ursula. The next scene setting is in 'Shortlands.' Rupert arrives in Shortlands because he is willing to meet Gerald and check his well-being. Birkin was stunned to see the terrible condition of Gerald's coal-mining business. Gerald was completely at a loss. To motivate Gerald, Rupert suggested doing jujitsu together, that too in a naked position. Jujitsu stands for a physical action of the encounter between two or more people without any other equipment; just the hand's capacity is the source of winning. In simple words, it is just a type of wrestling. They did sexual communication while wrestling. Again, a reflection of homosexuality is visible

between them. They share a theme of deep companionship, which proves that it is more than just friends because Rupert again says to Gerald that he will never be able to love any woman (including Ursula) like he loved Gerald. In the 20th century, few critics like E.M. Forster kind of believed that there were possibilities for Lawrence to be a homosexual. There were also rumors in the modern era (20th century) that D.H. Lawrence could be a homosexual because he portrayed homosexuality in "The Rainbow" and "Women in Love." It is also essential to keep in mind that Lawrence himself never declared that he is not straight or he is a homosexual. These are just rumors and perceptions about him by Forster and the people of U.Kthe. As an active reader, it is a good quality to relate and work with the author's personal life, but it is also ethical to remember that one should not generalize any rumor about anyone. It is against someone's privacy. It is also believed that this novel has few features of an autobiographical novel, as said in the introduction, because Lawrence's love life was also a bit complicated, just like Rupert and Gerald. Lawrence, before his marriage with Frieda von Richthofen, was dating a girl named Jessie Chambers in his college days. Jessie was Lawrence's first love of life, and through her motivation, he wrote many novels in his early life.

The first love of life is different from that of a wife. Somewhere, Lawrence always remembered Jessie in his heart, even after his marriage to Frieda. Lawrence imagined himself as Rupert, Ursula as Frieda, and Jessie as Gerald. Critics believe that these three fictional characters portray Lawrence's love life, including his wife and mistress. As the novel proceeds, Mr. Thomas Crich expires. Gerald did not have a healthy relationship with his father, so he was not affected even a little bit by his father's demise. As days pass and Christmas is near to be celebrated, Gerald thinks he should also start a new chapter in his life. He wanted to move on. He thought he needed a partner in his life to make his life beautiful. Since Gerald was very close to Rupert and marrying Gurdun would separate him from Rupert; he wanted to get suggestions from Rupert. Again, there is a portrayal of homosexuality. Rupert suggests to him that he can marry Gurdun but on one condition. The condition of Rupert was that he wanted a Lifetime bond with Gerald till the last breath. Gerald agreed with Rupert. Many readers and critics believe that this novel name should have been kept "Men in Love" rather than "Women in Love."

This is said because, parallelly with straight couples, Ursula and Birkin, Gurdun and Gerald, Gerald and Rupert's sexual desires are also going on. One fact is clear that their friendship involves characteristics of queer relationships. It is proved by their talks and promises that they feel romantically for each other rather than just friends. It is also a myth, or one can say a rumor, about this novel that if Lawrence

had kept the novel's name as "Men in Love" in the early modern era, then it would have been banned again, like "The Rainbow." The reason was the Britain Act which was Obscene Publications Act 1857; this act did not allow queer content because the early modern era was completely homophobic. Since this novel is open to all types of healthy opinions and perceptions, so many critics also believe that Rupert's love for Ursula and Gerald's love with Gurdun was just a formality to portray a homophobic society in which they are heterosexuals. However, any myth cannot be generalized unethically without any facts. There is a spectacular quote used by D.H Lawrence through Rupert's character to define the beauty of art and morality to readers. "The essential function of art is moral. But a passionate, implicit morality, not didactic. A morality which changes the blood, rather than the mind." Rupert verbally says this statement. Rupert Birkin, through this statement, is trying to say that art also teaches people lessons in life. Maybe not directly, but surely indirectly. Those critical things of life that we do not understand directly verbally can sometimes be grasped from art or the beauty of nature.

Lawrence, through Rupert's words, Blood and Mind, portrays that art surely cannot change a person's psychology, but it can transform a person's thinking from negative to positive. Moral has been used in that statement to signify that art always promotes morals and values through its artistic beauty, which is essential for a person because a materialistic world cannot give value to life. As the novel continues, Ursula dares to talk to her father about marrying Rupert Berkin. Mr. Brangwen gets furious and announces his denial about her and Rupert's marriage. Ursula protests and leaves his house. While leaving the house, she had a bad impression of her father, that his love was only a profit and loss for him. He never wanted Ursula to marry a man of her choice and live her life on her own terms. People of the early modern era mostly denied love weddings, which Lawrence shows here that independence as an adult or a child is his or her right. There was no house for Ursula and Rupert to live in after marriage. Hence, they decided to live with the tenant. Rupert always believed that Ursula was prosperous for his fate and a symbol of motivation to motivate his soul. They married each other in the upcoming days. Now Rupert and Ursula are officially a happily married couple. After their wedding, Ursula is concerned about the life of her sworn sister, Gurdun. As she knows that Gurdun and Gerald are in a relationship, she (Ursula) asks Gerald to marry Gurdun to name their relationship officially for a balanced life. Gurdun agrees to Ursula, and he invites Gurdun, Ursula, and Rupert to the U.K. for the wedding celebration and preparation. The Brangwen think about their parents and get upset that they never understood them for their love. They thought their existence was nowhere in their life of choice. Gurdun was satisfied in her mind that she would now also be emotionally settled in her life. Gurdun, Ursula, and Rupert

leave for Europe. The last setting of the novel is shown in 'Austrian Alps.' It is a mountain region in Austria. Everything was going well, but fate had different plans for Gurdun and Gerald. An affair of Gurdun with a homosexual man ruins the happiness of Gerald and Gurdun. The homosexual man named 'Loerke,' was a German artist already living with a companion, but for some mysterious reasons, he attracted Gurdun to himself. He was not physically fit or smart in looks, but he was successful in attracting Gurdun. He was a German artist by profession. Gurdun & Loerke's affair begins. A small reason behind this love affair was also some immaturity of Gurdun and also lack of self-awareness. One day, Gerald came across Gurdun's love letters from Loerke. Gerald was completely shattered, stunned, and furious at Guardian. Gerald even tried to kill Gurdun in aggression and want of revenge by drowning her in a boat in the water. Luckily, Rupert was successful in saving Gurdun from drowning in deep water.

Gerald was not able to balance his mental health, so he died by suicide tragically in a 'snow burial.' He could have managed to escape from being trapped in excessive snow, but he wanted to die in that excessive snow region. Gerald's character comes to an end here. The most mentally and emotionally affected person by Gerald's suicide is Rupert Birkin in the whole world. Rupert's and Gerald's promise that they will remain together forever remains unfulfilled due to fate. One fact was clear: Rupert and Gerald were then friends, so it was not easy for Rupert to move on easily. After a few weeks, Rupert shared his concerns about Gerald's demise and his relationship with his wife, Ursula. Rupert calmly and politely discusses with Ursula that while Ursula is with him, Rupert wants no other woman in his life as a companion. Ursula is his priority in everything in life, but he also admits to her that his relationship with the late Gerald was also very special to him. He also admits that he can never love a woman like he loved the late Gerald. Ursula, as Rupert's wife, might be hurt emotionally, but as a good human being, she understood her husband's emotions and cared for Gerald. As a good wife, she supported and motivated him; this shows her maturity, which is just the opposite of Gurdun's behavior. The novel comes to an end here. In the end, Ursula and Rupert were united, fortunately, but sadly, Gerald suffered due to Gurdun's immature doings and was never able to live a happy married life. The unbreakable promise of Rupert and Gerald reminds the readers of a moral message that it does not matter what our plans are for our loved ones; luck, fate, and time always win at last.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this novel is that a human's life is not as simple as it seems to be from the outside for anyone. If a human being wants to live his or her life with

satisfaction and prosperity, then it is essential to first explore and analyze his or her own self. In the novel, Gurdun is completely lost in her life because she is unaware of what she wants. On the other hand, Ursula was completely stable and balanced in her life because she was mature enough to understand her own self. Gerald and Rupert portrayed a shadow of homosexuality in the novel because somewhere, Lawrence wants to reflect a message that queerness is an integral part of society. Rupert was also a brave person like Ursula, so their compatibility matched. Gerald was too a good human in his place, but unfortunately, he suffered the doings of his partner, Gurdun. Through Gerald's character, Lawrence signified a message that a person always needs to balance his emotions and mental health for a healthy life. Gerald should not have been in excessive guilt and pain because the fault was not of him at all. Sometimes, a person suffers the ill doings of his loved ones, which is completely an immoral fact.

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