

# DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE

## LIFE (1885 - 1930)

David Herbert Lawrence was born in Eastwood in 1885. His father was a miner, while his more educated mother came from a genteel background and was determined her children should rise above their class. After the death of her first son, she placed all of her hopes in Lawrence, whom she encouraged to study hard. While studying at Nottingham University, he met and fell in love with Frida von Richthofen and decided to leave for Germany with her. They married in 1914. During their stay abroad, Lawrence completed *Sons and Lovers*. When war broke out in 1914, the couple returned to England. When he published *The Rainbow*, the book was banned for its treatment of physical love. Lawrence responded to this cultural repression by going into self-imposed exile. In the company of Frida, he travelled the world in search of places uncontaminated by modern civilization. He died of tuberculosis in Venice in 1930.

## ACHIEVEMENT

Lawrence's novels and short stories created a picture of British society at a time when the novel was introspective and concerned with depicting the mental processes of one or more characters. He achieved a fresh honesty and recognition of female sexuality and the importance of sex in human relations. The great theme of his work is the conflict between the rational mind and inner impulses. Lawrence felt that middle-class respectability deprived men and women of their physical, passionate natures.

Among Lawrence's best known works may be mentioned:

- ***Sons and Lovers***, a semi-autobiographical novel about an excessively possessive mother's love and its consequences on her son's psychological and sexual development;
- ***The Rainbow***, a study of the nature of sexuality and the problems of marriage;
- ***Women in Love***, again on the problems of man-woman relationships;
- ***Lady Chatterley's Lover***, it's both the story of a passionate love and a study of class conflict and the clash between industrialization and nature.

## SONS AND LOVERS

Lawrence's first major novel is autobiographical. Above all, the novel records the closeness of this relationship with his mother and his dependence on her. The novel is also one of the most significant modern examples of **bildungsroman**, charting a young man's discovery of his true self and his potential as an individual in a situation that threatens to suffocate him.

Lawrence believed that man's authentic nature was realized in **love**. In his view, love frees individuals from rigid conventions. Love allows Paul Morel, the main character of the novel, to define his own nature and desires through the women that he falls in love with. He loves three women in the course of the novel: **Miriam**, a spiritual girl, **Clara**, a liberated married woman. Both of these relationships exist in conflict with the dominant love of his life: his **mother**. Lawrence's depiction of the mother-father-son emotional triangle coincides with Freud's theories about **Oedipus complex** and powerful and deep impulses involved in child-parent relationships.

**PLOT.** The novel begins before Paul Morel's birth and describes the marriage between his parents: a miner, Walter Morel, and a young schoolteacher, Gertrude Coppard. Once married, the couple

discover how incompatible they are. Gertrude Morel transfers her affections to her eldest son William. In the meantime Paul, her last child, is born and after William's death, she focuses all her love on him. Paul returns her love, to which is added an often murderous hate for his father. When he is sixteen, he meets Miriam. They became closer and closer and Mrs Morel grows more and more possessive and jealous of her son. Eventually Paul finds Miriam's spiritual intensity suffocating. When he is twenty-three he has a love affair with a married woman, Clara. Where Miriam is spiritual, Clara is sensual and physical and suffocates him in a different way. All this time Paul's mother has been suffering from a long and painful illness. Paul decides to dissolve all the morphine pills in milk and give them to his mother to put her out of her suffering. At the end of the novel Paul takes his farewell of Miriam and Clara and despite the void left by his mother he resolves to make a life of his own.

Notebook