

women in love

Reviewed by Janet Fraser

D.H. Lawrence considered "Women in Love" his best book. Director Ken Russell has reduced the ponderous comments on industrial England in the early twentieth century found in the original novel and emphasizes, instead, the pulsing, violent nature of the men who created this society. The result is an exciting, deeply disturbing film which arouses in the viewer emotions which beforehand lay dormant. Lawrence has created an explosive situation—four larger-than-life characters who have the power to make or break each other. Suspense in the movie is maintained by continuous action and change of scenery to prevent boredom, by comic relief and through the tight performances of a talented cast.

The story introduces us first to two school teacher sisters, Ursula (Jennie Linden) and Gudrun (Glenda Jackson). You can see right from the beginning that these two are unusual, strong-minded women who get whatever they want—in this case, Rupert Birkin (Alan Bates), and Gerald Crich (Oliver Reed).

To Crich, son of a wealthy industrialist, the organization of his father's coal mine is his only reason for living, until he falls passionately in love with Gudrun. Gerald's fascination with Gudrun's independence and lust for life mark

his downfall, for it is these qualities that eventually destroy him. Although he is very inhibited, Gerald is driven by forceful emotions that manifest themselves only in physical relationships. The only way he can combat Gudrun when she says that he is crude and lacks "finesse", when she injures his pride, is to attack her. The ultimate expression of his devotion and attraction to Rupert is shown during a wrestling match when the two naked men's struggle simulates making love. Gerald is deeply disturbed by the fact that he is incapable of returning Rupert's love, by the mockery his mother makes of his father's funeral, by any inefficiencies in the factory, and, most of all, because Gudrun does not need him.

Rupert betrays the cynical philosophies he extolls wherever he goes, by his optimistic love for Ursula and his idealistic belief in Gerald. His fatalistic view of life contrasts with his sensual nature: he celebrates the grasses of a wheat field with his body, as fiercely and passionately as he makes love with Ursula. Ursula is the most conventional of the group and also has the greatest potential for personal happiness. In surrendering herself to Rupert, in mind as well as body and being sincere in her affection for him, she achieves a permanent relationship for them.

The love-hate relationship between Gerald and Gudrun is due to Gudrun's unpredictable personality. She is an emancipated woman—brilliant, eccentric, wild, sensuous—her restless spirit could neither be tamed by one man nor satisfied by a thousand. Enveloping herself in a world of fantasy, she wanders around the bars of her town, one night had an affair with a homosexual artist, and in one particularly funny scene, she frightens away a bunch of cows with her erotic dancing. Gudrun becomes aware of how mediocre her life really is through the prodding of a talented artist who says she is a "remarkable woman." She begins to despise the weakness she sees in Gerald's character, and punishes him for wanting

too much of her without giving enough of himself. When Gerald commits suicide because he cannot ever hope to be loved by the only person who shapes his existence, she is candid about her emotions. It is not so much grief or guilt that Gudrun feels, but rather, pity, and relief that the tense situation has exploded, and left her free again. Glenda Jackson is really fantastic in this part—you cannot imagine her as anyone but Gudrun. She is not beautiful nor even mildly pretty, but the enigmatic quality in her face, her graceful movements, and a low, husky voice make her extremely attractive. Her portrayal of an enormously vital personality is self-disciplined and therefore she never gets corny or melodramatic.

Gudrun is symbolic of the yearning intellectuals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had to return to nature and the irrational aspects of life, and their disenchantment with the highly organized industrial society they inhabited. Gerald had both power and money but he did not have love—his passions, both in sports and sexual encounters, were rebellions so that he would not become like the machines he so efficiently incorporated into his factory. Lawrence is no romantic, however. He deals with human beings sympathetically but without illusions. I felt during the movie that the author really understood what makes men do the things they do, how they can never be completely satisfied, and why life never really fulfills its promises.

"Women in Love" is probably one of the most profound novels written in this century, and for once movie producers have not ripped it to shreds. What could have degenerated into a really trashy film because of the explicit sex contained in the story, does not. The movie is done in good taste with competent actors, and realistic re-creation of that period, and is in close keeping with the original dialogue. It seems a shame that the movie was only on for three days at the "Gaiety" because "Women in Love" has got to be one of the best things to come out this year.

Dear Santa:

After eighteen or twenty years of writing letters to Santa it may be difficult to decide what to ask for. Here are some letters from people who've had twice that that amount of time yet can still think of lots of things they want.

ANNE MURRAY

Dear Santa,

After years of singing at the Red and Black and College Hill Socials, I've finally reached the top. Now I've made it, I've discovered that to keep my image I can't have any fun. For Christmas, Santa, please give me:

1. singing lessons from the thirty-two voice St. Louis Aquarium Choir
2. a week in Springhill, Nova Scotia
3. a starring role in a movie with Robert Goulet
4. Glen Campbell

RICHARD NIXON

Dear Santa,

My list is not just for me, but for all the people of America. During my term as President I would like to get a few things that we already possess in all but name.

For Christmas, I want:

1. Ontario and the rest of Canada
2. Brazil and the rest of South America
3. Puerto Rico
4. Taiwan

P.S. I would also like to get Cuba and Chile back.

RICHARD HATFIELD

Dear Santa,

I've been premier for over a year now and haven't got much to show for it, except some magazine articles calling me Canada's most eligible bachelor. For Christmas I want:

1. all New Brunswickers to eat a box of potato chips a day
2. a Playboy Club in Fredericton so I'd have somewhere besides the R-Cade to go
3. my own Piper Cub bunny plane
4. American firms from Ontario to move to New Brunswick.

JUDY LAMARSH

Dear Santa,

I've retired from public life more completely than I dreamed possible. Santa, I would like to get back into the public view. Could I please have at least one of the items on my list.

1. a sex-scandal
2. a biography of my by Lester Pearson
3. the public discovery that I've been secretly married to Mao Tse-Tung for the last fifteen years
4. the Trudeau name their baby after me

PIERRE TRUDEAU

Dear Santa,

What I would really like for Christmas is to have all my blunders of the past two years erased, especially in the economy. Since this is impossible, I would like:

1. some miracle to boost the economy since I don't know how to do it myself
2. to dispense with all the bother of parliament and elected representatives and let me and my friends be left alone to rule the country
3. the Americans to move out of Canada, selling all their business to Canadians—for one dollar.
4. a cradle

JAMES DINEEN

Dear Santa,

The campus has been very quiet since I've been President. The dictatorship of the previous regime has settled into a quiet bureaucracy. All I would like for Christmas is:

1. a latin tutor so I can pronounce the graduating students names a little easier at Encaenia
2. a new pair of skis, since I broke mine last year, when I broke my leg
3. flared trousers
4. a meccano set