

Reading the 'Restored' Text of 'Wintry Peacock'

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The 'General Editors' Preface' at the front of each of the individual volumes in the Cambridge edition of Lawrence's works informs the reader that the central aim of the Cambridge project is to "provide texts which are as close as can now be determined to those [Lawrence] would have wished to see printed". In practice, of course, this can pose, in the case of a constantly-revising author such as Lawrence, serious problems concerning the authority of individual manuscript, typescript and published versions of a piece of writing. John Worthen, in an essay on Lawrence's 'multiple' texts, has discussed a number of the problems facing an editor of Lawrence's works.¹ In particular, the absence of manuscripts and typescripts can hinder an editor's attempt to determine authorial intention. This has already resulted in an omission in reproducing the text of a short story in one of the Cambridge editions. The omission occurred in Bruce Steele's editing of the short story 'Wintry Peacock' for the collection *England, My England and Other*

¹ See Worthen's essay, 'DH Lawrence: Problems With Multiple Texts', in Ian Small and Marcus Walsh eds., *The Theory and Practice of Text-Editing: Essays in Honour of James T. Boulton* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 14-34).

Stories, and it is with this oversight - and its subsequent rectification - that my essay will concern itself.²

The compositional and publication history of 'Wintry Peacock' is highly complex. The story was written in Middleton, Wirksworth, in January 1919. It was written into a 'Sterling' school exercise book, currently part of the George Lazarus collection in the possession of the Hallward Library at the University of Nottingham.³ What happened to the story between this time and February 1920 is unknown. In February 1920, Lawrence, in Sicily, received a request for a short story for a new review to be edited by Michael Sadleir out of Oxford. Lawrence sent on 'Wintry Peacock' to Sadleir, and agreed the fee of £10 for the story. In the summer of 1920, Sadleir's new review fell through. Shortly after he had sent the story to Sadleir, however, Lawrence received another request for a story: this time from Carl Hovey, editor of the *Metropolitan* magazine in New York. Hovey agreed to buy 'Wintry Peacock' for \$250: the equivalent of over £60 and an excellent sum, at this time, for a short story.⁴ Lawrence asked Sadleir to send on a copy of the typescript to Hovey, but Sadleir, now having no need of the story, sent his own copy to New York. In October

² Details for the two editions of *England, My England and Other Stories* referred to in the text of the essay are as follows, with my abbreviations in square brackets:

DH Lawrence, *England, My England and Other Stories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, Ed. Bruce Steele [Cambridge])

DH Lawrence, *England, My England and Other Stories*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1995, Ed. Bruce Steele; Introduction and Notes by Michael Bell [Penguin]

Where I quote from these editions I use parentheses, with an abbreviation followed by a page number.

³ Manuscript La Z 1/15

⁴ John Worthen quotes the sum Lawrence received from Hovey as evidence of "the advantage he gained by publishing in America". See John Worthen. *DH. Lawrence: A Literary Life*, London: Macmillan, 1989, p. 108

Lawrence received Sadleir's £10 in spite of the fact that 'Wintry Peacock' was not used. The story did not appear in the *Metropolitan* magazine until 21 August 1921. When it did appear it had acquired an editorial sub-title ('The Lance-Corporal Comes Home from the War'), plus two illustrations.

In October 1921, Lawrence agreed to allow Sadleir to include 'Wintry Peacock' in his new venture, *New Decameron III*, to be published in Oxford by Basil Blackwell. Lawrence kept the £10 and Sadleir had his story, sent on to him by Lawrence's American publisher, Thomas Seltzer. Taking its title from Boccaccio, the *New Decameron* series collected together various stories under a narrative linkage. Lawrence was asked to make a few changes from the *Metropolitan* proofs to fit the *New Decameron III* format, and for this Blackwell paid him a further £21 in December 1921.⁵ The story was, then, a rather lucrative one for Lawrence. It appeared in Sadleir's collection on 15 June 1922. The agreement with Sadleir meant that Lawrence had to negotiate with Blackwell for the release of 'Wintry Peacock' for inclusion in the English edition of *England, My England*: this, in turn, delayed publication of that collection in England until January 1924, fifteen months after Seltzer's American edition, which appeared in October 1922.

It is, as I have already indicated, a highly complex history of composition and publication for so short a piece of writing, and yet that is not the end of the story. When Bruce Steele

came to edit 'Wintry Peacock' for the Cambridge edition of 1990, he justifiably used the *Metropolitan* text, corrected for accidentals from the manuscript, as the base-text. There was, however, one crucial piece of compositional evidence missing from Steele's repertory. He had the manuscript, and he had the published versions, but he did not have the typescript upon which Lawrence must have made the fairly sweeping changes to the manuscript to produce the *Metropolitan* version for Hovey. He notes in his editorial introduction: "it is known that Lawrence made extensive revisions to the story in a typescript which cannot now be located" (Cambridge, xxxix). In a footnote he remarks that this typescript had been given by Frieda Lawrence to her lawyer in 1938 (its state was described in a descriptive catalogue of Lawrence's manuscripts by Lawrence Clark Powell).⁶ By an irritating quirk of fate, this missing typescript turned up during 1990 in the collection of George Lazarus: it is now in the library of the University of Nottingham.⁷

So, how do the changes to this typescript vary from the text prepared by Steele for the Cambridge edition? The answer is in one particular aspect, seemingly overlooked by Carl Hovey when he published the altered typescript of the story in his magazine: Lawrence chose to break the story down into three

⁵ In the *New Decameron III* version (published under the sub-title of 'The Poet's Tale') there is no reference to the war, and Alfred is changed from a returning Lance-Corporal into a former chauffeur.

⁶ See Lawrence Clark Powell, *The Manuscripts of DH Lawrence: A Descriptive Catalogue*, New York: Gordon Press, 1972, p. 24: "CORRECTED TYPESCRIPT, 26 pages (8x10). Many pages completely rewritten between the lines in Lawrence's hand"

⁷ Manuscript La L 13/2. The manuscript pages are numbered 3-26 (the first two pages - which Lawrence crossed through - are missing).

sections. The significance of this decision on Lawrence's part was acknowledged by Steele when he re-edited the story for the Penguin imprint of the Cambridge *England, My England and Other Stories*, published in 1995 with an introduction and notes by Michael Bell. In what follows, I will argue for its overall importance to the way we read the story.

The Cambridge edition notes that 'Wintry Peacock' may have had its origin in a dream Lawrence reported to Lady Cynthia Asquith in a letter of 3 June 1918, six months before he penned the story. Lawrence's account of the dream runs as follows:

When I had been to some big, crowded fair somewhere - where things were to sell, on booths and on the floor - as I was coming back down an open road, I heard such a strange crying overhead, in front, and looking up, I saw, not very high in the air above me, but higher than I could throw, two pale spotted dogs, crouching in the air, and mauling a bird that was crying loudly. I ran fast forwards and clapped my hands and the dogs started back. The bird came falling to earth. It was a young peacock, blue all over like a peacock's neck, very lovely. It still kept crying. But it was not much hurt. A woman came running out of a cottage not far off, and took the bird, saying it would be all right. So I went my way. - That dream in some oblique way or other is connected with your 'aura' - but I can't interpret it.⁸

⁸ James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson eds., *The Letters of DH Lawrence Volume III*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 247-248

The events of the dream are remarkably clear to Lawrence, but the latent content resists his interpretation. In the writing of 'Wintry Peacock' six months later, Lawrence drew upon the material of the dream, re-casting it in a realistic setting yet carrying over the strong sense of a dream context and of a separable manifest and latent content.

The dream was narrated to Cynthia Asquith in the first person: 'Wintry Peacock' would be Lawrence's sixth first-person short story.⁹ The setting is now 'Tible', based on Ible, a hamlet close to Lawrence's house in Middleton. Scrutiny of the original manuscript shows that he deleted an opening line: "Some winter days among the hills are more lovely than Summer".¹⁰ This opening would have drawn upon the landscape around Lawrence's house (Mountain Cottage), and reproduced the "deep snowy morning"¹¹ he wrote of to Koteliensky on New Year's Day 1919. In place of the deleted opening he chose (in manuscript) to write of the narrator's meetings with Maggie Goyte - the woman from the cottage - in summer and autumn, still setting the main action of the story in winter. The decision to frame the story in this way appears, then, to have been a very conscious one on Lawrence's part. When he revised the story for publication, he cut the opening section and plunged straight into a description of the freshly-fallen snow: "There was thin, crisp snow on the ground, the

⁹ The earlier first-person stories are 'A Fragment of Stained Glass', 'A Lesson on a Tortoise', 'Lessford's Rabbits', 'The Fly in the Ointment', and 'Once-!'.
¹⁰ Manuscript La Z 1/15, p. 1. Thanks are due to Dr. Dorothy Johnston and the staff of the Department of Manuscripts and Special Collections at the Hallward Library of the University of Nottingham for their kindness in allowing me access to this manuscript

¹¹ James T. Boulton and Andrew Robertson eds., *The Letters of DH Lawrence Volume III*, p. 315

sky was blue, the wind very cold, the air clear" (Penguin, 77). These changes to the manuscript lose the episodic, three-part (summer-autumn-winter) form of the original story, with its dream-like lapses of time, and dream-like correspondences, in order to accentuate the core plot.¹² I would argue that Lawrence responded to the loss of this original dream-like structuring of the story by splitting 'Wintry Peacock' into three sections: the first part detailing the reading of the letter to Maggie Goyte; the second part describing, as in the dream, the narrator's discovery of the peacock named Joey at Griff Low, and its return to the Goyte household; the third part concerning the narrator's subsequent conversation with Maggie's husband, Lance-Corporal Alfred Goyte. On top of any practical reasons why Lawrence may have wanted the three section breaks¹³, I would suggest that he inserted them in the places he did in order to highlight a latent content to the story that had previously been obscured. The section breaks detail phases in the narrator's relation to Maggie Goyte, but they now mark certain changes in the way the narrator relates to Maggie:

¹² It has been noted that, when Lawrence made the cuts to the manuscript, he introduced certain inconsistencies into the text. Two mentions of Maggie's cotton bonnet, for instance, were cut, yet Lawrence forgot to alter the subsequent line, "she had on the cotton bonnet" (Penguin 77). He also changed Elise's nationality from French to Belgian, yet forgot to alter the reference to her letter having been "addressed from France" (Penguin 78). Maggie's curious accent is pointed up in manuscript (Cambridge 241), but only alluded to in her pronunciation of 'bird' in the altered typescript (Penguin, 80). In addition, the narrator has a wife in the manuscript, but there is only a vague mention of another presence in his home in the typescript version (Penguin 84-85). What critics have failed to note is that in the manuscript opening, the narrator speaks to Maggie in autumn; when this was cut, Lawrence added a section in the typescript in which the narrator says he "had spoken to her in the summer" (Penguin, 77). The reasons behind Lawrence's decisions to change Elise's nationality and to move his narrator's first conversation with Maggie back to the summer are open to speculation.

¹³ It is possible that these breaks were inserted by Lawrence with one eye on the fact that the *Metropolitan* magazine might break up the text of the story in mid-flow. In fact, the story was broken at two points when it was printed in the magazine, and one of the breaks came at the place Lawrence marked for the start of section three (Cambridge, 242, footnote 83:17).

changes which make it easier for us to discern a certain underlying symbolism in the story. I will attempt to clarify this point by close reference to the text.

In the opening to the manuscript version of the story, Maggie Goyte is initially heralded by the narrator as a strong and highly-sexualised physical presence, whose beauty and self-consciousness perhaps echo those qualities in Lady Cynthia Asquith.¹⁴ One of the most noteworthy aspects of these early interactions is the emphasis they place upon the processes of viewing and of being viewed, and they convey the idea that Maggie commands a certain power over the narrator because of her talent for visual domination and manipulation. In the opening manuscript interaction, the narrator is going for a leisurely summer stroll:

I was a little uneasy, thinking I had taken a private farm-road. But I kept on. In a rough garden to the right, raised above the road, tall blue bell-flowers rose. And a little further, a very lovely peacock was stepping among the stones, swelling its blue neck and trailing its bronze and green. All round was the cow-splashed sordidness of a farm, strong smelling. I stopped to look at the peacock as he stepped and pecked and made his crest tremble. And then I glanced back. A woman was standing out from the end of the wall to watch me. She wore a print bonnet. Seeing me look at her she walked across the road to the opposite cart-shed. (Cambridge, 241)

¹⁴ See Mark Kinkad-Weekes' portrait of her in *DH Lawrence: Triumph to Exile 1912-1922* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 86

The next time the narrator sees her, in this manuscript version, it is autumn, and it is Maggie who opens a conversation with the somewhat startled narrator:

"Plenty of blackberries this year", said a ringing voice near to me. It was a rather short woman, "glegging" up at me from under her cotton bonnet, with fine, black, furtive eyes. She was sallow and long-faced, with crisp black hair. Her skirts were very short. She would be about thirty years old. She spoke with a rolling west-country burr impossible in Derbyshire. I listened to the roll of her "ye-urrr", and looked at her. She averted her face. (Cambridge, 241)

Both of these interactions place the narrator in a subordinate position. He is the anxious trespasser on Maggie's property; she "glegs" (stares) up at the narrator, but avoids his scrutiny by averting her face.

In the altered typescript version that Lawrence wished to see published, the narrator meets Maggie in section one. The detail concerning the short skirt is retained:

As I passed the end of the upper house, I saw a young woman just coming out of the back door. I had spoken to her in the summer. She recognised me at once, and waved to me. She was carrying a pail, wearing a white apron that was longer than her preposterously short skirt, and she had on the cotton bonnet. I took off my hat to her and was going on. But she put down her pail and darted with a swift, furtive movement after me. (Penguin, 77)

Maggie attracts the narrator's eye because of a certain spirit of flirtatiousness she possesses. The narrator finds himself looking at her and musing about her (Penguin, 88); we are told that her "gloomy black eyes" soften to him "with that momentary humility which makes a man lord of the earth" (Penguin, 77). Yet he also fears that this effect is being consciously cultivated by Maggie: that she is disarming his defences through manipulation - he fears that he is "being cajoled" (Penguin, 78). This fear, and the depiction of Maggie's powerful sexual presence, anticipates the six references to her "witch-like" characteristics. The narrator's apparently unpremeditated decision to mistranslate the letter she fetches for him may be seen as a largely unconscious response to this fear of Maggie's very female form of manipulation. The narrator blocks Maggie's attempt to indict her husband through the secret opening of his private mail, and, in the process, he is able to reflect in dialogue with Maggie on the manipulative qualities of women over men more generally. The cruel, sardonic, almost sadistic reading he gives to Elise's letter can be explained as a response to his early sense of helplessness in the opening manuscript encounters with Maggie. The narrator "read[s] with a callous heart the effusions of the Belgian damsel" (Penguin, 79) and to Maggie he reflects upon the power of the female will when exercised over men: "'You don't know", I said. "You know how anxious women are to fall in love, wife or no wife. How could he help it, if she was determined to fall in love with him?"' (Penguin, 82). Male anxiety and helplessness when confronted by the

female will and its forms of manipulation may be said to constitute the thematic centre of this short story, as it does of other stories in the *England, My England and Other Stories* collection.¹⁵

The second section moves us from the very fraught and hectic dialogue of the opening to a visual scene which, in juxtaposition to the opening, invites a symbolic interpretation. Forced to stay inside by a fresh fall of snow, the narrator sees Joey, Maggie's favourite male peacock, foundering outside:

In the faint glow of half-clear light that came about four o'clock in the afternoon, I was roused to see a motion in the snow away below, near where the thorn-trees stood very black and dwarfed, like a little savage group, in the dismal white. I watched closely. Yes, there was a flapping and a struggle - a big bird, it must be, labouring in the snow. I wondered. Our biggest birds, in the valley, were the large hawks that often hung flickering opposite my windows, level with me, but high above some prey on the steep valley-side. This was much too big for a hawk - too big for any known bird. I searched in my mind for the largest English wild birds, geese, buzzards.

Still it laboured and strove, then was still, a dark spot, then struggled again. I went out of the house and down the steep slope, at risk of breaking my leg between the rocks. I knew the ground so well - and yet I got well shaken before I drew near the thorn-trees.

Yes, it was a bird. It was Joey. It was the grey-brown peacock with a blue neck. He was snow-wet and spent. (Penguin, 84)

¹⁵ For example, in 'Monkey Nuts', Joe, a young soldier, is aggressively courted by a land-girl who makes him feel maddened and helpless, and in 'Tickets Please' the flirtatious John Thomas is savagely attacked by a scheming group of female work colleagues.

Joey now takes on a weighty symbolic significance. He is the male bird whom Maggie caresses and kisses; he is also the male bird to whom Maggie says in the first section, "You're bound to find me, aren't you" (Penguin, 80). Joey is the symbol for a castrated and disarmed masculinity.¹⁶ As if to emphasise this point, Lawrence mentions that the peacocks in *Titled* (Joey's offspring) are "tail-less" (Penguin, 77).

Reading Joey as a symbol of castrated masculinity allows us to account for Lawrence's choice of title for the story: the 'Wintry Peacock' is the castrated male struggling rather pathetically to break free from the wilful woman, but returning nonetheless. It also enables us to understand why the two central males in the story respond to the bird so powerfully. We now know why the narrator should be a "little afraid" (Penguin, 85) of Joey's struggles as he returns him, in a fish-bag, to Maggie: the narrator himself has come all too close to Maggie, and, at this point in the story, he has still not broken free from his attraction to her. We can also understand why the returning husband, Alfred, should so hate the bird, and desire to see it killed. It is not a question, as Weldon Thornton has suggested, of Alfred being "jealous of the peacock".¹⁷ Rather, the bird represents a mode of masculinity that Alfred

¹⁶ This reading opposes Kingsley Widmer's assertion that Joey is "the soul symbol of the woman": Widmer ill-advisedly views the male Joey as a symbolic trope carried over from *The White Peacock*.

See Kingsley Widmer, *The Art of Perversity: DH Lawrence's Shorter Fictions*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962, p. 110-112.

¹⁷ See Weldon Thornton, *DH Lawrence: A Study of the Short Fiction*, New York: Twayne, 1993, p. 98, footnote 71. Thornton writes: "Silly as it is for Alfred to be jealous of the peacock, he obviously is".

fears and, in fearing, reacts violently and sadistically towards. In the original manuscript ending to the story, Alfred actually admits that Joey "haunts" him (Cambridge, 244). In expressing his desire to see Joey's neck wrung, Alfred externalises and attempts to exorcise his fear of castration.

Alfred's characteristic pose in 'Wintry Peacock' stresses this fear of castration. In section two, he stands in the doorway, "his hands stuck in front of him, in his breeches pockets" (Penguin, 88): a defensive pose repeated twice in the final section, where he intercepts the narrator, "with his hands in front of him, half stuck in his breeches pockets [...]" (Penguin, 88). He is, we should remember, a wounded Lance-Corporal, who went lame and now walks with a limp. Although the evidence of Elise's letter suggests his possession of a rather rugged sexuality, his portrayal in 'Wintry Peacock' reflects an anxiety concerning male identity that emerged directly out of the experiences of male breakdown at the front.¹⁸ Alfred, whose injury is underplayed by Maggie¹⁹, has been convalescing in Scotland for six weeks: presumably at one of the centres for wounded officers, not unlike Craiglockhart, where shell-shock victims were sent to recuperate their lost 'manliness'.²⁰

¹⁸ On the war's threat to previous notions of masculinity see, in particular, Eric J. Leed's *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War One*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979, Elaine Showalter's essay on shell-shock as 'male hysteria' in *The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980*, New York: Pantheon, 1985, and Susan Kingsley Kent, 'Love and Death: War and Gender in Britain, 1914-1918', in Frans Coetzee and Marilyn Shevin-Coetzee eds., *Authority, Identity and the Social History of the Great War*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995

¹⁹ In section one, Maggie says to the narrator: "Oh, he was wounded in the leg. Yes, he's all right, a great strapping fellow. But he's lame, he limps a bit. He expects he'll get his discharge - but I don't think he will" (Penguin, 80)

²⁰ Siegfried Sassoon was treated by WHR Rivers at Craiglockhart during the war. See Elaine Showalter, 'Rivers and Sassoon: The Inscription of Male Gender Anxieties', in Margaret Randolph

The recuperation of a form of manliness is implied by the narrator's rejection of Maggie at the end of section two. Here, manliness is premised upon independence from the female will:

"Must you go?" she asked, rising and coming near to me, standing in front of me, twisting her head sideways and looking up at me. "Can't you stop a bit longer? - We can all be cosy today, there's nothing to do outdoors". And she laughed, showing her teeth oddly. She had a long chin.

I said I must go. The peacock uncoiled and coiled again his long blue neck, as he lay on the hearth. Maggie still stood close in front of me, so that I was acutely aware of my waistcoat buttons.

"Oh well", she said, "you'll come again, won't you? Do come again".

I promised.

"Come to tea one day - yes, do!"

I promised - one day. (Penguin, 88)

In section three, the narrator is outside the house, where he meets Alfred and, after a brief but tense confrontation, the two men fall into a reviving laughter that retains an overtone of anxiety. The narrator, after all, returns to a rather melancholy and threatened isolation, whilst Alfred, "a handsome figure of a man" (Penguin, 91), must return to the "contest with his wife", to "have it out with her" (Penguin, 90).

In conclusion, I would suggest that Lawrence's section breaks in the 'restored' text of 'Wintry Peacock' serve a crucial purpose. They represent Lawrence's own gradual

understanding of a latent content in his story and, by their change of emphasis, they enable the reader to experience this understanding as an integral part of his reading of the story. The discovery of the typescript of 'Wintry Peacock' and the eventual incorporation of its changes into the new Penguin edition of *England, My England and Other Stories* give us access to a 'restored' text; the section breaks offer us, in their revelation of a previously-obscured symbolism and development, a more fruitful and rewarding story.²¹

Yale University Press, 1987

²¹ I am grateful to Peter Preston of the University of Nottingham for the extremely useful comments he made on an earlier draft of this paper.

St. Mawr, The Escaped Cock, and Child of the Western Isles: The Revival of an Animistic Worldview in the Modern World

Takeo Iida

DH Lawrence's *St. Mawr* and *The Escaped Cock* were published in 1925 and 1929, and in 1957, twenty-seven years after Lawrence's death, Rosalie K. Fry's children's story, *Child of the Western Isles*, came out. Although Fry does not seem to have been influenced by Lawrence's works, her work echoes Lawrence's animistic worldview which is described in his two novellas, and we can indicate that both writers share the same tradition of European animism and try to revive an animistic worldview in their own ways in the modern world where man-centred ideology or materialism nearly stifles the lively animistic sense of life, and their trials to recover that sense seem to be their revaluation of the animistic worldview which the modern age has long disregarded or suppressed in exchange for homocentricism or material prosperity. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate by comparing the two writers this thesis which seems to have received least attention from critics so far.²²

In *St. Mawr*, Lou Carrington leads a superficial life with her aristocratic husband, Rico, feeling no fulfilment in her life. Yet one day when she sees the horse named St. Mawr, she is overwhelmed by him, and she worships him as Pan:

²² I once discussed the importance of animism in contrast to Christianity in *St. Mawr* in my essay on the novella (Iida, 32-46)