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**A GENETIC STUDY OF ‘THE SHADES OF SPRING’**

ELLIOTT MORSIA

Scholars of Lawrence’s compositional and writerly development have often focused upon an inherently teleological emergence-maturity theme, which diminishes the significance of the “avant-texte”, in the terms of genetic criticism (“la critique génétique”). This essay sets out to demonstrate some of the limitations of traditional approaches to Lawrence’s composition by introducing a “genetic” methodology to the study of his work, taking ‘The Shades of Spring’, from the landmark collection *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories* (1914), as a foundational case study.

Though Sean Matthews has recently set up the ‘*Odour of Chrysanthemums: a text in process*’ website at the University of Nottingham – a valuable pedagogical tool interposing the counter-aims and benefits of genetic criticism – textual criticism in the field of Lawrence studies has been dominated by the ongoing Cambridge Edition of the *Works* of D. H. Lawrence.<sup>1</sup> By codifying eclectic texts in the Anglo-American tradition, relegating “variant” material, piecemeal, to an apparatus and appendix at the back of volumes, the Cambridge Edition texts reinforce the notion that the “avant-texte” serves a subsidiary role in literary criticism. While some contributors to the Cambridge project, such as Paul Eggert, have challenged the subordination of genetic materials in the study of Lawrence,<sup>2</sup> this essay argues for the further introduction of genetic criticism – as has already been achieved for other major modernist writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and Samuel Beckett.<sup>3</sup>

I do not, however, wish to deprecate the invaluable work of the Cambridge Edition, which introduces vast swathes of manuscript material into the canon (such as the recent *The Vicar’s Garden and Other Stories*, which includes an early version of ‘The Shades of Spring’), prepares “version” editions (including *Paul Morel* or *The*

*First 'Women in Love'*) as in the contemporary German editorial mode of " Fassungen",<sup>4</sup> and, most importantly, helps to ensure Lawrence's return from the margins of late-twentieth-century modernist studies. It is precisely on the back of this work that, in the polemical spirit of Lawrence, we can now assert the significance of the writing process itself, beyond the codified writing products. In a letter of November 1915, concurrent with the publication of *The Rainbow*, one of his most radical modernist visions of the novel, Lawrence signals: "I am bored by coherent thought. Its very coherence is a dead shell. But we must help the living impulse that is within the shell. The shell is being smashed" (2L 426).

### **Frameworks**

'The Shades of Spring' was initially composed between 16–23 December 1911. Having received the manuscript back from his then literary mentor Edward Garnett, Lawrence revised it by 8 March 1912 and the story was published a year later, in May 1913, as 'The Soiled Rose' both in *The Blue Review*, John Middleton Murry's short-lived successor to *Rhythm*, and in the American magazine *Forum*. These early texts, both pre- and post-revision, together comprise the *early* version of the story. Lawrence picked it up again in 1914, revising the text on at least two separate occasions in the summer and autumn, for inclusion in *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*, where it was retitled 'The Shades of Spring'. I will refer to these later revised texts as comprising the *late* version. In all versions of the story, an autobiographical intellectual named John Adderley Syson has deserted his sweetheart, a farmer's daughter named Hilda Millership, and returns "on a visit to the country of his past" (VicG 141) to find himself replaced by her non-intellectual lover, the gamekeeper Arthur Pilbeam.

Though Lawrence began publishing in earnest in 1909, a number of major studies have argued that he did not fully "emerge"

as a “mature” writer until late 1914 with the publication of his first collection of short stories, *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*, and while he was rewriting ‘The Wedding Ring’ as *The Rainbow*. Lawrence revised or rewrote the stories included in *The Prussian Officer* collection (some of which were written as early as 1907) during the interval between *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow* and, as these are often viewed as radically divergent novels, this period in 1914 is seen as key. The trope of Lawrence’s emergence during this period was first heralded by J. C. F. Littlewood, whose articles in the *Cambridge Quarterly* in the late 1960s culminated in a 1976 British Council Pamphlet titled *D. H. Lawrence I: 1885–1914*. As indicated by the dates given in his title, Littlewood’s pamphlet functions to outline a “true” timeline for Lawrence’s “progress to maturity”, which would see *The Prussian Officer* collection supplant the previous critical marker, *Sons and Lovers*. Littlewood argues that:

A writer on Lawrence is in a false position when attempting to deal with the initial period from any earlier perspective than the first moment of which it is possible to say that Lawrence is now truly himself and has found himself as an artist ... The usual reply is *Sons and Lovers*, but time has strengthened my belief that the correct answer is certain stories in the volume entitled the ‘Prussian Officer’.<sup>5</sup>

Littlewood supports his argument by comparing earlier and later texts or versions, which he uses to study Lawrence’s changing treatment of certain major themes, such as the isolated autobiographical protagonist or his “spiritual” young lover.<sup>6</sup> A number of other contemporaneous essays likewise apply a close textual analysis to early and late stages of composition in order to support a teleological reading. Brian Finney’s claim that there is an “enormous gulf separating” *Sons and Lovers* and *The Rainbow*, “bridged” by the revision of *The Prussian Officer* stories, is emblematic in this respect.<sup>7</sup> But this reading is most strongly

reinforced by Keith Cushman's book-length study *D. H. Lawrence at Work: The Emergence of the 'Prussian Officer' Stories* (1978). In his treatment of 'The Shades of Spring', Cushman provides the following, summative statement:

The progression from the *White Peacock* chapter ['The Scarp Slope'] to 'The Shades of Spring' is a study in Lawrence's growth to maturity, of his ultimate acceptance of his past and of himself. The special radiance of 'The Shades of Spring' also speaks clearly and directly to the fact that it is part of the emergent moment of *The Rainbow*. He had at last transformed something of a personal archetype into a first-rate work of short fiction.<sup>8</sup>

The "archetypal" argument summarised here, which champions a later version or a final published text as an aesthetic and personal triumph, devalues early compositional material and decentralises the writing process; much in the tradition of New Criticism.

Mark Kinkead-Weekes could be seen as providing a counterpoint position by suggesting that a critical assessment of Lawrence should take into account the writer's own theory of creativity – "essentially a theory of process, of continuous and organic change" – and arguing that "there are vital ways in which a work of Lawrence's is its process of becoming" (*R* lxiii-lxiv). However, his own path-breaking essay, 'The Marble and the Statue: The Exploratory Imagination of D. H. Lawrence' (1968), which predates the more detailed manuscript studies of the 1970s and 80s, anticipates Littlewood's early work in that it adopts a similarly teleological approach to textual development. Although the essay mainly focuses on Lawrence's philosophical writings of 1914, particularly *Study of Thomas Hardy*, Kinkead-Weekes likewise argues that through a radical development during that year Lawrence was able to "re-found" his burgeoning novels, *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, "in a new dimension": "The full

implications only dawned gradually, but that it was a new dimension is beyond doubt”.<sup>9</sup>

Turning to genetic criticism, we can first note that despite the introduction of textual process into textual scholarship in, for example, the editing of multiple versions in the Cambridge Edition of Lawrence, the general crossing of literary- and text-critical divides in English has yet to transpire. For Sally Bushell, “a full critical engagement with textual process and the coming-into-being of the literary work has not yet occurred in any systematic way within Anglo-American scholarship”.<sup>10</sup> Peter Shillingsburg likewise argues that, despite abandoning the quest for the “archetype text, the one closest to the lost original text” and adding many new goals, “what textual criticism has not done either well or ill is to develop the principles and practices of the interpretive consequences of its findings”, which sets the stage for an Anglo-American genetic criticism.<sup>11</sup>

Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden point out that although both genetic and textual criticism deal with manuscripts and textual variations

their aims are quite different. Rather than trying to establish texts, genetic criticism actually destabilizes the notion of “text” and shakes the exclusive hold of the textual model. One could even say that genetic criticism is not concerned with texts at all but only with the writing processes that engender them.<sup>12</sup>

Genetic criticism is then a mode of literary criticism in which diachronic textual process takes precedence over the synchronic textual product. Thus, as Almuth Grésillon notes, there is a preference in genetic criticism for “production over the product, writing over what is written, textualization over the text ... the dynamic over the static, the operation over the opus, genesis over structure, the strength of the act of writing over the form of the printed word”.<sup>13</sup> The suitability of such an approach to Lawrence – a continuous reviser, writing in an ever-increasing variety of genres

and forms, and whose texts were marked from the outset by the inhabitation of multiple competing selves – is evident. Russell MacDonald gestures towards this in his recent essay ‘Revision and Competing Voices in D. H. Lawrence’s Collaborations with Women’, where he notes that the Cambridge Edition did not update its editorial policy “to account for such developments in textual theory as Jack Stillinger’s notion of ‘multiple authorship’ or Jerome McGann’s work on the social construction of texts ... This misrepresents Lawrence’s literary-cultural contexts of production”.<sup>14</sup> More broadly, I would also note that Lawrence’s own critical schemas repeatedly place emphasis upon the dynamic and the conflicted in strict opposition to the static and ideally perfected. The terse lines taken from a letter of November 1915, and extracted above, are representative: “I am bored by coherent thought” (2L 426).

Unlike the Anglo-American tradition where an eclectic single-reading text is underwritten by the concept of the “copy-text” (which relates to ancient and medieval customs, where, as Dirk van Hulle notes, a manuscript was generally a scribal copy produced for public circulation),<sup>15</sup> the textual model of genetic criticism is underwritten by the “avant-texte”. Jean Bellemin-Noël devised the term “avant-texte” in the early 1970s to denote all the *documents* that come before a *work* when that work is considered as a *text*, and when those documents and the text are themselves considered as part of a textual system, or compositional *process*.<sup>16</sup> These terms have been set out most rigorously by Pierre-Marc de Biasi, although his methodical approach may not be ideally suited to fluid compositional and creative processes.<sup>17</sup> As Louis Hay notes, genetic criticism is less interested in the “constituted text” than in the “plurality of virtual texts behind the surface of the constituted text”.<sup>18</sup> It is in response to the openness of the text that Hay remarks: “it would be disappointing to look only for confirmation in this area of what we already know, or think we know. Manuscripts have something new to tell us: it is high time we learned to make them speak”.<sup>19</sup> Rather than refer back,

retrospectively, to manuscripts or the writing process in order to test or reaffirm a critical position which responds originally to a published text, then, by adopting a genetic approach we might learn to make the manuscripts of D. H. Lawrence “speak”.

Finally, a genetic approach reveals two important features which subvert from within the concept of the triumphant final published text: first, the traces of preliminary and early versions which *persist* (unexplored, deserted, excised, expurgated, and so on) in the later ones; second, the manner in which later versions are themselves always *retroactively* constructed, often in reference to (subsequently) absent textual elements.<sup>20</sup>

### **‘The Shades of Spring’**

In keeping with a confusing Lawrentian custom, ‘The Shades of Spring’ has carried multiple titles. The original holographic manuscript was titled ‘The Harassed Angel’ and then changed, speculatively, to either ‘The Right Thing to Do’ or ‘The Only Thing to Be Done’ (see Figure 7 overleaf). As described earlier, this manuscript was revised and published twice under a new title, ‘The Soiled Rose’ (1913). Lawrence picked the story up again in the summer of 1914, when selecting and rewriting stories to contribute towards a collection for Duckworth under the guidance of Garnett, when, in a partially revised state in July 1914, it was retitled ‘The Dead Rose’. Ultimately, in either the late summer or autumn of 1914, the re-revised story was given its final new title, ‘The Shades of Spring’, and was published soon after in *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*.

While I have consulted the original manuscript, since a version based upon ‘The Harassed Angel’ has been published in the Cambridge Edition of *The Vicar’s Garden and Other Stories*, I have provided page references to this edition, as well as to the Cambridge Edition of *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*.<sup>21</sup>



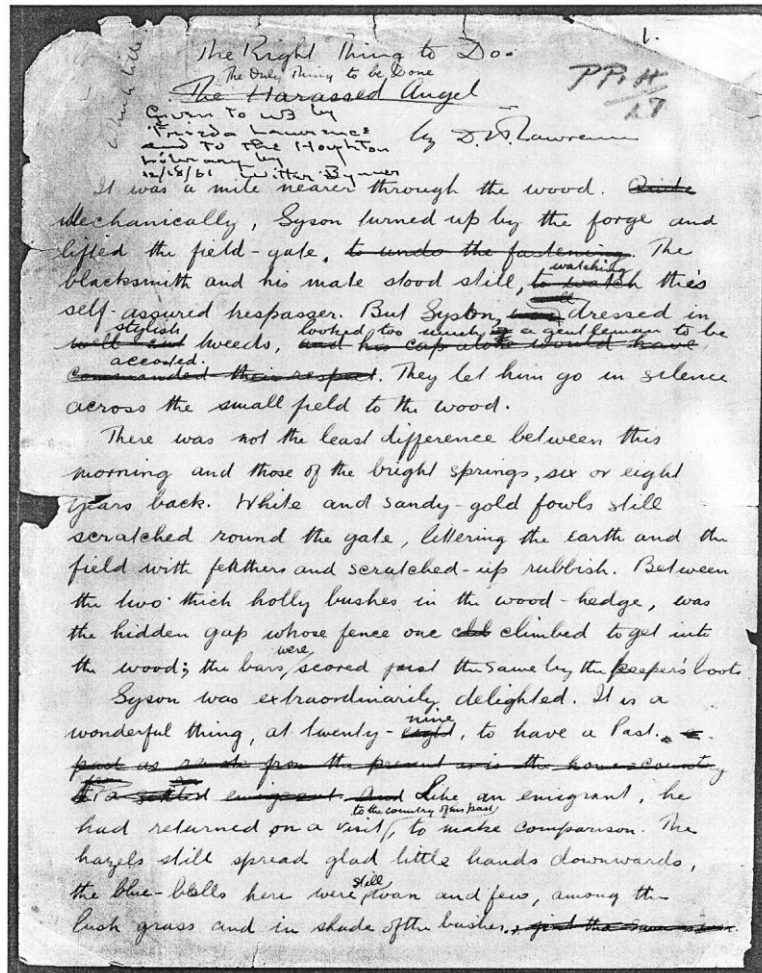


Figure 7: Page 1 of 'The Harrassed Angel' manuscript, reproduced by kind permission of Laurence Pollinger Ltd, the Trustees of the Estate of Frieda Lawrence Ravagli. This shows Lawrence's first draft of the description of, and Syson's reaction to, "the country of his past" (VicG 141).

In comparing these versions I have presented passages side-by-side and have aligned corresponding lines where possible, to highlight the alterations. Elsewhere, I have presented a synoptic text, with strikethroughs, ~~deleted~~, to indicate words deleted, and angled brackets, <inserted>, to indicate words inserted during the writing process.

Both the “early” and “late” versions of the story (as set out above) begin with five ranging, descriptive paragraphs, which are left almost entirely intact, save for a few dainty adjustments, as in the opening paragraph where Syson is stripped of his “stylish tweeds” (*VicG* 141). In the second paragraph, from which I quote below, the country surrounding Willeywater Farm (the fictional equivalent of Hags Farm, the early home of Jessie Chambers) is described as an unchanging idyll:

There was not the least difference between this morning and those of the bright springs, six or eight years back. White and sandy-gold fowls still scratched round the gate, littering the earth and the field with feathers and scratched-up rubbish. Between the two thick holly bushes in the wood-hedge, was the hidden gap whose fence one climbed to get into the wood; the bars were scored just the same by the keeper’s boots. <He was back in the eternal.> (*PO* 98)

Fittingly, this passage does not itself undergo revision (see Figure 7) in either the early or late stages of composition. Lawrence composed these lines from his sickbed in his neat and slightly squat handwriting and only a short affirmative addition is later affixed to the end: “He was back in the eternal”.

In the fifth paragraph though these long, flowing, unaltered sentences are broken up by the intrusion of the second character, Arthur Pilbeam: “Syson turned satisfied, to follow the path that sheered down-hill into the wood. <He was curiously elated, feeling himself back in an enduring vision.> He started. A keeper was standing a few yards in front, barring the way” (*PO* 98). As Syson’s

“enduring vision” is punctured so is the calm continuity of Lawrence’s prose: from this point there follows a series of dramatic collisions between first Syson and Arthur, then Syson and Hilda, when Arthur intrudes once more, and finally between Hilda and Arthur; all of which are contested in revision. Over the following page both the reader and Syson are introduced to the gamekeeper, Arthur, and, as with the early description of Syson, Arthur’s uncle Naylor is stripped of his “flaunting red face”, his “side-whiskers” and his “velveteen skirts” (*VicG* 142). As this description had been given by Syson, the cuts make him appear less foppish: his exclamation ““Oh goat-foot god of Arcady!”” is also cut. After this preliminary dialogue comes the following, confrontational passage:

'The Harassed Angel' ( <i>VicG</i> 142–3)	'The Shades of Spring' ( <i>PO</i> 99–100)
<p>“And you will introduce yourself?” asked Syson.                      “Arthur Pilbeam – Naylor’s my uncle,” said the other, very clumsily.                      “You live here in Nuttall?”                      “I lodge with my uncle.”                      “Married?”</p>	<p>“And you – who are you?” asked Syson.                      “Arthur Pilbeam – Naylor’s my uncle,” said the other.                      “You live here in Nuttall?”                      “I’m lodgin’ at my uncle’s – at Naylor’s.”                      “I see!”                      “Did you say you was goin’ down to Willeywater?” asked the keeper.                      “Yes.”</p>
<p>The men’s eyes met suddenly.                      “No – I’m courting Hilda Millership.”</p>	<p>There was a pause of some moments, before the keeper blurted: “<i>I’m</i> courtin’ Hilda Millership.”</p>

In the later version, the first line is punctured by a dash and inflected to repeat itself. This happens again in the fourth line, where Naylor's name is repeated. These features sharpen the conflict, and the repetitive rhetorical style is a major feature of Lawrence's later writing. This said, the earlier passage is more concise – "The men's eyes met suddenly. 'No'" – Lawrence having extended the passage by twenty words in the later version. While the conflict is sharper then, the later version is perhaps more contrived, as in the ending where Arthur blurts his assertion: "'I'm courtin' Hilda Millership'". In both versions though the characters appear compelled to play out their conflict and Hilda's lurking absence (or absent presence) provides the thrust to each. Most notable then, is the fact that, while the slightly finicky revisions above are made, such long sections remain untouched in the story's descriptive opening. As soon as the characters enter the story and the dialogue commences, Lawrence seems compelled to revise.

A divide between dialogical and descriptive passages is again suggested early on as the narrative progresses through the following interstitial passage:

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'The Harassed Angel'  
(*VicG* 143)

---

'The Shades of Spring'  
(*PO* 100)

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"Ah well!" said Syson, "I will leave you. I suppose you don't intend to turn me back." He laughed to himself. The keeper paid no attention. The two men stood high in an open space, grassy, set round with small sheaves of sturdy bluebells; a little open platform on the brow of the hill. Syson took a few indecisive steps forward, then stopped.

"Ah well!" said Syson, "I will go on. I suppose I may." The keeper stood in silent opposition. The two men hesitated in the open, grassy space, set round with small sheaves of sturdy bluebells; a little open platform on the brow of the hill. Syson took a few indecisive steps forward, then stopped.

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“I say, how lovely!” he cried.      “I say, how beautiful!” he  
cried.

---

We can sense here a subtle internal rhythm, emphasised by the quick transition from dialogue to description and back, with the revision focused on the dialogic framing. Syson is conflicted as he prepares to exit the dialogue with Arthur, then, as the narrative intimates the continuous promise of their natural surroundings, he is able to take a few steps forward before again coming to a halt to make an unconscious remark to the keeper: “I say ...”. Lawrence himself clearly felt compelled to adjust the bordering pieces of dialogue, such as ~~I will leave you~~ <I will go on> and ~~How lovely!~~ <How beautiful!>. In between these passages he similarly adjusts the characters’ interior states, which are themselves in dialogue: ~~The keeper paid no attention~~ <The keeper stood in silent opposition> ~~The two men stood high~~ <The two men hesitated>.

Finally though, these constrained dialogical passages feed into “~~an open space, grassy~~ <the open, grassy space>, set round with small sheaves of sturdy bluebells; a little open platform on the brow of the hill”. This diegetic and compositional “open space”, a neutral descriptive scene, is here, as frequently throughout the story, one of natural beauty. Though the word order is initially changed, this brief passage is unaltered by Lawrence, providing momentary respite for Syson and the author in composition/revision. The recuperative promise alluded to in the section above emerges then more fully in the paragraph which follows:

He had come in full view of the downslope. The wide path ran from his feet like a river, and it was full of bluebells, save for a green winding thread down the centre, where the keeper walked. Like a stream, the path opened into azure shallows at the levels, and there were pools of bluebells, with still the green thread winding through, like a thin current of ice-water through blue lakes. And from ~~out of~~ <under> the twig-purple of the bushes

swam the shadowed blue, as if the flowers lay in flood water over the woodland. (*VicG* 143; *PO* 100)

Here the beauty of the natural interlude has a hypnotic quality, providing a rhythmic counterpoint to the conflicted dialogue that preceded (and follows) it. The words are indicative: the “wide” path “runs” and “winds” like a “river”, like a “stream” through blue “lakes”, upon which the purple bushes “swim”, as though in “flood water”, over the woodland. Whilst dense and busy, the scene provides a calm and continuous flow. Once more this long descriptive passage goes unaltered through revision, save for the negligible replacement of “out of” for “under”.

Though there are many more examples of the kind of textual movements I have highlighted thus far, I will skip forward to the climactic clash between Syson, Arthur and Hilda. Having entered Willeywater Farm – where the cultivated Syson, visiting from London, now feels himself at an ironic distance from Hilda’s rustic family – Syson has already made the following crucial observation of Hilda in both versions:

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‘The Harassed Angel’  
(*VicG* 146–7)

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‘The Shades of Spring’  
(*PO* 103–4)

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He was afraid of her now,  
seeing her so much altered.

He was uneasy before her.

She was being discovered  
afresh to him, who thought he  
knew her so thoroughly.

He was looking at her with  
new eyes, and she was a  
different person to him

---

Akin to the manner in which Lawrence himself re-visions his characters at the alternate stages of composition, Syson finds Hilda “much altered”, “a different person to him”. For Syson, this strange “new” presence is fearfully attractive. Hilda leads Syson through the woods, disclosing to him her engagement to Arthur, before

revealing their private sanctuary in the keeper's hut – which also resides in a restful open space: “They came to a place where the undergrowth shrank away, leaving a bare, brown space, pillared with the brick-red and purplish trunks of pine trees ... In the midst of the bare space stood a keeper's log hut” (*VicG* 149; *PO* 106–7). This passage is also unaltered in revision, unlike the dialogue that follows where, inside the hut, Arthur intrudes on the pair and Hilda attempts to (re-)introduce the two male characters:

'The Harassed Angel' ( <i>VicG</i> 152–3)	'The Shades of Spring' ( <i>PO</i> 109–10)
I know him – I've met him before,” growled the keeper. “Never mind – I want to introduce you formally. Addy, Mr Pilbeam, to whom I'm engaged to be married. Arthur – Mr Syson, who was an old friend of ours.”	“I've met him a'ready,” said the keeper. “Have you? It is Addy, Mr Syson, whom you know about. – This is Arthur, Mr Pilbeam,” she added, turning to Syson.
Syson bowed, but the other mechanically held out his hand. The two men shook hands.	The latter held out his hand to the keeper, and they shook hands in silence.
“Allow me to congratulate you heartily,” said Syson. In his heart, he was saying bitterly “Mrs Pilbeam – good God!” He bade the woman goodbye. “Which way will you go?” she asked.	“I'm glad to have met you,” said Syson. “We drop our correspondence, Hilda?” “Why need we?” she asked. The two men stood at a loss.
“Over Foster's,” he replied. “Arthur, you will go with Mr Syson to the gate,” she said.	“Is there no need?” said Syson. Still she was silent. “It is as you will,” she said.

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<p>They went all three together down the gloomy path. “Ah les beaux jours de Bonheur indicible Ou nous joignons nos bouches...,” quoted Syson, half sincere, half mocking. “C’est possible!” she replied, in the same spirit. “Good!” he cried. “We might have rehearsed it. I never could help being sentimental. How does it go on – ? ‘Qu’il etait bleu, le ciel, et grand l’espoir’” “I never like farce,” she replied, cuttingly. “Besides, <i>we</i> cannot walk in <i>our</i> wild oats. You were too modest and good to sow any at that time.” Syson looked at her. He was shocked that she could sneer at their young love, which had been the greatest thing he had known.</p>	<p>They went all three together down the gloomy path. “‘Qu’il etait bleu, le ciel, et grand l’espoir’,” quoted Syson, not knowing what to say. “What do you mean?” she said. “Besides, <i>we</i> can’t walk in <i>our</i> wild oats – we never sowed any.” Syson looked at her. He was startled to see his young love, his nun, his Botticelli angel, so revealed. It was he who had been the fool.</p>
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This section was extensively revised, and with the corresponding passages aligned, we can see roughly where a quarter of the earlier version has been cut, and that what remains has been significantly altered. While the revised section has been significantly reduced and is thus more pointed, it has, rather confusingly, removed the puncturing dashes and the rhetorical inflections which were previously inserted: “~~I know him~~—I’ve met him before <a’ready>,” growled <said> the keeper. “~~Never mind~~—I want to introduce you formally.<Have you?>”. Following this opening, Syson’s suggestion



to Hilda to drop their correspondence is abrupt and arguably misplaced. Equally, Syson's quoting from Verlaine's 'Colloque sentimental' seems forced in the revised version, where, rather than feeling self-confessedly sentimental as in the original, he more guardedly quotes "not knowing what to say".

Syson's more guarded nature is a theme which runs throughout the later version, where he is generally much less affected, much more impersonal. While the more Victorian description of Syson's interior state – "In his heart, he was saying bitterly 'Mrs Pilbeam – good God!'" – is removed, along with several other similar comments, its central insight into Syson's bitterness of heart is not recovered. In the earlier version, following Hilda's "cutting" criticism, Syson is "shocked that she could sneer at their young love", which, crucially, "had been the greatest thing he had known". In the later version, however, Hilda's comment stakes the blame on the pair of them – "we never sowed any" – and Syson is merely "startled", feeling he has been "the fool".

By 1914 Lawrence had of course met and married Frieda Weekley, almost certainly influencing his subsequent revision of Syson. While Syson's later guardedness itself potentially upsets the spontaneity of the earlier story, the above revision, extensive and placed at a crucial juncture, in removing dashes and inflections is clearly inconsistent with a number of other revised passages. It may also undermine the integrity of the earlier version by squeezing out Syson's emotional response and replacing it with an aesthetic reflection: "his Botticelli angel, so revealed". By relating the story's revision to Lawrence's larger trajectory as a writer, we can also note a number of potential seeds for *Women in Love* in the earlier version of this section. The passage near the centre of 'The Shades of Spring' above, where Syson looks to end his correspondence with Hilda, is brought forward in revision: in 'The Harassed Angel' the issue of correspondence comes after this section. There, Syson also hands his "card" to Arthur, not to end but to begin a correspondence between the male pair: "I shall want to know your news, for all that. So if you'll write to me, I will write to you. All

the correspondence shall be between us two” (VicG 152). While this intimation of discourse between the cerebral Syson and the physical figure of Arthur signals a dynamic which Lawrence will pick up again in the later novel, with the friendship of school inspector Rupert Birkin and industrial magnate Gerald Crich, the open-ended promise of correspondence (left in suspense) is particularly suggestive of the open ending to *Women in Love* (where Birkin states his belief in more than one kind of love). This suggestion is emphasised by the fact that this passage in ‘The Harassed Angel’ ends with an enforced paragraph break (see Figure 8), the only such break in the entire manuscript.

Following this tense and heavily revised passage of dialogue, which as mentioned ends with a paragraph break, runs the following, unrevised descriptive passage:

Instead of going straight to the high-road gate, Syson went along the wood’s-edge, where the brook spread out in a little bog, and under the alder trees, among the reeds, great yellow stools and bosses of marigolds shone. Threads of brown water trickled by, touched with gold from the flowers. Suddenly, there was a blue flash in the air, as a kingfisher passed.

Syson was extraordinarily ~~wretched~~ <moved>. He climbed the bank to the gorse bushes, whose sparks of blossom had not yet gathered into a flame. Lying on the dry brown turf, he discovered sprigs of tiny purple milkwort and pink spots of lousewort. (PO 110)

Again the story moves from a conflicted and much revised section of dialogue, in this case where all three protagonists are at loggerheads, to a flowing, open patch of natural beauty, where “the brook spread out in a little bog”, gold and blue “flash in the air” and “threads of brown water trickled by”. As the earlier contested passages of dialogue flow into this open and restful descriptive scene, centred on a natural continuity, Lawrence’s revision once again highlights the story’s rhythmic movement.

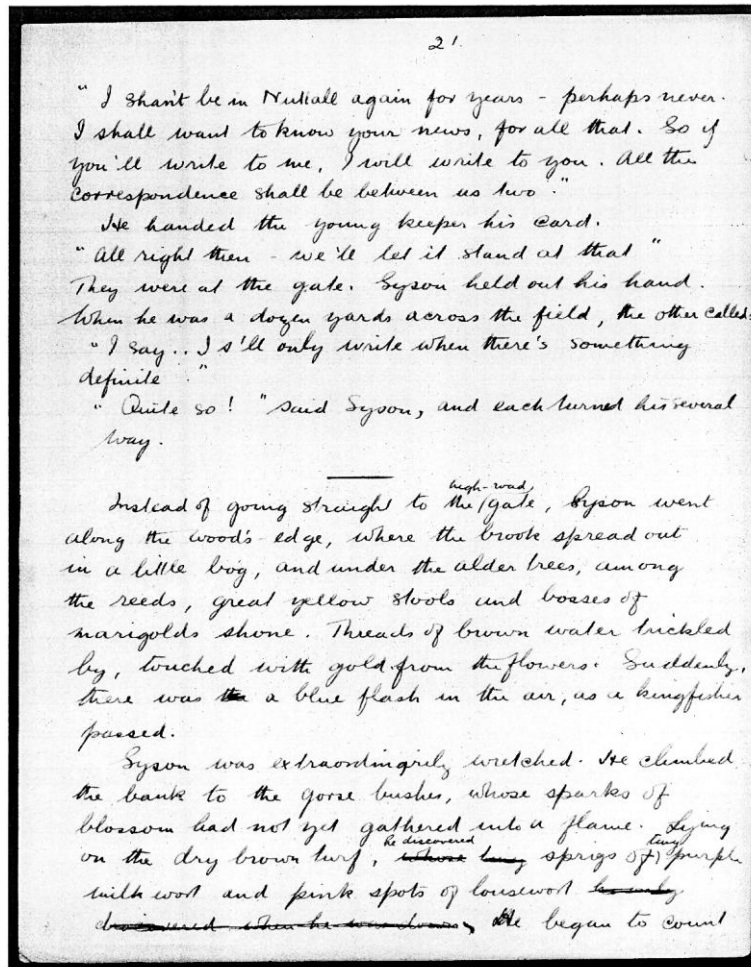


Figure 8: Page 21 of 'The Harrassed Angel' manuscript, reproduced by kind permission of Laurence Pollinger Ltd, the Trustees of the Estate of Frieda Lawrence Ravagli.

This shows the dramatic close to the dialogue between Syson and Arthur, with the only scored paragraph break in the text.

This particular passage in the story, which culminates with Syson “lying on the dry brown turf” where, in ‘The Harassed Angel’, he feels “a kind of death”, also prefigures a rhythmic transition in *Women in Love* when, in the ‘Breadalby’ chapter, after being struck on the head by Hermione with a lapis lazuli paperweight, Birkin drifts into the surrounding countryside. By comparing the relevant passage in *Women in Love* to *The First Women in Love* (of 1916), we can also note how the passage is left almost entirely intact despite extensive revision of the first and second typescripts:

Birkin, barely conscious, and yet perfectly direct in his motion, went out of the house and straight across the park, to the open country, to the ~~moores~~ <hills>. The brilliant day had become overcast, spots of rain were falling. He wandered on to a wild valley-side where were thickets of hazel, many flowers, tufts of heather, and little clumps of young fir-trees, budding with soft paws. It was rather wet everywhere, there was a stream running down at the bottom of the valley. (*FWL* 107)

### **Rhythm and Spontaneity; Constructivism and Garnett; Attachment**

The rapidity with which Lawrence composed the first version of ‘The Shades of Spring’, without prior conceptualisation, is paradigmatic of his more spontaneous and rhythmic writing processes. Though this particular example *is* remarkable given that he was bedridden with pneumonia at the time, for Lawrence, completing an unplanned story in around a week in extremely cramped and busy conditions is fairly typical. Lawrence was lodging at the time in Croydon with the Jones family (husband, wife, and young daughter Hilda Mary), while also being tended to by a nurse and his sister Ada, who had travelled down to stay during his illness.

A study of Lawrence's writing process reveals some of the story's underlying rhythms of dialogue, between conflict and continuity, which are grounded in the process of its composition. There is an immediate rift between the heavy and constraining revisionary process for passages of dialogue and the light, even negligible process for descriptive passages. Once we observe this polarity within the text/s, a circular, wavelike rhythm begins to emerge, whereby the narrative progresses through revolutions of conflicted dialogical passages, where characters collide, and serene descriptive passages, where a continuous natural scene provides a restful counterpoint. Lawrence was also able to retain a great degree of spontaneity in his final texts, despite heavy bouts of revision, by leaving sections unaltered from the initial burst of writing and by inserting fresh passages or rewriting passages entirely rather than dividing them into, and altering them as, separate components.

Lawrence was an outspoken opponent of the modernist school of fiction that championed supreme artistry in the formal creative mode of constructivism. For Lawrence, this apparently aesthetic mode was symptomatic of a more general attitude to life: the desire for mastery. An analysis of his revision gives us some insight into the textual genesis of this opposition, and a genetic approach to Lawrence could also have an impact upon genetic criticism generally. Lawrence's own writing process suggests a counterpoint to the "constructivist" model of composition supported by those of his more explicitly modernist contemporaries.<sup>22</sup> Finn Fordham provides the following overview:

To set up a method of composition in which the mastery of prose was the goal was therefore a challenge greater than that of mastering poetry and one which ambitious novelists – Henry James, Ford Madox Ford, Joyce, and Proust, who all acknowledged Flaubert as a model or a master – eagerly responded to. Pound believed that "Flaubert [had] lifted prose to the rank of a finer art, and one has no patience with

contemporary poets who escape from all the difficulties of the infinitely difficult art of good prose by pouring themselves into loose verses”.<sup>23</sup>

With its tendency to focus on precisely these authors, genetic criticism has an inherent aversion to “inspirational or organic conceptions of literary creation”, supporting instead “the view that poets are like craftsmen or skilled workers”; Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘The Philosophy of Composition’ (1846) is seen as a founding document in this respect.<sup>24</sup> Lawrence voiced his opposition to constructivism in a review of Thomas Mann published in July 1913, during the timeframe for the composition of ‘The Shades of Spring’:

And even while he [Flaubert] has a rhythm in style, yet his work has none of the rhythm of a living thing, the rise of a poppy, then the after uplift of the bud, the shedding of the calyx and the spreading wide of the petals, the falling of the flower and the pride of the seed-head. There is an unexpectedness in this such as does not come from their carefully plotted and arranged developments.<sup>25</sup>

Though Ferrer and Groden would censure Lawrence’s organicism here, the seasonal cycle – “the shedding of the calyx ... falling of the flower” – is itself quite revisionary. More importantly, the feature that Lawrence stresses in relation to the writing process in this analogy is its “unexpectedness”. Lawrence himself censured the kind of formal mastery which he accurately observed as a central feature of the “modern” school of fiction and which attempts to rein in the unexpected. By exploring the role of dialogue and spontaneity in Lawrence’s writing process, we can begin to map out an alternate compositional model in which unexpectedness and submission – to something (or someone) outside and beyond the control of oneself – are both important features.<sup>26</sup>

While the recursive progression of human interaction and natural continuity in Lawrence's story does not share the kind of high modernist structure which resonates clearly in, for example, Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931), the subtle "modernist" rhythms, which provide the text with intrinsic movement, are also less perceptible. It is easier therefore to mistake 'The Shades of Spring' for a more conventional and antiquated work, emulating an earlier and more successful realism, the kind of work Lawrence and Woolf found equally restrictive. I suggest this error has been committed repeatedly by the various critics who have treated the text and its revision, as, despite some alternate interpretations of the final material, they unanimously view Lawrence's revision as a wrenching act: bringing the texts forward and enabling them to figure alongside such later works as 'The Prussian Officer' and *The Rainbow*. Rather than demonstrate a process of organic maturity, progression, or breakthrough, Lawrence's revision helps us discern the subtle rhythms throughout the various texts, generated by a more spontaneous compositional form.

A final question, which is frequently overlooked in studies of Lawrence's composition at this stage in his career, is whether Lawrence benefited from the editorial influence of Edward Garnett. While the editors of the Cambridge Edition of *Sons and Lovers* deem this question "irreducibly hypothetical" (*SL* lxxviii-lxxix), Lawrence broke his close association with Garnett immediately following the publication of *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories* and remained averse to the structural and ideological implications of constructivism, as championed by Garnett, throughout their partnership: "Garnett's plays – they are not alive" (*IL* 326). Considering how much has been made of Lawrence's revision of *The Prussian Officer* collection, it is surprising that Garnett's restrictive influence has been ignored and especially as a significant bout of revision completed in July 1914 actually took place in Garnett's house in Kent, The Cearne. Garnett's major role in the publication of the collection may well have led Lawrence to excise those features which he feared would receive the most censure. It

was in letters to Garnett during the same period that Lawrence expressed a concern over *The Trespasser* for its “fluid, luscious quality”, and for being “too chargé, too emotional” (*IL* 351, 337). In the parallel case of ‘The Harassed Angel’, it was to Garnett that Lawrence feared the story may appear “thin – maladif” (*IL* 343). This concern relates specifically to the unguarded nature of the earlier version, which, as discussed in relation to Syson, becomes more impersonal in revision. Cushman argues “several emendations tend to make Syson less a fop and an aesthete and more a human being”.<sup>27</sup> Syson is, however, arguably more human in the earlier version due to his greater emotional attachment. The “emendations”, regarding items of clothing and poetic exclamations, include: “stylish tweeds”, “flaunting red face”, “side-whiskers”, “velveteen skirts”, the exclamations ““Oh goat-foot god of Arcady!”” and ““Tandaradei”” (*VicG* 148), and, finally, Syson’s quoting of Verlaine’s ‘Colloque Sentimental’. While the cutting of these florescent details have been read, somewhat inevitably, as indicating Lawrence’s “maturity” (and Syson’s apparent humanisation), I would counter by suggesting that the majority of these details are actually typically Lawrentian. In the original manuscript Lawrence in fact toyed with various other details in his description of Syson (see Figure 7):

But Syson<,> was<well> dressed in felt[?] and<stylish> tweeds,  
~~and his cap alone would have commanded their respect~~<looked  
too much a gentleman to be accosted>.

Elsewhere in both versions of the story, Syson takes pleasure in fitting “his fingers into the round loops of the ~~dead~~ countess’ scissors” (*VicG* 147; *PO* 104). Lawrence also *adds* fresh florescent details during the revisionary process: the added appellations of a Botticelli angel and the interpolated memory of William Morris’s lyrical poem ‘The Chapel in Lyonesse’, for example. Finally, unaltered in both versions, we have the following sartorial description of the country surrounding Hilda’s farm: “He loved the



place extraordinarily, the hills ranging round, with bear-skin woods covering their giant shoulders, and small red farms like brooches clasping their garments" (*VicG* 145; *PO* 102).

I will conclude by briefly finessing out Lawrence's consolidation of the story's eventual title. While, in textual terms, it mutely repudiates the writing process and the "avant-texte", Cushman's summative assertion that "the progression from *The White Peacock* chapter to 'The Shades of Spring' is a study in Lawrence's growth to maturity, of his ultimate acceptance of his past and of himself" is also biographically misleading.<sup>28</sup> Lawrence's development as a writer was in perennial conflict with his attachment to the past, a past that cannot be simply excised, as suggested by the following passage in the later version:

the blue streak of water in the valley, the bareness of the home pasture, the sound of myriad-threaded bird-singing, which went mostly unheard. To his last day, he would dream of this place, when he felt the sun on his face, or saw the small handfuls of snow between the winter-twigs <or smelt the coming of spring>. (*VicG* 145; *PO* 102)

Lawrence, revising in 1914, not only leaves the earlier passage intact, but also supplements its sentiment by inserting the indicative reference – "the coming of the spring" – to the story's eventual title. Lawrence was pursued by the shades of spring for many years. In his letter to David Chambers (Jessie's younger brother) in the winter of 1928, he wrote: "Whatever I forget, I shall never forget the Hags – I loved it so" (*6L* 618).

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<sup>1</sup> The website address is: <http://odour.nottingham.ac.uk/index.asp>

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<sup>2</sup> See Paul Eggert, 'Textual Product or Textual Process', in *Devils and Angels: Textual Editing and Literary Theory*, ed. Philip Cohen (Virginia: Virginia UP, 1991), 56–71, and Paul Eggert, 'Reading a Critical Edition With the Grain and Against: The Cambridge D. H. Lawrence', in *Editing D. H. Lawrence: New Versions of a Modern Author*, eds Charles L. Ross and Dennis Jackson (Michigan: Michigan UP, 1995), 27–40.

<sup>3</sup> For example see Finn Fordham, *I do I undo I redo: The Textual Genesis of Modernist Selves* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), a study of the writing processes of six modernist authors: Hopkins, Yeats, Conrad, Forster, Joyce, and Woolf.

<sup>4</sup> See Hans Walter Gabler, George Bornstein and Gillian Borland Pierce, eds, *Contemporary German Editorial Theory* (Michigan: Michigan UP, 1991); for an overview see Gabler's 'Introduction: Textual Criticism and Theory in Modern German Editing', 1–16.

<sup>5</sup> J. C. F. Littlewood, *D. H. Lawrence, I: 1885–1914* (London: Longman Group, 1976), 14.

<sup>6</sup> Similar readings can be found in Keith Sagar, "The Best I Have Known": D. H. Lawrence's "A Modern Lover" and "The Shades of Spring", *Studies in Short Fiction*, vol. 4 (1967), 143–51; and John Worthen, 'Short Story and Autobiography: Kinds of Detachment in D. H. Lawrence's Early Fiction', *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, vol. 29 (1985), 1–15.

<sup>7</sup> Brian Finney, 'D. H. Lawrence's Progress to Maturity: From Holograph Manuscript to Final Publication of *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories*', *Studies in Bibliography*, vol. 28 (1975), 321–32, 322.

<sup>8</sup> Keith Cushman, *D. H. Lawrence at Work: The Emergence of the 'Prussian Officer' Stories* (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1978), 147.

<sup>9</sup> Mark Kinkead-Weekes, 'The Marble and the Statue: The Exploratory Imagination of D. H. Lawrence', in *Imagined World: Essays on Some English Novels and Novelists in Honour of John Butt*, eds Ian Gregor and Maynard Mack (London: Methuen & Co, 1968), 371–418, 371, 380.

<sup>10</sup> Sally Bushell, 'Textual Process and the Denial of Origins', *Textual Cultures*, vol. 2.2 (2007), 100–17, 100.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Shillingsburg, 'Interpretative Consequences of Textual Criticism', *Text*, vol. 16 (2006), 63–5, 63.

<sup>12</sup> Jed Deppman, Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, eds, *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-Textes*, trans. Jed Deppman (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania UP, 2004), 11.

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<sup>13</sup> Almuth Grésillon, 'Slow: Work in progress', *Word & Image*, vol. 13.2 (1997), 106–23, 106.

<sup>14</sup> Russell MacDonald, 'Revision and Competing Voices in D. H. Lawrence's Collaborations with Women', *Textual Cultures*, vol. 4.1 (2009), 1–25, 2.

<sup>15</sup> Dirk van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics, Joyce's Know-How, Beckett's Nohow* (Florida: Florida UP, 2008), 21–2.

<sup>16</sup> Jean Bellemin-Noël, *Le Texte et l'avant-texte: Les Brouillons d'un poème de Milosz* (Paris: Larousse, 1972).

<sup>17</sup> Pierre-Marc De Biasi, 'What is a Literary Draft? Toward a Functional Typology of Genetic Documentation', trans. Ingrid Wassenaar, *Yale French Studies*, vol. 89 (1996), 26–58.

<sup>18</sup> Louis Hay, 'Genetic Criticism: Origins and Perspectives', in *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-Textes*, eds Deppman, Ferrer and Groden, 22.

<sup>19</sup> Louis Hay, 'History or Genesis?', trans. Ingrid Wassenaar, *Yale French Studies*, vol. 89 'Drafts' (1996), 191–207.

<sup>20</sup> See Daniel Ferrer, 'Clementis's Cap: Retroaction and Persistence in the Genetic Process', *Yale French Studies*, vol. 89 (1996), 223–36.

<sup>21</sup> 'The Harassed Angel' manuscript is housed at Houghton Library, Harvard University, item no. MS An 1891 (11). Extracts are reproduced here by kind permission in Figures 7 and 8.

<sup>22</sup> For a more historicist account of modernist revision see Hannah Sullivan, *The Work of Revision* (Harvard: Harvard UP, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> Fordham, *I do I undo I redo: The Textual Genesis of Modernist Selves*, 134.

<sup>24</sup> Ferrer and Groden, *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-Textes*, 2–3.

<sup>25</sup> D. H. Lawrence, 'German Books: Thomas Mann', *Blue Review*, 3 (1913), 200–206, 206.

<sup>26</sup> Sally Bushell's own 'Philosophy of Composition' provides a potential sketch for such a model; see Sally Bushell, *Text as process: creative composition in Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Dickinson* (London: Virginia UP, 2009).

<sup>27</sup> Cushman, *D. H. Lawrence at Work: The Emergence of the 'Prussian Officer' Stories*, 135–6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.