D. H. LAWRENCE AND PHILIP HESLTINE

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The credit for introducing Philip Hesltine – perhaps better known as the composer Peter Warlock – to Lawrence must go to the young poet and dramatist, Robert Nichols. It was his excited response to Lawrence’s early novels which enthused Hesltine, then, in 1914, in his second term as an undergraduate at Christ Church, Oxford. He in turn came to regard The White Peacock, The Trespasser and Sons and Lovers as together forming one of his transforming experiences, an experience compounded by the discovery of Love Poems and Others, which he described as containing “some of the most wonderful love poems in the world”.1 Hesltine’s excitement was so feverish that, having abandoned Oxford for London at the end of his first academic year, he determined to meet Lawrence in person. “No meeting could afford me greater pleasure or interest”.2 So he wrote in a private letter just two weeks before his twentieth birthday in October 1914. However, despite his youthful drive, it was to be over a year before Hesltine achieved his objective.

They first met at a dinner party in mid-November 1915.3 The result was that Lawrence’s enthusiasm for his new acquaintance matched Hesltine’s for him. On 17 November he wrote to Nichols: “I went to dinner with Hesltine. I like him very much: I think he is one of the men who will count, in the future. I must know him more” (2L 442). In more extravagant language, Hesltine conveyed to a former teacher at Eton his rapture at having been in the company of the man “I have long venerated as the greatest literary genius of his generation”.4 Moreover, by a piece of good fortune, he found himself in a position at once to be of assistance to Lawrence, who was trying to secure a retreat from warring Europe, and especially from his native country, whose judicial system had, on 13 November, ordered the suppression of The Rainbow. Lawrence
had told his agent, J. B. Pinker, following the original decision of the Bow Street magistrate to issue a warrant for the seizure of all copies of the novel: “There is a man who more or less offers us a cottage in Florida … We have got passports. It is the end of my writing for England” (2L 429). The possibility that the Society of Authors would fight the court’s decision about The Rainbow required Lawrence to remain in the country; “the [unidentified] man” with the Floridean cottage began to fade from the scene; and, fortuitously, Heseltine was able at least potentially to offer a solution: his (much older) friend, the composer Frederick Delius, “has a forsaken estate in Florida” (2L 444). He wrote to Delius immediately after his first meeting with Lawrence:

[Lawrence] wants to go to Florida for the winter, since he is, I am afraid, rather far gone with consumption. I write this hurried note to ask whether it would be possible for him to go and live in your orange grove. He has nowhere definite to go in Florida and is very poor … He begged me to write you at once and ask whether anything could be arranged about living at the grove … He is such a marvellous man – perhaps the one great literary genius of his generation, at any rate in England.5

The approach was rebuffed: Delius replied that the orange grove had been “left to itself for twenty years and is no doubt only a wilderness of gigantic weeds and plants. The house itself will also have tumbled down”.6 In reaction, Heseltine no doubt accurately described his state of mind as “a whirlpool of alternating excitement and depression”.7

The two men met, then, at a time of extreme tension in Lawrence’s life. Feelings of betrayal by the British establishment and by Methuen, the publisher of The Rainbow, who did nothing to defend the novel, were reinforced by horror at the brutality of war most recently symbolised by the Zeppelins which had bombed London in September 1915:
It seemed as if the cosmic order were gone, as if there had come a new order, a new heaven above us … All the while the big guns were bellowing angrily … These are the heavenly ministers now, and this gun-fire is the world’s acclamation of worship. (2L 390, 396)

These feelings jostled with the conviction that “nevertheless, though the skies fall, or have fallen, one must go on with the living, constructive spirit” (2L 397). That spirit found one manifestation in Robert Nichols, then suffering from shell-shock, whom Lawrence visited in hospital in the company of Heseltine, and to whom he wrote on 17 November:

You belong now to the creative, constructive, loving side of life … Learn to be still and to trust yourself to the unseen loving forces of life: they are there, though the evil predominates. (2L 443)

For good measure Nichols was invited, along with Heseltine, to go to Florida “for a year or two … it would be splendid” (2L 446). And to promote this illusory project (which was doomed by circumstances) Lawrence’s friend, Lady Ottoline Morrell, sent £30 and canvassed others, including Edward Marsh, the Duke of Portland and G. B. Shaw, for additional support.

Following the first encounter between Lawrence and Heseltine it is clear that a second meeting was arranged in less than a week. Lawrence’s letter to his new friend on 22 November opens: “I hope you didn’t mind the holding forth of last night. But do think about what we were saying, of art, and life” (2L 447). As if Lawrence was uncertain about Heseltine’s sexual orientation, the letter continues:

One must fight every minute – at least I must – to overcome this great flux of disintegration … [represented] in physical life [by] homosexuality, the reduction process. When man and woman come together in love, that is the great immediate syn-
thesis. When men come together, that is immediate reduction. (2L 448)

Two of the three letters to Heseltine first published in 2001, and reprinted in this number of the *JDHLS*, when coupled with existing knowledge of his personal life, substantiate the belief that the subject of human relationships in their various forms had been a principal topic of conversation between the two men from the very beginning of their acquaintance. In the earlier of these two letters (1069a), conjecturally dated 24 November 1915, Nichols is the overt focus for Lawrence’s disquisition on sexual ethics, but the penultimate paragraph reveals the prime intention: to cajole Heseltine himself. References to the Armenian Dikran Kouyoumdjian (the novelist, Michael Arlen), Shahid Suhrawardy (Heseltine’s friend from his Oxford days and still in Oxford) and Dorothy Warren (the niece of Lady Ottoline) strengthen the impression that Lawrence and Heseltine had speedily established a circle of shared acquaintances. Lawrence hoped that Dorothy Warren might become the object of Heseltine’s affections – or of Nichols’s; early in 1916 he suspected that “the Armenian” was in love with her (2L 504); but he failed on all counts.

The second of the letters reprinted here – 1073a, conjecturally dated 26 November 1915, just two days after the first – introduces Minnie Lucy Channing, always known as ‘Puma’; she was to prove a continuing factor in Heseltine’s moral and sexual development. Two months older than he, the twenty-one year old woman has been variously described as an opportunist “hanger-on of the bohemian set that frequented the Café Royal”, as possessing “striking, almost classical Mediterranean beauty”, and as being “hot-blooded, forthright and vivacious”. In many ways she was naïve, so not wholly unlike Heseltine himself. However, as he had obviously confessed with embarrassment, she was pregnant with his child, an anxiety which Lawrence magisterially brushes aside as of little consequence. The plan, mentioned in the first letter, for Lawrence to entertain Heseltine to tea on Sunday 28 November,
had presumably been replaced by the proposal that they should go to tea with him.

There is a noticeable shift in tone in the second letter. Heseltine is instructed almost peremptorily, in the manner of a disciple, not only to present himself at Garsington, but also how to behave in Lady Ottoline’s presence. For his part Lawrence wrote to her on the same day suggesting that:

it would be nice if Heseltine came with us – just he, so that we can introduce him to you – or else he will never come at all. I wonder if you would write to him … I’m not sure if we can persuade him to come: he says he has no right to foist himself off on people: an excess of self-deprecation. (2L 452)

Lady Ottoline obliged; the Lawrences and Heseltine arrived at Garsington on 29 November and, as appears from the Morrells’s visitors’ book, so did Suhrawardy who presumably travelled direct from Oxford. This was the first of several visits by Heseltine; with Kouyoumdjian he was at Garsington on 3 December and again on 13 December. Referring to the latter visit, Lawrence repeated to Lady Ottoline his liking for Heseltine (first expressed on 3 December) but added: “Heseltine is a bit backboneless and needs stiffening up. But I like him very much”. His opinion of Kouyoumdjian was equally frank:

[he] seems a bit blatant and pushing: you may be put off him. But that is because he is very foreign, even though he doesn’t know it himself. In English life he is in a strange, alien medium, and he can’t adjust himself. But I find the core of him very good. (2L 473)

Lady Ottoline needed no advice; she made her own judgements:

What strange creatures Lawrence and Frieda attract to themselves. He is enthusiastic about both Heseltine and
Kouzoumdjian, but I don’t feel attracted to them, indeed quite the reverse. Heseltine is tall and blonde, soft and so degenerate that he seems somehow corrupt. Kouzoumdjian is a fat dark-blooded tight-skinned Armenian Jew, and though Lawrence believes that he will be a great writer, I find it hard to believe. Obviously he has a certain vulgar sexual force, but he is very coarse-grained and conceited. I cannot sit in the room with them for long. He and Heseltine seem to pollute the atmosphere, and stifle me, and I have to escape from their presence —

One consequence of Heseltine’s visits to Garsington was his meeting and subsequent infatuation with Juliette Baillot, the Swiss governess-companion to Lady Ottoline’s daughter, Julian. On 14 December 1915 he announced to his friend, Boris de Croustchoff:

Suddenly as I looked at the exceedingly charming little Swiss girl this evening, it struck me that I can NEVER return to Puma – it has become quite impossible. She has soiled my whole life – I can no longer imagine that I loved her the tiniest bit, when I now passionately love the Swiss girl with my whole heart – as no one ever before. God, but she is out of this world – Puma must away – it must be – how can it be? Ah, my friend, it must, must, it must be! Ah, if only I had courage – to send that one far away and to receive this one for eternity!!

He wrote in German to Croustchoff but presumably conveyed the same sentiments simultaneously in English to Lawrence, whose reply on 18(?) December reveals an indifference to Puma’s feelings comparable to that shown in his letter of 26 November:

If you are very fond of Mlle Baillot, then marry her. I think it would be best. Have enough of the other, then marry the little Swiss … I think probably she will suit you better than any English woman you can find. Since I have been thinking about
it, I think you are right to be fond of her. She is probably your woman. (2L 481)

The relationship did not prosper. Juliette Baillot could not reciprocate Heseltine’s affection (Lady Ottoline thought “luckily”); she heard from her employer that “he had a mistress who was pregnant with his child. We never met again, and I burnt all his letters”.¹¹

During the period of his infatuation with Juliette, Heseltine had joined the Lawrences in Cornwall where they were staying at Porthcothan (in the house belonging to J. D. Beresford, the novelist). He arrived on 1 January 1916, but within ten days cracks were beginning to appear in the friendship between Heseltine and Lawrence; letters from the one to Delius on 6 January and the other to Lady Ottoline on 9 January make this clear:

I don’t want to identify myself with [Lawrence] in anything beyond his broad desire for an ampler and fuller life … He is a very great artist, but hard and autocratic in his views and outlook, and his artistic canons I find utterly and entirely unsympathetic to my nature … he is, nevertheless, an arresting figure, a great and attractive personality, and his passion for a new, clean, untrammelled life is very splendid.¹²

Heseltine is here also. I like him, but he seems empty, uncreated. That is how these young men are. There seems to be no hope for life in the living themselves. But one always believes in the miracle … poor Philip who really seems as if he were not yet born, as if he consisted only of echoes from the past, and reactions against the past. But he will perhaps come to being soon: when a new world comes to pass. (2L 501-2)

The discovery that Heseltine had been repeating to Frieda Lawrence comments made by Ottoline Morrell about her, thus setting the two women at each other’s throats, undoubtedly
contributed to undermining the friendship. But Lawrence was perceptive in his observation about Heseltine’s attitude to Puma:

I think Heseltine will go ... back to his Puma ... He says he despises her and can’t stand her, that she’s vicious and a prostitute, but he will be running back to her in a little while, I know. She’s not so bad, really. I’m not sure whether her touch of licentious profligacy in sex isn’t better than his deep-seated conscious, mental licentiousness. (2L 504)

Lawrence proved right in the long run, despite Heseltine’s declaration to Croustchoff quoted above, and despite his remarks to Delius in February 1916:

I am still worried to death by the little model I took away in the summer in sheer desperation of loneliness. I never really liked her, ... as I told you in London, she is going to have a baby ... but I have no idea what is to become of the child. She cannot possibly afford to keep it, and I have far too little liking for her to want to help her afterwards – 13

Meanwhile, in Cornwall Kouyoumdjian was about to arrive (on 10 January 1916) and, as Lawrence told Lady Ottoline, then “we are going to write, all of us together, a comedy for stage, about Heseltine and his Puma and so on. It will be jolly” (2L 501). Heseltine continued to find favour but, by 20 January, Kouyoumdjian did not: “I don’t care for him ... He is going away in a few days”; nevertheless the playwriting continued to be “rather fun”. Unfortunately, the play, if ever completed, has not survived; one wonders about the quality of the humour in it and whether the comic momentum would have changed once Puma had been known in person. She arrived in Porthcothan on 26 January; Heseltine “motored over and fetched her from Newquay”.

Lawrence felt at ease with her immediately: “she is a quiet, quite nice little thing really, unobtrusive and affectionate. [Heseltine] is
fond of her, in spite of what he says” (2L 517). Whether Heseltine discussed her, and his passionate attachment to Juliette, with Lawrence in Puma’s presence will never be known, but it is clear that Lawrence was the recipient of his confidences and passed on his assessment of the situation to Lady Ottoline in mid-February:

About H and Mlle. – I tell him he ought to tell her. I suppose he will. It is queer. He declares he does not like this one, the Puma, but he does really. He declares he wants her to go. But he is really attached to her in the senses, in the unconsciousness, in the blood. He is always fighting away from this. But in so doing he is a fool. She is very nice and very real and simple, we like her. His affection for Mlle. is a desire for the light because he is in the dark. If he were in the light he would want the dark. He wants Mlle. for companionship, not for the blood connection, the dark, sensuous relation. With Puma he has this second, dark relation, but not the first.

In such circumstances Lawrence believed in the propriety of two wives: “I don’t see why there should be monogamy for people who can’t have full satisfaction in one person, because they themselves are too split” (2L 539). By the end of February Heseltine had returned with Puma to London in the hope of obtaining exemption from conscription on medical grounds, and Lawrence wrote again to Lady Ottoline; his personal ambivalence is manifest:

Heseltine is in a great state of (unjustly) hating the Puma, and looking on Mlle as a white star. He will swing from dark to light till he comes to rest. I believe if he stayed long enough with Mlle exclusively, he would hate her: but perhaps not. We can but let him oscillate violently. He is really very good and I depend on him and believe in him. But he is exasperating because he is always in such a state of mad reaction against things, all mad reactions. It is a terrible cyclonic state, but he will be worth having with us. (2L 557)
At least part of Lawrence’s keenness to have Heseltine “with us” was connected with the scheme known as ‘The Rainbow Books and Music’, which they had developed together in mid-February. Heseltine had strongly urged the project in order to secure publication of The Rainbow by private subscription, with other works – musical and literary – to follow. Lawrence acknowledged his own lack of “business genius” whereas – as he assured Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield on 24 February 1916 – Heseltine came from a family who were “perfect dealers in art” and was himself “one of those people who are transmitters, and not creators of art” (2L 549). Heseltine had been prepared to sustain the project with his own money, but his being involved in it had caused a furious and jealous reaction from the Murrys: Jack claimed to have proposed it two months earlier and was now seemingly excluded. The furore gradually subsided; in April 1916 the project was abandoned, Heseltine having received only about 30 replies to the 600 circulars he had distributed; but the affair – together with his stay in Cornwall – had convinced him that his friendship with Lawrence was doomed:

[Lawrence] has no real sympathy. All he likes in one is the potential convert to his own reactionary creed. I believe firmly that he is a fine thinker and a consummate artist, but personal relation with him is almost impossible.  

Exactly what brought about the rupture in relations is unknown: Heseltine may have suspected that the Lawrences were pushing him into marriage with Puma, while she may have suspected that Mlle Baillot was being preferred. What is certain is that Heseltine and Puma were at one: he “denounced [Lawrence] to his face”; she returned a letter from Frieda to Heseltine “with a note to the effect that we [Lawrence and Frieda] are both beneath contempt”. Lawrence, for his part, recognising that a break had become inevitable, wrote to Heseltine in April:
I forgot to ask you … if you would send also the MS. of my philosophy … I shall be glad when I have that MS., and this affair is finished. It has become ludicrous and rather shameful. I only wish that you and Puma should not talk about us, for decency’s sake. I assure you that I shall have nothing to say of you and her. The whole business is so shamefully fit for a Kouyoumdjian sketch. Please send me the manuscript, and we will let the whole relation cease entirely, and remove the indecency of it. (2L 598)\(^6\)

Heseltine did not return Lawrence’s manuscript; he later claimed to have used it as toilet paper.

His own affairs were fraught with difficulties. On 3 July Puma gave birth to her child, Nigel (first called Peter), and arranged to have him adopted at once. Heseltine agreed, with whatever reservations, to marry her; their wedding took place in the Chelsea Registry Office on 22 December 1916.

At about the same time that Lawrence declared his friendship with Heseltine and Puma at an end, he was at work on the preliminary version of what would become Women in Love. On 19 May his agent, J. B. Pinker, was informed: “I am half way through a novel, which is a sequel to the Rainbow” and in November he sent to his friend, the novelist Catherine Carswell, a typescript of the entire work now published as The First ‘Women in Love’. In a covering letter he asked if her lawyer-husband, Donald Carswell, would give a professional judgement:

Ask Don if he thinks any part libellous – e.g. Halliday is Heseltine, The Pussum is a model called the Puma, and they are taken from life – nobody else at all lifelike. (3L 36)

Though, then, the opening chapters underwent revision, there can be little doubt that the portraits of Heseltine and Puma which occur there were sketched at the time of the break in their relations with Lawrence. The two characters are set in London’s Bohemia:
this sensational crowd that Halliday mixes with, they are nihilists with regard to the conventions, even if they are ultimately bourgeois … Painters, musicians, writers—hangers-on, models, advanced young people, anybody who is openly at odds with the conventions, and belongs to nowhere particularly. They are often young fellows down from the university, and girls who are living their own lives, as they say. (FWL 50)

Pussum – Puma – is presented as:

a girl with dark, soft, fluffy hair cut short in the artist fashion, hanging level and full almost like the Egyptian princes’s [sic]. She was small and delicately made, with warm colouring and large, dark, hostile eyes. There was a delicacy, almost a beauty in all her form, and at the same time a certain attractive grossness of spirit … (FWL 52)

Julius Halliday (Heseltine) is:

a pale, full-built young man with rather long, solid fair hair hanging from under his black hat, moving cumbersomely down the room, his face lit up with a smile at once naive and warm, and vapid. (FWL 55)

Heseltine’s friend, Cecil Gray, protested that the portrait was malicious; whatever the truth in his assertion, it is certain that the tension between Heseltine and Puma is accurately reflected in the first encounter between the two characters. Their fictional (like their actual) relationship has no secure foundation; Halliday, Pussum claims,

made me go and live with him, and now he wants to throw me over … he doesn’t know what he wants … He came and cried to me, tears, you never saw so many, saying he couldn’t bear it
unless I went back to him … And now I’m going to have a baby …

The vacillation so characteristic of Heseltine in his dealings with Puma is faithfully depicted. His offer to bribe her with £100 to disappear into the country and not trouble him again (FWL 57) is substantiated – according to Barry Smith17 – by an earlier letter to Delius. And his letter of 19 April 1917 containing an hysterical denunciation of marriage – particularly marriage with Puma – made a lasting union seem quite impossible:

I have always looked on the institution of marriage as the supreme blasphemy … The whole idea is filthy – and I, for my part, would never permit the paws of officialdom to mess about with any relation that really existed between me and any human being. So, when I was badgered by our mutual friend [Puma] (with whom I had never had and could never have had any but a purely bestial relation) to make her a final present of forty shillings worth of respectability in a ‘certificate of marriage’, I made no objection, seeing that the ceremonial meant no more for me than to make a mock of what was already a mockery.18

For her part, Pussum – as Lawrence well knew –

had got her Halliday, whom she wanted. She wanted him completely in her power. Then she would marry him. She wanted to marry him. She had set her will on marrying Halliday. (FWL 70)

The vacillation, irresolution and changeableness, of which there is abundant evidence in the relations between all the principals in this story, continued. In April 1917, Heseltine decided to leave London behind and return to Cornwall, staying first at the ‘Tinner’s Arms’ in Zennor (where the Lawrences had stayed between February and March 1916) and then renting a bungalow on the road to Penzance.
Lawrence was not pleased: “I don’t like him any more, it can’t come back, the liking” (3L 120). But it could. Five weeks later, on 14 June, he asked Gray: “tell me about Heseltine. I am feeling kindly about him again” (3L 134). And Heseltine himself was feeling more than “kindly” about Puma. In a letter to Nichols on 17 June he describes an extraordinary emotional shift and a dying to his former self which Lawrence would have applauded; indeed it is likely that he had already expressed himself in comparable terms to Lawrence. The letter to Nichols reads:

at the moment of complete uncertainty, a strange inner voice has prompted me to throw over all my apparent certainties as illusions and fall back upon quite inexplicable realities …

At least I have found one certainty, I have found a direction, and a peace that passeth, not the understanding but certainly the mere reason. What I have hitherto sought as love has proved the most ridiculous of vain illusions: love has been with me all the while and it is I, and not love, that has been blind … I have found, for the first time in my life, reality in the one place of all others where I was most certain that it could not be found – and if this is not real, nothing in my life ever could be. I have found in Puma and my babe a greater and realer love than I have ever been able to imagine … All that I have hated and cursed in Puma has been myself – my foul old self – and that is dead now, once and for all.19

Having received what one must presume was a similar outpouring, Lawrence replied by return, on 11 June 1917, in the third letter re-printed in this journal (1423a). This letter contains one of Lawrence’s clearest and least ambiguous assertions of the primacy of marriage. Perhaps responding to Heseltine’s new attitude to Puma, Lawrence tells him: “You know I believe in marriage, more than in love: in fact, in my scheme, marriage is the great initiatory process to being”. He also touches on more prosaic matters, informing Heseltine that “owing to military botherings, [he] may
come up to London … to see a specialist”, and indeed he did visit a
London specialist a week or so later, before attending an army
centre in Bodmin on 23 June for medical re-examination; once
again he was rejected for military service, but we do not know if he
took the opportunity to see Heseltine in London.

That Heseltine and Puma responded to an invitation in this letter
to visit Cornwall is, however, established in Lawrence’s letter of 23
August 1917:

Puma and Heseltine came down: wan and unhappy she, crazy
he: stayed a fortnight in the bungalow, she hating it; now have
disappeared utterly. Starr says mysteriously ‘Mum’s the word’.
(8L 25)

His final words about the disappearance of the pair sound ominous
and the mystery beloved of Meredith Starr sounds alarming: in fact,
Puma and Heseltine had decamped to Ireland to avoid a summons
for a further army medical examination, despite his having a
certificate exempting him from military service.

Lawrence’s good will, manifested in letter 1423a, was reciprocated
by Heseltine through his attempts to interest Dublin
publishers in Lawrence’s writings, and particularly in “a little book
of philosophy” finished in August 1917 (3L 152). “Based upon the
more superficial ‘Reality of Peace’” (essays published in the
English Review), Lawrence considered the now lost ‘At the Gates’
to be “pure metaphysics … and perfectly sound metaphysic” (3L
155). J. M. Hone had expressed a strong desire to see this work; in
a remarkable letter testifying to his own conviction about its
importance Heseltine claimed that it was he who aroused Hone’s
interest. Writing to Nichols on 14 December 1917, he said:

At my instigation one of the partners of a big publishing firm
here has secured the MS. of the whole book … and it is, in my
opinion, as also in his, the supreme utterance of modern
philosophy – This is a big phrase but it is impossible to
exaggerate the book’s importance. Lawrence can’t get it published in England … But we must get it printed, and we want to make a big thing of it – that is, advertise it very extensively and work up all the excitement that a work of the prophet Ezekiel *redivivus* would arouse – “for behold, a greater than Ezekiel is here!”

Further to strengthen his attempt to persuade Hone to print a work of such significance, Heseltine urged Nichols to write to the publisher; Nichols duly wrote from army headquarters in France, on 26 January 1918; but in spite of their joint efforts, the work was never published.

As could have been predicted, Heseltine and Puma’s marriage failed. She appears to have left Dublin – and her husband – early in 1918; she went to Wales, where she – the “mulierrcula impudica”, in Heseltine’s words – stayed temporarily with his mother. We do not know whether their marriage ended in divorce or permanent separation, but Puma plays no further part in this narrative.

The turbulent relationship between Lawrence and Heseltine also ended in acrimony. The first trade edition of *Women in Love* was published by Martin Secker on 10 June 1921; on 2 September Heseltine’s solicitors, Messrs Clifford Webster, Emmet & Coote, demanded that alterations be made in the descriptions of Halliday and Pussum, otherwise he would sue for libel. By his own private admission to his solicitors, Heseltine had already decided not to “embark upon an actual case”; he simply hoped “to give Mr. Secker and the author the impression that proceedings will certainly be taken if the matter cannot be settled out of court”. The policy worked; Secker agreed not to issue further copies until the dispute was settled. Lawrence’s reaction was terse: “Heseltine trying to make himself important” (*4L* 87). But Secker took the matter more seriously; the fact that it coincided with a strident attack on the novel in *John Bull* – ‘A Book the Police Should Ban’ – concentrated his mind (*4L* 88 n. 2). Lawrence continued to be unmoved: “I believe the thing to do is to go quietly and let Heseltine
get tired. He’s a half imbecile fool” (4L 89). Secker persisted and Lawrence agreed to make some changes; he sent “the altered pages” to Secker on 8 October:

The Pussum I have made a blue-eyed fair-haired little thing: Halliday black and swarthy … I think it all perfect nonsense – as if there weren’t dozens of little Pussums about Chelsea, and dozens of Hallidays anywhere. But I do it since you wish it this way. (4L 93-4)

He remained – thoroughly and justifiably – sceptical about how far Heseltine was prepared to force the issue: he “is altogether a shady bird: too shady, I should say, to risk himself and his precious wife in court” (4L 108). And he was right: Heseltine admitted that “if it came to a case, my wife would be an essential witness and I have now finally separated from her”. Lawrence was convinced that Heseltine was merely trying to blackmail Secker: “I’d see him in several hells first” (4L 113). Expressed very frankly: “Heseltine ought to be flushed down a sewer, for he is a simple shit” (4L 116). Consequently, Lawrence was furious when he discovered that Secker had in the end agreed to pay £50 damages and ten guineas costs if Heseltine accepted Lawrence’s modifications of the text: “It makes me sick with rage to think that Heseltine got that money out of [Secker]. Really, one should never give in to such filth” (4L 129). The only satisfaction Lawrence derived from the altercation with his one-time friend, now “that filthy rat” (4L 138), was that:

Secker has not mentioned to me anything about my paying for the Heseltine blackmail money: so I have said nothing. If Secker pays blackmail that is not my affair. (4L 169)

Never again was Heseltine mentioned in Lawrence’s surviving correspondence.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., 76, gives the date as 15 November, but there is a letter from Heseltine on 16 November: “This evening I met and had a long talk with D. H. Lawrence”. Edward Nehls, D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957-59), i, 329.
4 Barry Smith, Peter Warlock, 77.
6 Ibid., i, 330.
7 Ibid., i, 331.
8 Paul Delany, D. H. Lawrence’s Nightmare: The Writer and His Circle in the Years of the Great War (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1979), 201; Barry Smith, Peter Warlock, 83-84
10 Barry Smith, Peter Warlock, 82-83.
12 Barry Smith, Peter Warlock, 85.
13 Ibid., 84-85.
14 Ibid., 91.
15 Ibid., 92.
16 The lost MS was entitled ‘Goats and Compasses’; on its contents, see Mark Kinkead-Weekes, D. H. Lawrence: Triumph to Exile, 1912-1922 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 303-5.
17 Barry Smith, Peter Warlock, 310, n. 66.
18 Ibid., 108.
19 Ibid., 120.
20 Edward Nehls, D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography, i, 452. (Heseltine misquoted Matthew xii. 42: “behold, a greater than Solomon is here”).
21 Barry Smith, Peter Warlock, 122.