

Paper Proposal for Material Cultures 2010: "Technology, Textuality, and Transmission"

"Searching for the 'Ideal Text': Considering Textual Authority and Self-Censorship in D.H. Lawrence's *Women in Love*"

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D.H. Lawrence has always held an ambivalent place in popular culture and the canon of English Literature, but it is well regarded that he was a particularly careful writer and editor of his work. Despite his often painstaking efforts, unusual revisionary techniques, editing, and censorship have resulted in a series of adaptations of his novel *Women in Love*, making "Lawrence's" *Women in Love* elusive to this day. In 1987, the Cambridge edition of the novel was printed, the publisher stating that "until now no text of *Women in Love* has ever been published which is faithful to all of Lawrence's revisions," and furthermore claiming to "[clear] the text of literally thousands of accumulated errors allowing its readers to read and understand the novelist's work as he himself created it." This paper will question to what extent multiple editions complicate readings of the text by assessing the process of writing, editing and censorship. I argue that an awareness of the complicated creation and reception process is required for re-assessing Lawrence and his work. I further argue that Lawrence self-censored *Women in Love*, complicating issues of textual authority and recent editorial procedures, such as declared in the Cambridge edition, which seeks to re-create an ideal and pure form of the novel.