

The Trespasser

By drs. J.A.Goris

Lawrence's next novel is *The Trespasser* published in 1912. 'For anyone interested in writing novels' says Melvyn Bragg in the introduction to the Cambridge Edition of 1982ⁱ, 'the origins and contents of *The Trespasser* make a compulsive case history.' While the young Lawrence was a teacher in Croydon, a real life story was presented to him by a friend of his, Helen Corke. She had been involved with a musician, who killed himself. Her notes were perfectly suitable for fiction; Lawrence read and adapted them, took his own part in the tale and audaciously published it. Even though the subject is very much private, tragic and rather shameful to be made public to the world, Helen gave her permission. The years in which it was written were tumultuous for Lawrence. In the course of this strange novel's history his mother died, he broke off his six-year unofficial engagement to Jessie Chambers, broke off an official engagement to Louie Burrows, published his first novel *The White Peacock*, formed his fertile literary friendship with Edward Garnett, met Frieda Weekley and left England.

As Bragg's introduction explains, the story of *The Trespasser* is very simple: a young woman takes her music teacher away to the Isle of Wight for a holiday. They spend five unevenly ecstatic days together. He returns to his unloved wife and burdensome family and hangs himself. The woman mourns for a while and then takes up with another man; his widow takes in the better class of lodger. Its language is poetic and full of symbolism, and so is the title: you can make great play with it. The heroine-mistress trespasses on the life of the married man she seduces into spending an illicit holiday with her; the man trespasses in taking the liberty to go away with his pupil, a freedom that is denied him as husband, father and breadwinner. Lawrence trespasses on the real story of Helen Corke, who herself trespasses on the world of Herbert Baldwin Macartney, the musician. The young Lawrence also felt himself a trespasser in the powerful world of established London literature, as we have seen in the previous chapter. Finally in the novel Lawrence is beginning to trespass on the estate of passionate and erotic writing in which he was to hunt so successfully, even though it made him a target of censorship and pursuit by moralists of all walks of life.

The main characters are the married couple Siegmund and Beatrice MacNair, and Siegmund's friend Helena Verden, living in South London. When the story begins Siegmund is dead; it is through his photograph hanging above the piano in Helena's room that we gain our first impression of him (p.9):

It was the profile of a handsome man in the prime of life. He was leaning slightly forward, as if yielding beneath a burden of life, or to the pull of fate. He looked out musingly, and there was no hint of rebellion in the contours of the regular features. The hair was brushed back, soft and thick, straight from his fine brow. His nose was small and shapely, his chin rounded, cleft, rather beautifully moulded.

It is the profile of a man with refinement, sensitivity, seemingly resigned, at the same time bending down under the load life has bestowed on him. Such a man seems to be out of place in the sordid home in Highgate with its 'drab and dreary' room (p.15), the table 'spread with a dirty cloth', to which he is welcomed by the 'chill wetness of the little white garden.' His house is not his haven: 'as he closed the door, and found himself in the darkness of the hall, the sense of fatigue came fully upon him.' This is the place where he lives with his wife Beatrice and their children Irene, Vera, Marjory, Frank and Gwen. He is not a happy man; his life is in a crisis. Lawrence wrote the novel at a time when his own life was in chaos; it was written in agonized circumstances during his mother's last illness, and based on the upsets and miseries of Helen Corke. It is this mood of crisis and intensity that pervades the story.

Siegmund is caught between two women, neither of them contributing sufficiently to his happiness to make life worthwhile. First there is his wife Beatrice, a strong-willed, proud woman, to whom he has been married for over twenty years, and with whom he has an empty, unhappy life. Beatrice is 'of good family, had been brought up like a lady, educated in a convent school in France' (p.20). The reader who associates this kind of background with a prudish and unadventurous attitude to life is not immediately proved right; the story of their elopement as young lovers, both in their teens, is full of romance. But there is a distance between young Siegmund and Beatrice from their earliest acquaintance. Beatrice was quite good-looking as well as educated, and he thought much of her; 'I thought she was miles above me' (p.108 ff.). He remembers her countenance, her great, dark eyes as she looked at him, and they 'seemed to have formed an alliance in that look': she was the other half of Siegmund's consciousness, and he of hers. Siegmund felt 'very romantic, fearfully emotional, and the soul of honour.' They eloped to Brighton, to get married. 'It's funny', says Siegmund as he later tells this story to Helena, 'but that Beatrice is as dead - ay, far more dead than Dante's. And I am not that young fool, not a bit.'

He feels starved in his marriage; the attraction has long since gone. Emotionally, spiritually and sexually his life is unfulfilled; 'for years he had suppressed his soul, in a kind of mechanical despair doing his duty and enduring the rest' (p.14). Though he is thirty-eight years old, he feels 'disconsolate as a child' (p.17). Over the passing years Siegmund has

resorted to a life of art and music, an interest he shares with Helena. He feels very much at ease with her: 'she was so calm, and full of her own assurance. It was a great rest to be with her. With her, nothing mattered but love, and the beauty of things.' Helena, who has noticed his moods of depression and loneliness, proposes a holiday for the two of them on the Isle of Wight. Siegmund has known Helena for quite some time; she used to be his pupil, and afterwards they became close friends. Together with her friend Louisa she often visits Siegmund's theatrical performances; the three of them frequently go for walks and spend time together, and Siegmund has been invited to her home several times. He has high expectations of their holiday together. The outing is going to be 'a breaking of bonds, a severing of blood ties, a sort of new birth' (p.14). What he hopes to find with Helena is what he does not find with his wife: a sense of fulfillment, a love making that will lift his being, so that he will feel new and reborn again after these 'few days purely for his own joy.'

However, what Siegmund fails to realize in his hunger for contact and warmth is, that whereas Helena is devoted to him in music and arts, this does not warrant an equal devotion in a further intimacy. To begin with, she is a good deal younger than he is and has never been married herself. She does not understand much of the oversensitive and careworn Siegmund (p.24 ff.):

So often, she did not take his meaning, but left him alone with a sense of tragedy. She had no idea how his life was wrenched from its roots, and when he tried to tell her, she balked him, leaving him inwardly, quite lonely.

She lightly interprets his dark distress as something that merely needs being laughed off: 'his little anxious look of distress amused her'; 'to see a big, strong man anxious-eyed as a child because of a strange sound, amused her.' The stay on the Isle of Wight does not turn out to be what Siegmund had hoped for. Helena goes along with him on the path of romantic interest, but ultimately they are incompatible. She longs for tenderness and intimacy; they share a long, 'supreme kiss', the sort of kiss in which Siegmund feels man and woman have one being, 'the only Hermaphrodite'; however, it means something different for Helena. She is not sexually aroused: 'her passion exhausts itself at the mouth' (p.32). She is what Lawrence calls a 'Dreaming Woman': the dream of love is what matters most, her actual desire is accomplished in a kiss. It had set Siegmund on fire, but Helena 'felt herself flagging. She had not the man's brightness and vividness of blood', and longs to go to sleep. As Helena lies still

on Siegmund's breast, listening to his heart, she may be dreaming of him, but the dream itself is more important than the man: 'To the real man she was very cruel' (p.33).

The reader gets the impression that Siegmund is jumping to conclusions; his harsh judgement of young Helena after just this one encounter seems rather premature.

Interestingly, in Siegmund's pondering over the woman in his arms we recognize a parallel with Lawrence's notion about the 'Magna Mater', the female prototype in Lettie, Meg and Emily of *The White Peacock*:

His dreams were the flowers of his blood. Hers were more detached and inhuman. For centuries a certain type of woman has been rejecting the 'animal' in humanity, till now her dreams are abstract, and full of fantasy, and her blood runs in bondage, and her kindness is full of cruelty.

The 'Magna Mater', or the 'Great Mother', symbolizes the woman who sees her ability to give birth, to bring new life into the world as the ultimate goal of female sexuality. Siegmund's musing surpasses the present here-and-now; it suggests a wider context in the history of humanity. As we will see in the discussion of Miriam in *Sons and Lovers*, Lawrence borrowed this idea of time perspective from Thomas Hardy, the author he studied most extensively. Lawrence's labelling this type of woman as 'Madonna' refers to the Church, which, indeed, has advocated the procreative function of sexuality as its main purpose and childbearing as the prime interest of women 'for centuries'. The Lawrencean 'Great Mother' adheres to this sublimated sense of sexuality and allows motherhood to become so all absorbing and superior to everything else that she comes to consider herself above her husband and 'hostile to his wishes'. Her life energy is directed towards a 'higher' cause, 'in bondage' with the Church. She is not allowed a deeply sensual craving for her male partner; their sexual union does not involve her in the sense Lawrence sees as 'fruitful togetherness', the togetherness he later describes in his dissertation *Fantasia of the Unconscious* as the true source of creative energy. Lettie and Meg of *The White Peacock* are such females, excluding their husbands from their role as fathers.

Helena has no children yet; she feels a dreamed-up substitute of this 'superior' love for Siegmund: a possessive kind of care and protection. Later in the story we will see how the carved Christ at the Catholic Church will inspire her to the sublimated sexuality of the woman who sacrifices her body for a higher purpose, like Christ did his. All in white, with her 'cool, thick throat' she can only give her lover 'Madonna love': she addresses him 'softly, gently, as if he was her child whom she must correct and lead.' She wants his dependence and caresses,

not his passion. While Siegmund's body is 'burning and surging with desire', his heart beating fast (p.38 ff.), Helena's involvement is almost against her will: 'she seemed to be offering him herself to sacrifice... abandoned to him.'

For the time being Siegmund puts aside the 'sorrow' he feels in their union. He settles for what Helena has to offer and conforms to what she wants of him (p.40 ff.). He is 'filled with an easiness that would comply with her every wish'; he has become the Siegmund of Helena's dreams, and 'she had created him.' She gets away with it: 'The moon was there to put a cool hand of absolution on her brow.' Siegmund feels 'at home', he does not feel an 'outcast' anymore; the sea 'seems to be poured out of the moon'. Helena has inspired a definition of a love that brings him spiritual and aesthetic joy (p.47):

When Siegmund had Helena near, he lost the ache, the yearning towards something, which he always felt otherwise. She seemed to connect him with the beauty of things, as if she were the nerve through which he received intelligence of the sun and wind and sea, and of the moon and the darkness. Beauty she never felt herself, came to him through her. It is that, makes love.

But Siegmund is also a very physical being; he loves the early morning nature and runs naked across the beach (p.42 ff.). Even though he is 'a poor swimmer' he playfully plunges into the sea: 'he offered his body to the morning, glowing with the sea's passion', accepting its 'sudden cruelty' with a mere frown. He is proud of himself and his handsome physique and well aware of Helena's rejection of it: 'she rejects me as if I were a baboon, under my clothing.' As Lawrence puts it, 'it was his physical self thinking', in revolt against Helena's coolness.

Soon Helena is confronted with this physical Siegmund (p.52 ff.), who is not her dreamed lover, nor a child needing motherly attention, but a grown man of flesh and blood, who is 'not her Siegmund.' As she lies listening to the overpowering throb of the sea it seems to merge with Siegmund's heartbeat, and it frightens her: 'This was the God she knew not: as she knew not this Siegmund. It was so different from the half-shut eyes with black lashes, and the winsome, shapely nose.' She feels alien to the forceful, physical Siegmund, who is 'like the heart, and the brute sea' (p.56) and she hates 'the brute in him.' Unlike Siegmund, Helena does not feel comfortable with the unruly forces of nature. She prefers bathing in small rock-pools, which are bright and clear and do not hide submerged water plants. This holds an allusion to the symbolic meaning of the sea hiding secrets under its surface as an allegory of repressed sensuality. The electric light bulb Siegmund finds, therefore, symbolizes the new light he hopes to shed on their love life; in *Fantasia of the Unconscious* Lawrence uses the

word 'electricity' in connection with 'the act of coition.' However, the light bulb soon becomes 'a senseless bauble' in Helena's hands.

Walking home together along the churchyard wall (p.60 ff.) where 'the carved Christ looked down on the dead' her love is inspired with 'old' values instead; her heart is swelling with emotion and 'all the yearning and pathos of Christianity filled her again.' She transfers her mood of religious spirituality to Siegmund: 'she felt a rare tenderness and admiration for him.' Conscious of 'the sleeping dead' in their graves Helena realizes the dejected fashion of her companion, and even though it is unusual for her to be 'so humble-minded' she feels she must 'be submissive' to him that evening. Siegmund is roused by her fervent embrace, which 'burned away his heaviness', and which he mistakes for a prelude to the passionate sexual intimacy he is craving for. But Helena is not motivated by a desire for passion; it is her mood of Christian submissiveness that makes her want 'to sacrifice to him, make herself a burning altar to him':

That night she met his passion with love. It was not his passion she wanted, actually. But she desired that he should want *her* madly, and that he should have all - everything. It was a wonderful night to him. It restored in him the full 'will to live'. But she felt it destroyed her. Her soul seemed blasted.

In Lawrence's later novels *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love* there is a reversal of roles: it is not the female, but the male who is destroyed. In *The Rainbow* Anton Skrebensky's self worth is 'blasted' by Ursula's sexual aggression, while in *Women in Love* Gerald Crich is the victim of Gudrun's betrayal. In *The Trespasser* the male is triumphant, but not lasting. Walking on the beach, Siegmund feels elated. He is as full of life as the sea, hugging the warm body of the shore as if it were Helena; as if he were 'the first man to discover things: like Adam when he opened the first eyes in the world' (p.66). He is restored to life, Helena has fulfilled him utterly, and in a 'delicate tingling as of music' he feels whole again. 'You seem to have knit all things in a piece for me', he says to her.

His triumph over life creates a daring in him that Helena is unfamiliar with (p.78 ff.): "Carpe Diem", he said. "We have plucked a beauty, my dear. With this rose in my coat I dare go to Hell or anywhere." Whereas he expects her to rejoice with him, Helena is highly disturbed by this new, almost blasphemous Siegmund; he is so unlike the old one who joined her in her spirituality, who matched her dreams and whom she had hoped to possess forever by the sacrifice of her body. Now she is moved with a vivid passion of grief; she feels she cannot share or reciprocate his worldly, proudly sensual feelings. Overpowered by an

uncontrollable fear of losing him she bursts into - for Siegmund incomprehensible - sobbing. In the intense silence that follows she battles to restore her power over him. The urgent knocking with his heart on her breast 'like a man who wanted something and who dreaded to be sent away ' proves his vulnerability to her. Helena, wanting him in her dream world again, loses herself in high-flown spirituality, strong enough to baffle her lover. In a scene suggesting a violation of Siegmund by Helena, who is 'weighing down the life of Siegmund' by lying prone on his body, she ruthlessly forces lines of German poetry upon his exasperated mind, 'touching him with her mouth and her cheeks and her forehead.' She experiences a spiritual climax as she 'swooned lightly into unconsciousness' and says with wide-eyed delight 'to her soul': 'I have been beyond life. I have been a little way into death.'

As in several earlier scenes the moon is emphatically present here. Both in his early and later work Lawrence frequently uses scenes in the moonlight to symbolize a woman's mysterious, witch-like victory over men. Its influence in literature derives from Greek and Shakespearean drama; in *Macbeth* witches cast their evil spell over men in the moonlight. Macbeth is ensnared by the witches' prophecies and ultimately sees his life ruined. Their goddess of classical and medieval witchcraft is Hecate, properly another name for Diana and Luna, moon goddesses. It is in a witch-like, darkly symbolic way that Lawrence describes the Magna Mater's power over Siegmund (p. 82):

She looked down at Siegmund. He was drawing in great heavy breaths. He lay still on his back, gazing up at her, and she stood motionless at his side, looking down at him. He felt stunned, half-conscious. Yet as he lay helplessly looking up at her, some other consciousness inside him murmured 'Hawwa, - Eve - Mother!' She stood compassionate over him. Without touching him, she seemed to be yearning over him like a mother. Her compassion, her benignity, seemed so different from his little Helena. This woman tall and pale, drooping with the strength of her compassion, seemed stable, immortal, not a fragile human being, but a personification of the great motherhood of woman. 'I am her child, too,' he dreamed, as a child murmurs unconscious in sleep. He had never felt her eyes so much as now, in the darkness, when he looked only into deep shadow. She had never before so entered and gathered his plaintive masculine soul to the bosom of her nurture.

For Siegmund the experience is overwhelming; he is utterly drained, both physically and psychically. He can hardly control his body, he feels detached from the earth and 'all the near, concrete, beloved things', as if they have melted away from him. He feels sick, unsupported, somewhere alone on the edge of an enormous space, and cannot come to terms with what has happened to him. He knows he has been through an ordeal, 'as a man feels who is being brought from under an anaesthetic' (p.84).

In spite of his passionate grief when reviewing his hour of passion with Helena he does not reproach her, nor communicate his turmoil. In a way their roles are reversed: at the beginning of their stay it was Helena who felt Siegmund's elder. Now Siegmund feels a kind of tenderness and pity for her, as she walks with buoyant feet beside him, unconscious of what is going on in his mind: 'He walked on alone in his deep seriousness, of which she was not aware.' Enraptured in her own world, 'pleased with her fancy of wayward little dreams' (p.87), she inspires him with pity; a pity he feels drawing him 'nearer to life', the only sign of still being human. However, in relation to Helena his silent pity is degrading and an unequivocal sign of his inability to relate to her as an equal human being. Siegmund himself interprets it as a noble gesture to 'spare her her suffering', as he did his mother when, as a child, he had severe diphtheria. In his efforts to relive the last few hours, he puts the experience down to his own propensity to be too vigorous: 'I suppose living too intensely kills you, more or less' (p.86). It is now Siegmund's turn to identify with the carved Christ, thus nailing himself on the cross, belittling his own sorrow as 'small and despicable' compared to Christ's and reducing himself to a passive sufferer, a victim.

We see an influence of Thomas Hardy in the character of Siegmund's old acquaintance Hampson, who, like Gillingham in *Jude the Obscure*, appears in the story as the protagonist's less complicated, more extroverted alter ego. Hampson puts Siegmund's darkest thoughts and fears into words when talking about 'the draughty House of Life'. Siegmund recognizes his own feelings; Hampson 'seemed to express something in his own soul' (p.95). He dramatizes Siegmund's debilitation by the Great Mother even further by interpreting her as a castrating female: 'By instinct they aim at suppressing the gross and animal in us Therefore they destroy the natural man in us - that is, us altogether.' Siegmund sees his sense of doom acknowledged; after the flight from his domineering wife Beatrice, he finds no real 'melting and fusing' with his dreaming Helena, and develops serious doubts about his own potentials as a vital male being. Yet, as Alastair Niven argues in his essay about the novel¹ :

The Trespasser is not an anti-feminist novel - Siegmund's wife, for example, is portrayed with some pity - but it does suggest that between male and female there too often exists an imbalance in the relationship which debilitates both partners. As Siegmund's acquaintance Hampson puts it, 'She can't live without us, but she destroys us.' This is not Lawrence's view of what has to happen when man and woman conjoin,

¹ See endnote ii, p.30

but his notion of what frequently does happen because the right balance has not been struck, give and take has not been proffered.

Both Siegmund and Helena are too firmly steeped in their fixations - he in his sense of domination by the Great Mother, she in her dream world of the Spiritual God as her ideal partner - to engage in a battle of wills or to achieve a fruitful communication as human beings. In this sense their feeling of 'doom' and 'impending fate' (p.105) is realistic. They may temporarily fill a void in each other's life, but they remain far removed from 'the right balance', like Gudrun and Gerald in *Women in Love*, whose 'battle' results in mere destruction - with tragic results. The protagonists Ursula and Birkin do succeed in finding such a balance, but not without a struggle. It takes a good deal of perseverance and strength to resolve their fierce 'battle of the sexes.'

The further withdrawal of each of the lovers into their own world is the beginning of the end of their affair. Both are unable to 'come out of the mist-curtain'; their togetherness has been reduced to a mere 'fellow-suffering', they are essentially 'unnecessary to each other.' Siegmund's silence about what is ailing him intensifies the distance between them (p.109 ff.). Helena feels 'very much alone,' deciding that love is not such a wonderful thing after all, but only a temporary episode. 'It was her hour of disillusion' and its dreariness is worse than anything her lonely life has known. Siegmund topples from his pedestal when he tells her about his relationship with Beatrice: 'I have always shirked. Whenever I have been in a tight corner, I've gone to Pater''I've always funk'd. I tell you I'm something of a moral coward.' Helena comes to despise him with 'extreme bitterness': 'Was that really Siegmund, that stooping, thick-shouldered, indifferent man?' After all, he is just an ordinary man: 'his aura had ceased', his radiance is gone; he is merely 'something of the "clothed animal on end," like the rest of men.' Not the god of her dreams, but a mortal human who feels hurt and small, who needs to be held and comforted. And who needs most of all, as Helena gathers with loathing, physical love: gripped in her lover's 'brute embrace' she realizes that 'the secret thud, thud of his heart, the very self of that animal in him she feared and hated, repulsed her.' Her giving in to a feeling of revulsion intensifies her dread of losing him, and with the end of their holiday in sight, the lovers are in deep turmoil and torment. Siegmund cannot rid himself of a sense of failure and humiliation: 'Helena had rejected him...she had cried to her ideal lover and found only Siegmund' (p.136). Ultimately it dawns upon him that Helena and he are alone even in their doom, and that 'the sense of oneness and unity of their fates was gone' (p.121).

The courage displayed by the couple on the motor boat, a scene Helena and Siegmund watch from the ferry on their home journey, is in sharp contrast to their own moral inadequacy and self-deception (p.153 ff.). Lawrence's introducing the couple on the launch to the reader as 'lady' and 'gentleman' suggests superiority, which is expressed in their matter-of-fact attitude in the face of a near collision with a huge steamer. 'The lady saw the danger first' and without showing emotions, with complete restraint she seizes the boy that is with her; not alarming him, but holding him firmly. The gentleman leaps to the stern and stands rigid, staring ahead. 'No one had uttered a sound' as their boat 'escaped by a yard or two.' Siegmund is aware of the immense inner strength needed for this attitude towards life, and admires the woman's composure: she is 'one who watched the sources of life, saw it great and impersonal' (p.156). The picture of intuitive, vital understanding between the couple on the boat clashes violently with the agonizing lack of it between Siegmund and Helena. The latter's scathing judgement of the couple as 'careless' makes Siegmund anxious to be 'released from her.' Her presence has culminated into a mere torture for him. He realizes that 'having her a little longer' (p.140) will not bring about any form of intimate communication between them; that 'she had to go on alone, like a foreigner who cannot learn the strange language' (p.149).

Siegmund sadly lacks any of the self-confidence and equanimity of the couple on board the motor launch. Nowhere in the story does he realize that failures in love may happen simply because partners do not match, just as collisions between ships happen for no good cause or reason at all. The restraint he admires in the lady is missing within himself; he does not 'watch the sources of life' as something impersonal. From this moment on, he is steadily giving in to his moral decline and despair of life. As to the return to his loveless home, his thoughts become 'an inextricable knot' (p.159 ff.). Feeling his only options are a life with either Helena or Beatrice, he is faced with Hobson's choice: 'If I have the one, I shall be damned by the thought of the other', not to mention the children: 'I shall remember the children'. He pictures himself as failing both partners in either case: without him Beatrice will live unhappily in a cottage in the country, unable to run a proper household, while he himself will be financially unfit to keep both his family and Helena. Leaving Helena altogether will make him responsible for her future: 'What will she do when I am gone? What will become of her? Already she has no aim in life - then she will have no object.' Siegmund 'thought imaginatively, and his imagination destroyed him.' Implied is his incapacity to come to grips with reality and to consider an acceptance of its imperfections. As the resigned attitude of the man in the photograph at the beginning of the story suggests, he shows no 'rebellion.' He bends down under life's burden of faltering relationships with two women that do not make

him happy, and yields to 'the pull of fate.' He gives up on himself as a responsible, capable adult: 'It seems to me a man needs a mother all his life' (p.180).

In the face of her adulterous husband and failing breadwinner - 'she was aware that he hated work' - Beatrice's anger and wrath soon culminate into 'an outburst of angry hysteria' (p.189 ff.). The ensuing fierce quarrel lands the partners into a complete checkmate from which they find themselves unable to withdraw with any dignity. Siegmund retreats 'like a sick dog, to die or to recover as his strength should prove.' Beatrice, like Meg in *The White Peacock*, enlists the children on her side in relentless contempt of their father. Siegmund, no longer able to sustain himself in 'this prison corridor of life' commits suicide by hanging himself in his bedroom. The way in which Lawrence describes his protagonist's last inner distress is deeply moving and pitiful. His death requires some courage, but the fact that Lawrence never again used such an ending underlines his dissatisfaction with this solution to the novel 'In a novelist so passionately interested in seeing how a fulfilled life may be attained' says Alastair Niven ², 'the extinction of life represents a defeat not only for his main character but for his own conception of fiction.' In his later novels Lawrence finds the means to have his heroes overcome their tendency to despair, like Paul Morel in *Sons and Lovers* and Rupert Birkin in *Women in Love*. They try to find a more positive view of life, however difficult this may be. It is only Gerald Crich, the prototype of the cold industrialist, who is to meet with the cold betrayal of his lover and dies a literally 'cold' death by freezing.

Siegmund and Beatrice would never have been able to make their marriage work, as deep down they live in different worlds (p.230 ff.). Beatrice feels terror and dismay rather than grief at his death, and 'the memory of Siegmund began to fade rapidly'. She comes to look upon his suicide as selfish and cowardly. Released from the duties of an unhappy marriage, which she describes as 'her early romantic, but degrading marriage with a young lad who had neither income nor profession' she finally sees her way open to 'a more open, public form of living than the domestic circle.' She is restored to the favour of her well-to-do family, who advance her money to be invested in a boarding house for the better classes, and Siegmund's father, 'a winsome old man with a heart of young gold' scrimps and saves for the sake of his grandchildren. The establishment in Highgate is a huge adventure, making the world big with promise. Beatrice is delighted, the children 'excited, elated, wondering.'

Nor would Siegmund and Helena ever have been able to offer each other support in life. Both are victims rather than anything else, depending completely on each other for

² See endnote ii, p.30

anything worthwhile. Within a short time Helena is making the tragedy of Siegmund's death into an altar for her sustained suffering. She seems to lack the initiative to emerge from her grief a sadder but wiser woman. Helena, at twenty-eight, is going through a kind of 'danse macabre', feeling like a tree that is 'too tired to bud' (p.9). Her room is lifeless and colourless, 'unwelcome' to friends, 'indifferent, like a church'. Her new friend Cecil Byrne passionately warns her against the social isolation she is bringing upon herself by being 'an outsider to life' and 'dead with Siegmund'. However, the passion in his plea is lost to Helena; she prefers dead Siegmund's violin to the life interest Cecil tries to arouse in her.

Lawrence presents Siegmund's happiness and fate in life as depending entirely on two women, both of whom have turned out to be unsuitable partners for him. Unlike George in *The White Peacock* he is not even granted the comfort of a loving sister. There are no sympathetic females in *The Trespasser*; both Beatrice and Helena are captured in prototypes of castrating witches. Because of its symbolic qualities, the story indicates more than anything else the vigour of Lawrence's own struggle with the women that were most important to him. In this respect it paves the way to a better understanding of Paul Morel in Lawrence's next work, *Sons and Lovers*, in many respects the successor to *The White Peacock*, yet with some of Siegmund's despair in *The Trespasser*.

ⁱ D.H. Lawrence: The Trespasser. (The Cambridge Edition, Granada Publishing, 1982). Introduction by Melvyn Bragg p.7+8