

# THE TRESPASSER

D. H. LAWRENCE

EDITED BY  
ELIZABETH MANSFIELD



**CAMBRIDGE**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK  
40 West 20th Street, New York NY 10011-4211, USA  
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, VIC 3166, Australia  
Ruiz de Alarcón 13, 28014 Madrid, Spain  
Dock House, The Waterfront, Cape Town 8001, South Africa

<http://www.cambridge.org>

This, the Cambridge Edition of the text of *The Trespasser* now correctly established from the original sources and first published in 1981, © the Estate of Frieda Lawrence Ravagli 1981. Introduction and notes © Cambridge University Press 1981. Permission to reproduce this text entire or in part, or to quote from it, can be granted only by the Literary Executor of the Estate, Laurence Pollinger Ltd, 18 Maddox Street, Mayfair, London W1R 0EU. Permission to reproduce the introduction and notes entire or in part should be requested from Cambridge University Press. Acknowledgement is made to William Heinemann Ltd in the UK and the Viking Press in the USA, who hold the exclusive book publication rights for the work as published (copyright 1912) in their respective territories, for the authorisation granted to Cambridge University Press through the Frieda Lawrence Ravagli Estate for use of the work as published in preparing the new scholarly text. The manuscript of *The Trespasser* has been made available, and chapter 12 of 'The Saga of Siegmund' is published, by permission of the Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley. The three diaries by Helen Corke, © the Estate of Helen Corke 1981, are published by permission of the Estate and The Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin, which holds the original manuscripts.

*British Library cataloguing in publication data*

Lawrence, David Herbert

The trespasser. –

(Cambridge edition of the letters and works of D. H. Lawrence)

I. Title II. Mansfield, Elizabeth III. Series

823'.9'1F 80-41663

ISBN 0 521 22264 8 hardback

ISBN 0 521 29424 x paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2001

## CONTENTS

General editors' preface	page vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Chronology	xi
Cue-titles	xv
Introduction	i
<i>The Trespasser</i>	41
Explanatory notes	231
Textual apparatus	245
Appendixes	279
1 From 'The Letter': the diary of Helen Corke (written 6 August 1909 – 8 May 1910)	281
2 'The Freshwater Diary' (written 1909–10) by Helen Corke	293
3 From 'The Cornwall Writing' (written 1911–12) by Helen Corke	302
4 From Lawrence's MSI: chapter 12 ('The Stranger') of 'The Saga of Siegmund'	319
5 Extract from <i>The Surrey Comet</i> , for Wednesday, 11 August 1909	324
6 Wagner and <i>The Trespasser</i>	325

## INTRODUCTION

'Here am I a stranger in a strange land', wrote D. H. Lawrence on 15 October 1908, soon after he left his home in Eastwood to become a teacher at the Davidson Road Elementary School in Croydon.<sup>1</sup> That winter he met the woman whose story provides the basis of *The Trespasser*: Helen Corke.

It is difficult to trace Lawrence's experiences in Croydon through his testimony alone, but the various accounts by Helen Corke provide a detailed, if sometimes confusing, record. Four of her extant accounts appear to have been contemporary records of the events that inspired the novel: 'The Letter', a retrospective diary of August 1909 started in September of that year; 'The Freshwater Diary', a diary of 1909–10; 'The Way of Silence', a play dated winter 1909–10; and 'The Cornwall Writing' of 1911–12, another retrospective diary.<sup>2</sup> Her later accounts include a novel, *Neutral Ground* (dated 1918 but not published until 1933); interviews, lectures, articles and correspondence from 1950 to 1978; and *In Our Infancy*, part of an autobiography, written in the 1930s but not published until 1975.<sup>3</sup> Because of the painful involvement of the narrator in the story she relates, her

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, i. 82.

<sup>2</sup> For 'The Letter', 'The Freshwater Diary', and 'The Cornwall Writing' see pp. 281, 293, 302, 318, below.

<sup>3</sup> The following list of accounts is not complete, since Helen Corke also gave unrecorded lectures on the subject. *Neutral Ground* (1933); *D. H. Lawrence and 'Apocalypse'* (1933); *D. H. Lawrence's 'Princess': A Memory of Jessie Chambers* (1951); 'Concerning *The White Peacock*', *The Texas Quarterly*, ii (Winter 1959), 186–90; 'D. H. Lawrence As I Saw Him', *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, iv (1960), 5–13; *Songs of Autumn and Other Poems* (Austin, 1960); 'Portrait of D. H. Lawrence, 1909–10', *The Texas Quarterly*, v (Spring 1962), 168–77; 'D. H. Lawrence and the Dreaming Woman', transcript of BBC television interview of Helen Corke by Malcolm Muggeridge (July 1967) (summary published in *The Listener*, 25 July 1968); 'D. H. Lawrence: the Early Stage', *D. H. Lawrence Review*, iv (Summer 1971), 111–21; 'The Writing of *The Trespasser*', *D. H. Lawrence Review*, vii (Fall 1974), 227–39; *In Our Infancy: an Autobiography, Part I: 1882–1912* (Cambridge, 1975); 'D. H. Lawrence – the young schoolmaster, as I knew him', lecture to the DHL Society, Eastwood, 14 July 1976.

Edward Nehls, ed. *D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography*, i (Madison, Wisconsin, 1957) draws upon conversations and correspondence with Helen Corke in 1952 and 1954. He quotes excerpts from 'Lawrence As I Knew Him', a lecture given to the Colchester Literary Society (18 September 1950), and from the BBC radio Third Programme's 'Son and Lover' (8 May 1955).

accounts are a questionable source of information. They display the intentions of a patient undergoing self-therapy, rather than those of an objective chronicler; Helen Corke had reasons for concealing some things and placing others in a particular light. In her middle age she interpreted the actions of her youth in a way that was impossible when they occurred; and though in her old age her memory became unreliable, she continued to place confidence in it. Nonetheless, it seems essential to summarise the impressions of the person who was most closely connected with Lawrence at the time he began to write *The Trespasser*, and to add evidence from other sources – particularly his own writings – whenever possible.

Helen Corke met David Lawrence (as he was known to his Croydon friends)<sup>4</sup> for the first time during the winter of 1908–9.<sup>5</sup> She was a teacher at another school in Croydon, but Agnes Mason, her intimate friend who taught at the Davidson Road School, perceived the difficulties Lawrence was encountering in the classroom, as well as his loneliness, and she befriended him.<sup>6</sup> She invited Lawrence to her home one evening. Helen Corke, who was also invited, arrived late and stayed very briefly, but long enough for Agnes Mason's new friend to make a strong impression on her.<sup>7</sup> After this first meeting, however, Helen Corke saw Lawrence rarely until the autumn of 1909.

One occasion that she recalled was a Saturday in April, probably 24 April, when she joined Lawrence and Agnes Mason for a walk on Wimbledon Common.<sup>8</sup> Helen Corke had a particular reason for remembering that day. She had been involved for some time in a passionate relationship with her music master, Herbert Baldwin Macartney. 'H.B.M.' (as she always referred to him in her non-fictional accounts) was a married man whose warm feelings for his student had grown to love, and to a need for physical fulfilment. On

<sup>4</sup> At home, in Eastwood, DHL was called 'Bert'. Although Jessie Chambers, his childhood sweetheart, would have used that name originally, when she met Helen Corke she began to refer to him as 'David', as shown in her letters to Helen Corke and Helen Corke's testimony. The letters have been published in 'The Collected Letters of Jessie Chambers' edited and with an introduction by George J. Zytaruk in a special issue of *D. H. Lawrence Review*, xii (Spring and Summer 1979), vii–238.

<sup>5</sup> Corke, *As I Saw Him* 5. In no account is Helen Corke more specific about this date.

<sup>6</sup> See the letters and poems DHL wrote at this time, especially *Letters*, i. 82, 85, 97 and 'The Schoolmaster' poems in *Complete Poems* 897–903.

<sup>7</sup> See Nehls, *D. H. Lawrence: A Composite Biography*, i. 95. This account concurs with the others, except for Corke, *Trespasser*, where Helen Corke describes their first meeting 'at a Mason musical evening, when she had played violin solos to Agnes's accompaniment' (227).

<sup>8</sup> In her 1976 talk to the Eastwood DHL Society, Helen Corke noted that Swinburne had died 'about a fortnight before' this meeting. He died on 10 April 1909, and since Lawrence was in Eastwood for the Easter holidays from 8 to 18 April, 24 April is the most likely date.

the morning of this walk Macartney had asked her to spend a few days' holiday with him in August.

He asks with a kind of desperation which makes me afraid for him – I feel that I cannot, and dare not at the moment, refuse. When I assent he tells me that he has not seen the sea since the days of his boyhood, when the whole family used to migrate each summer to Freshwater, in the Isle of Wight. He would like to visit the old place again.<sup>9</sup>

Coincidentally, Lawrence went to the Isle of Wight – for a fortnight's holiday with his mother and sister Ada – leaving on the very same day, 31 July 1909. Meeting Helen Corke by chance a few days earlier, he had suggested that they travel together; but she, 'in no mood to meet strangers', deliberately caught the first train to Portsmouth.<sup>10</sup>

After her five-day holiday with Macartney, Helen Corke went to Cornwall with Agnes Mason and another woman friend. She became alarmed after several days at having no letter from Macartney; in desperation she took the train home; and there, in a local paper, was confronted by the report of his suicide on 7 August.<sup>11</sup> In her extreme grief, she withdrew into herself, despite the efforts of her parents and Agnes Mason. Three months later she still claimed: 'Two real things I have found: the joy of our five days and the pain which has succeeded them, and which stretches before me indefinitely.'<sup>12</sup> Her parents feared that she might take her own life, but Helen Corke abided by her lover's last words to her: 'I want you to promise that, whatever happens to me, you will go on.'<sup>13</sup>

Gradually in the autumn of 1909, Helen Corke and Lawrence became closer. Probably just after the school term began on 30 August, Lawrence learned from Agnes Mason of the tragedy.

She was suffering, Agnes said, from extreme mental and emotional shock, and now, a month after the event, was acting like a sleepwalker, hardly aware of her environment. Lawrence was intrigued and asked questions; he learned that the dead man had been a member of the Covent Garden Opera orchestra, one of its first violins. 'Nell' [Helen] had been his pupil for several years. Although interested, Lawrence did not brood upon the story, his mind being more happily occupied with consideration of a welcome change in his own future prospects.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Corke, *Infancy* 166.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* 169.

<sup>11</sup> Reports of the inquest appeared in *The Surbiton Times* (13 August 1909) and *The Surrey Comet* (14 August 1909). The latter is reproduced below, p. 324. (I am indebted to Professor Bruce Steele for this information.) See also Corke, *Infancy* 170, and pp. 307–8, below.

<sup>12</sup> See below, pp. 287–8.

<sup>13</sup> See below, p. 281. Quoted by Helen Corke with slightly different wording in other accounts. In *The Trespasser* (p. 194, below), DHL uses the same wording as 'The Letter'.

<sup>14</sup> Corke, *Trespasser* 229.

The suggestion here that Lawrence did not become immediately involved with Helen Corke's emotional breakdown fits in with the events as we know them from other sources of that early autumn and his slight acquaintance with her.

He was beginning to enter into the literary world. Ford Madox Hueffer (Ford) had accepted some poems for publication in the *English Review*. Some time before 11 September Lawrence visited Hueffer for, on that day, he told a friend:

The truth is, I am very much occupied with some work of my own. It is supposed to be a secret, but I guess I shall have to tell you. The editor of the *English Review* has accepted some of my Verses, and wants to put them into the *English Review*, the November issue. But you see they are all in the rough, and want revising, so this week and so on I am very hard at work, slogging verse into form.<sup>15</sup>

Lawrence was excited that Hueffer also liked his first novel, *The White Peacock* (known at this stage as 'Nethermere'), and recommended it to William Heinemann's partner Sydney Pawling for publication. Hueffer introduced Lawrence to 'various literary and artistic people', among them William Butler Yeats and Ezra Pound.<sup>16</sup>

With all this literary activity as well as his teaching duties, it is remarkable that Lawrence still found time, during the late autumn and winter of 1909–10, to give Helen Corke his friendship and support, walking a considerable distance to her home two or three evenings a week.<sup>17</sup> According to her accounts, Lawrence accepted the task of drawing her out of her 'living-death'.<sup>18</sup> He read to her from Goethe and Heine, Blake and Yeats, and from Gilbert Murray's translations of the Greek dramatists. 'Sometimes', Helen Corke relates, 'he would ask me to read a poem of his own, written in the college notebook he kept always in his pocket.'<sup>19</sup> Lawrence may also have shown her his play, *A Collier's Friday Night*, and suggested that she try to dramatise her own experiences, using it as a model.<sup>20</sup> The resemblances between the first acts of her 'The Way of Silence' and his play are too close to be coincidental.

<sup>15</sup> *Letters*, i. 137.

<sup>16</sup> E.T. 163.

<sup>17</sup> The opening chapter of *The Trespasser* presents DHL's record of his first visit and of many similar ones, Corke, *As I Saw Him* 8. In her BBC interview, Miss Corke stated that they met 'twice a week' at this time (reel 3A, page 1). (Hereafter references to the interview will be given in the form 3A/1.) In her play, 'The Way of Silence', she dramatised one of these visits, noting on the manuscript that the scene was 'reporting'.

<sup>18</sup> Corke, *As I Saw Him* 8.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* It is likely that this was the Botany Notebook, which contains poems from the Croydon period (privately owned; a photocopy is deposited in the University of Nottingham).

<sup>20</sup> DHL apparently showed an early draft of the play to Jessie Chambers in November 1909 (E.T. 166).

During the Christmas holidays and for a short time afterwards Lawrence's relationships with women underwent several changes. These are most cogently reflected in a letter of 28 January 1910. The first woman he mentions is Agnes Holt, a fellow teacher in Croydon, with whom for a time he contemplated marriage. The second is Jessie Chambers (the prototype for Miriam in *Sons and Lovers*) to whom he had been unofficially engaged for six years.

What do you want me to tell you about – my latest love? Well – she's off again – I don't like her . . . She still judges by mid-Victorian standards, and covers herself with a woolly fluff of romance that the years will wear sickly. She refuses to see that a man is a male, that kisses are the merest preludes and anticipations, that love is largely a physical sympathy that is soon satisfied and satiated. . .

I have been sick of her some little time. At Christmas an old fire burned up afresh, like an alcohol flame, faint and invisible, that sets fire to a tar barrel. It is the old girl, who has been attached to me so long. . . She is coming to me for a week-end soon; we shall not stay here in Croydon, but in London. The world is for us, and we are for each other – even if only for one spring – so what does it matter! What would my people and hers say? – but what do I care – not a damn! – they will not know.

I wonder why I tell you all these things, that I would not breathe to another soul! Because you ask me, I suppose. But put my letter in the fire, will you please! And tell me – do *you* think I am wrong?<sup>21</sup>

The letter (which fortunately the recipient, Blanche Jennings, did not burn) makes clear both the need that Lawrence felt for a sexual relationship and the guilt which accompanied it. These feelings bear on the way he would soon address the whole question of Helen Corke's relationship with Macartney.

### 'The Saga of Siegmund' (the first version of *The Trespasser*)

In beginning his second novel Lawrence had as written sources Helen Corke's records of her experience and response to it. Soon after her lover's death, she had begun to write down her memories of him. She appears to have started 'The Letter' on 5 September, but pre-dated the first entry 'Aug 6th' – the day before his suicide. The entry for 26 November refers to her other diary 'The Freshwater Diary': 'I am writing the story of our five days. It is good to live it all over again in the writing of it. At present every detail is clear – I write but enough to suggest the whole –'.<sup>22</sup> Some time between 9 January and 25 March (Good Friday) 1910,

<sup>21</sup> *Letters*, i. 153–4.

<sup>22</sup> See below, p. 288.



Lawrence read 'The Freshwater Diary'.<sup>23</sup> Helen Corke described his response.

There is a new urgency in his voice when he returns it. 'What are you going to *do* with these prose poems?' he asks. I reply, nothing. They are written; it is enough. He declares, and insists, that the act of expression in writing preassumes a reader, and also that human experience is the common property of humanity. . .

He returns to the subject later – comes with a request that he take the diary and expand its theme – use the poems as basis for a more comprehensive rendering of the story. He will bring me his work as it grows; nothing shall stand with which I am not in agreement.<sup>24</sup>

How much time elapsed between his reading the diary and conceiving the idea of expansion into a novel is also uncertain. By 8 May, Helen Corke had written in the last entry in 'The Letter': 'I have drawn another life into mine – to hold as I hold you [Macartney] dear. What can I do?'<sup>25</sup> The suggestion is that she has drawn Lawrence's life into her own, through his involvement in the writing of her story.

In one account, Helen Corke claimed that 'The Saga of Siegmund', the first version of *The Trespasser*, was begun 'during the fortnight succeeding the Easter holidays'.<sup>26</sup> According to Jessie Chambers, towards the end of that holiday Lawrence had been planning to use one of her brothers as hero in his next novel, but 'Almost immediately on returning to Croydon he wrote, apparently very much disturbed, saying that he found he had to write the story of Siegmund. . . It was in front of him and he had got to do it. He begged me to go to Croydon and make the acquaintance of "Helen"'.<sup>27</sup> Jessie Chambers then makes the statement often quoted: 'His second novel, *The Trespasser*, was written in feverish haste between the Whitsuntide and

<sup>23</sup> To establish a date for the first time that DHL read 'The Freshwater Diary' is one of the most difficult problems in the chronology of the composition of *The Trespasser*. See the entries in 'The Letter' for 9 January – 'The story of our last week is not yet finished' p. 290 – and 25 March, where the implication is that he has seen the diary, p. 292. In Corke, *Trespasser* and *Portrait* the accounts of DHL's reading the diary follow directly that of his February illness (at which time Helen Corke first saw the 'Nethermere' manuscript). In Corke, *Infancy* the two events are placed in reverse order. In Corke, *Early Stage* (often the most specific piece), the order is implied: 'With *Nethermere*, now *The White Peacock*, accepted by Heinemann [mid-December 1909] and on its way into print [revision complete 11 April 1910], Lawrence began to seek material for a second novel. His mind ranging the Midlands, was suddenly diverted to the tragic story told him during the autumn by Agnes Mason' (117).

<sup>24</sup> Corke, *Portrait* 171–2. This account is repeated in Corke, *Early Stage*; Corke, *Infancy* 176–7 follows this wording fairly closely.

<sup>25</sup> See below, p. 292.

<sup>26</sup> Corke, *Trespasser* 233. But in the BBC interview, she commented parenthetically: 'I suppose he might have begun it about the Easter of 1910. . .' (BBC interview 5/6).

<sup>27</sup> E.T. 181.

Midsummer of 1910'.<sup>28</sup> She is mistaken. We can be certain that Lawrence began the first version of *The Trespasser* before Whitsuntide (15 May) because on 27 April he had already told Sydney Pawling: 'I have written about half of another novel.'<sup>29</sup> Although Lawrence may have exaggerated the number of pages he had written, it is highly improbable that he would have made such a claim before he had even begun writing. Also the sense of urgency mentioned by both Helen Corke and Jessie Chambers, as well as their independent references to the Easter holidays, suggests that Lawrence began 'The Saga of Siegmund' soon after his return to Croydon on 3 April. It is likely that Lawrence did not begin to write his second novel until the 'Nethermere' manuscript (*The White Peacock*) was completed and mailed to Pawling on 11 April.<sup>30</sup> As he told his publisher in July, he would like to finish the proofs of this first book in order to be 'quite free to take up the second again. I like to have clear breathing room.'<sup>31</sup>

Before beginning 'The Saga' – and not long after learning the story from Helen Corke – Lawrence probably read George Moore's *Evelyn Innes* and *Sister Teresa* as well as H. G. Wells's *Ann Veronica*.<sup>32</sup> This confluence of fictional works on the subject of sexual emancipation and its effect on women may have been coincidental, or Lawrence may have been exploring approaches to a theme that he was considering for his new novel. While writing the first draft, he borrowed a copy of Gerhart Hauptmann's play, *Einsame Menschen*, the story of a man's choice between his wife and another woman, culminating in his apparent suicide.<sup>33</sup> He also borrowed Hauptmann's *Elga*, yet another treatment of infidelity, and read it with Helen Corke.<sup>34</sup> And, finally, a more general background of tragedy was present in the Greek drama they had been reading together.

Some additional direction came from their study of Wagner, although the extent of that study is uncertain. In October 1909, they had arranged to read German, so that Helen Corke might have 'more insight into Wagner's philosophy'.<sup>35</sup> Certainly the Wagnerian allusions in 'The Saga' contribute

<sup>28</sup> E.T. 181.

<sup>29</sup> *Letters*, i. 159.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.* 158.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.* 170. DHL's accidental inclusion of the name 'Siegmund' in the 'Nethermere' manuscript might suggest an earlier date of composition; but it can be accounted for by his familiarity with Helen Corke's story since the autumn of 1909, and their using that name for Macartney in their discussions. DHL could easily have had 'Siegmund' on his mind before he began 'The Saga'. (I am indebted to Mr Andrew Robertson for pointing out three appearances of the name 'Siegmund' in the 'Nethermere' manuscript, and to Mr George Lazarus for allowing me to examine it.)

<sup>32</sup> He lent *Evelyn Innes* to Helen Corke in December 1909, see below p. 289.

<sup>33</sup> *Letters*, i. 171.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* 164.

<sup>35</sup> See below, p. 287. For the lessons, DHL used a 'little ragged copy of German lyric verse, bought for two-pence from a secondhand bookstall' (Corke, *Portrait* 170). All the quotations

to the atmosphere of tragic love, although the random nature of these references and their occasional inaccuracy suggest that Lawrence had only a passing acquaintance with Wagner's operas, probably gleaned from Helen Corke herself. He had seen, and was disappointed by, *Tristan und Isolde*.<sup>36</sup> It is not known whether he had attended any of the four operas in the *Ring* before he completed 'The Saga'. About the original title 'The Saga of Siegmund', Miss Corke stated: 'One evening this spring [1910] D.H.L. brings me the first chapters of *The Saga of Siegmund*, saying that here is the beginning of a work of art that must be a saga since it cannot be a symphony.'<sup>37</sup> His choice of the word 'saga' suggests the associations of such well-known legends as *Volsunga Saga* and the *Nibelungenlied*, with particular emphasis on the themes of heroic achievement and death. The name 'Siegmund' was a sobriquet Helen Corke had chosen for Macartney during a performance of *Die Walküre*, and he reciprocated by calling her 'Sieglinde'.<sup>38</sup> The names for the hero and heroine of Lawrence's modern saga were, then, biographically derivative and indicate a stronger initial commitment to Wagnerian parallels than his more detached artistic perspective allowed in revision nearly two years later. A general allusiveness, appropriate to main characters who are ardent Wagnerians, remains in the completed work.<sup>39</sup>

The biographical material in 'The Saga' came largely from detailed discussions of Helen Corke's experiences with Macartney on long walks that she and Lawrence took over the Surrey downs during the spring weekends of 1910.<sup>40</sup> In addition to these reminiscences and 'The Freshwater Diary', Lawrence's other source was 'The Cornwall Writing', since, according to Helen Corke, by 1912 he had read 'some of it'.<sup>41</sup>

In the process of delving into the personalities of Helen Corke and her dead lover, it seems that Lawrence himself began to have feelings for her

of German poetry in *The Trespasser* are to be found in this volume, *German Poetry for Schools*, ed. C. H. Parry and G. Gidley Robinson (1889). This book is now in the possession of Dr Warren Roberts.

<sup>36</sup> *Letters*, i. 140.

<sup>37</sup> Corke, *Portrait* 172.

<sup>38</sup> Helen Corke to the editor in conversation, 28 April 1977. See also Corke, *Infancy* 158.

<sup>39</sup> Before the final draft DHL had at least seen *Siegfried* (*Letters*, i. 327). For a summary of the Wagnerian allusions in *The Trespasser*, see pp. 325-7, below.

<sup>40</sup> Helen Corke said in the BBC interview (5/5): 'He [Lawrence] knew everything that another person could know in relation to the story that he was making of it, you see, the actual facts. And rather more than that because we used to wander over the Surrey Hills, I feeling that Siegmund was almost a third person.' Specific mention of the context of these discussions does not occur until this interview.

<sup>41</sup> See *Letters*, i. 373 n. (Nowhere has Helen Corke suggested that he read 'The Letter'.)

stronger than friendship, as suggested in the last chapter of *The Trespasser*. Describing him in 'The Letter' as 'young and lusty', she confessed rather cryptically: 'I am afraid of leaning upon him – afraid of discovering yet more unworthiness in my own nature.'<sup>42</sup> In a later account, she identified her awareness of the change, but without giving any date.

At the top of a green hill which falls away to meadow, David challenges me to race down the slope, passes me, and turns in my path, catching me as I try to check. Recovering balance, we laugh, but David clasps me longer than is necessary; when we move he holds my hand fast, protectively and possessively; we are silent. I try to face the position objectively. It may be that David's feeling for me is quite other than the deep affection I have for him. The thought is disquieting, but I argue that his present reaction is induced by the writing of the Saga. He is putting himself, imaginatively, in H.B.M.'s place; the conditions are both abnormal and temporary. I must not confuse the man with the artist. When this work is finished he will see me from another angle and in other lights.<sup>43</sup>

In the BBC interview, she qualified the cause-and-effect relationship: 'whether he did it instinctively and out of a sort of primal feeling for me, or whether he was actually more interested in realising the character of Siegmund, I'm not quite sure'.<sup>44</sup> This identification is also present in Lawrence's 'Siegmund' poems – sympathetic studies of the ill-fated love affair – which appear in the 'college notebook' mentioned above.<sup>45</sup>

Jessie Chambers testified that during the writing of 'The Saga' Lawrence 'implored' her not to attempt to hold him: "'For this I need Helen, but I must *always* return to you," he said earnestly, "only you must always leave me free."<sup>46</sup> The conflicting feelings expressed to Jessie Chambers were relayed to Helen Corke as well, in a letter of mid-May that documents the uncertain ground of his relationship with these two women and, further, the emotional strain under which he was writing.

I had a letter from Muriel [Jessie Chambers] yesterday morning. She knew she had won. She wrote very lovingly, and full of triumphant faith. Since when, I have just lain inert... Yet I have a second consciousness somewhere actively alive. I write 'Siegmund' – I keep on writing, almost mechanically: very slowly, and mechanically. Yet I don't think I do Siegmund injustice...

<sup>42</sup> See below, p. 292.

<sup>43</sup> Corke, *Portrait* 173.

<sup>44</sup> BBC interview 2/2.

<sup>45</sup> These seemingly early versions are included in the 'Juvenilia' section of *Complete Poems*, 'A Love Passage' and 'Red' in particular. The early version of 'Red' is underlined and preceded by roman numeral II, and is perhaps a sequel to the poem 'Blue', which appears on the previous page of the college notebook. In this version of 'Red' the man addresses the speaker as 'Helen'. Other versions of these poems are in the Berg Collection, the New York Public Library.

<sup>46</sup> E.T. 181, 182.

[You] are part of his immortality. That is what would make me go wild, if I woke up. You see, I know Siegmund is there all the time. I know you would go back to him, after me, and disclaim me. I know it very deeply. I know I could not bear it. I feel often inclined, when I think of you, to put my thumbs on your throat.

Muriel will take me.<sup>47</sup>

The nature of Lawrence's relationship with Helen Corke by the late summer is suggested by the extent to which he discussed his feelings for Jessie Chambers with her. He had arranged a meeting between the two women in July. Helen Corke liked Jessie: 'I was very much impressed by the beauty and personality of his friend. She gave me a feeling of satisfaction and security. . . I watched the grace of her movements, and the dignity of her service [of tea].'<sup>48</sup> Lawrence talked with her about Jessie Chambers after this meeting and wrote: 'She is very pretty and very wistful. . . She kisses me. It makes my heart feel like ashes. But then she kisses me more and moves my sex fire. Mein Gott, it is hideous. . . I must tell her. . . that we ought finally and definitely to part.'<sup>49</sup>

During this summer holiday, Lawrence did break off his unofficial engagement to Jessie Chambers 'completely'.<sup>50</sup>

His perplexity about Helen Corke is indicated as well in the postcard he sent to her on 15 August: 'Why did you not go to Plymouth? What in the world are you doing? I give it up. It is true, I don't know what to say.'<sup>51</sup> In late August, however, he began revising *The White Peacock* proofs, with which Helen Corke helped him.<sup>52</sup> Despite this cooperation, a degree of uneasiness remained, which she described:

Some change in my relationship with David is inevitable. . . The grace and tenderness of his former bearing towards me show rarely; he is sullen, or irritation flares suddenly into fierce irony and pitiless criticism. . . the depression [is] caused by his indecision over future relations with Muriel and myself. . .

My sense of responsibility is awakened. It was so easy to admit David into the zone of intimacy between H.B.M. and myself – David the sensitive, impersonal artist. I should have foreseen that he might endanger his impersonality – but grief is stupid, and his nearness, his comprehending sympathy, were healing. The onus of the position is with me – I am senior by more than three years.

<sup>47</sup> *Letters*, i. 159–60. Before writing this letter, DHL had shown Helen Corke 'A Fly in the Ointment', which is based on his relationship with Jessie Chambers and begins 'Muriel had sent me some mauve primroses' (*Phoenix II* 13). From then on they referred to Jessie Chambers as 'Muriel'.

<sup>48</sup> Corke, *As I Saw Him* 10. Helen Corke remembered this visit as taking place at the end of July in Corke, *As I Saw Him*, but Professor Boulton believes it was 3 July (*Letters*, i. 158 n. 3).

<sup>49</sup> *Letters*, i. 173.

<sup>50</sup> E.T. 182.

<sup>51</sup> *Letters*, i. 175.

<sup>52</sup> See below, p. 292.

If it were merely a sex debt I have incurred, it might be paid. Then, eventually, David and Muriel could marry. *Would* they complement one another – would they be happy?<sup>53</sup>

The difficulties were to continue for the remainder of Lawrence's stay in Croydon, and even after.

These questions of relationship yielded precedence to an event that overshadowed all else. Mrs Lawrence became gravely ill, and on 22 August Lawrence went to Leicester to be with her. He stayed until the 28th, when he had to return to Croydon for the new term. She died on 9 December 1910. Just six days earlier, he had proposed to a close friend of his youth, Louie Burrows, and they became officially engaged. Their engagement did little to assuage the grief he felt at the loss of the person he loved most. In the college notebook are early drafts of poems about Mrs Lawrence's death. As he wrote in 1928: 'The death of his mother wiped out everything else – books published, or stories in magazines. It was the great crash, and the end of his youth';<sup>54</sup> and, 'Then, in that year, for [him] everything collapsed, save the mystery of death, and the haunting of death in life.'<sup>55</sup>

When Lawrence returned to school after the Whitsuntide holidays in 1910, he told Helen Corke that he had promised Heinemann 'the next novel', i.e. 'The Saga'. 'Will he want it? This transacting of literary business makes me sick. . . Will you tell me whether the Saga is good? I am rapidly losing faith in it. . . I assure you, I am not weeping into my register. It is only that the literary world seems a particularly hateful yet powerful one.'<sup>56</sup> His entry into the literary world brought with it a sense of insecurity, because he was aware that he had outgrown what he had just written, but could not disavow it completely because he recognised that it had merits. This insecurity continued to appear in his letters about his first two novels, the second in particular.

On 24 June, he wrote about 'the Saga' to Frederick Atkinson, Heinemann's general editor:

The other book goes pretty well. A month will see it cast. Then I shall leave it a month or two, after which I will chisel it and shape it as best I can. It is horribly poetic: Covent Garden market, floral hall. I shall never do anything decent till I can grow up and cut my beastly long curls of poetry. . . When I have *finished* a writing, I hate it. In it, I am vulnerable, naked in a thickly clothed crowd.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Corke, *Portrait* 176.

<sup>55</sup> 'Preface', *Complete Poems* 851.

<sup>56</sup> *Letters*, i. 161–2.

<sup>54</sup> 'Autobiographical Sketch', *Phoenix II* 301.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.* i. 167.

'A month' from 24 June 'will see it cast': yet according to Helen Corke's accounts, 'The Saga' was finished by the end of June or beginning of July.<sup>58</sup> Her dating is not accurate: through July and into August Lawrence was writing letters about his progress with the novel. He told Grace Crawford, an acquaintance whom he had met through Ezra Pound, on 9 July: 'I have just hanged my latest hero: after which I feel queer.'<sup>59</sup> On 15 July, he wrote to Atkinson: 'Tonight I shall write my last half dozen pages of the new work. . . During the next six or seven weeks I will lend the book to one or two of my people: then I will overhaul it rigorously: then I will send it to you.'<sup>60</sup> He wrote to Grace Crawford on 4 August: 'I have just finished my second novel.'<sup>61</sup>

Lawrence sent the manuscript to Hueffer and promised to let Sydney Pawling see it by the end of August. It was not until 9 September that Lawrence received Hueffer's comments: 'Hueffer wrote me this morning concerning the second novel. He says it's a rotten work of genius, one fourth of which is the stuff of masterpiece. He belongs to the opposite school of novelists to me: he says prose *must* be impersonal, like Turguenev or Flaubert. I say no.'<sup>62</sup> Hueffer's criticism as later reported by Lawrence to Garnett included another charge: 'Also it is erotic – not that I, personally, mind that, but an erotic work *must* be good art, which this is not.'<sup>63</sup>

On 18 October, when Pawling had acknowledged receiving the manuscript, Lawrence replied:

I am glad, and much relieved, to hear that you have the MSS. of the S[aga] of S[iegmund] in your hands. . . I shall wait with some curiosity to hear your opinion of the work. It contains, I know, some rattling good stuff. But if the whole is not to your taste, I shall not mind. . . Of course, you have only got the rapid work of three months. I should want, I do want, to overhaul the book considerably. . . I am not anxious to publish it, and if you are of like mind, we can let the thing stay, and I

<sup>58</sup> In the earliest accounts, she implies a date by indirect references. In Corke, *As I Saw Him*, for example, she states 'In July, 1910, Lawrence was feeling in full the reaction that comes after a period of strenuous inspirational work' (9). In Corke, *Portrait*, she explains that Jessie had read 'The Saga' before visiting Croydon in July. In Corke, *As I Saw Him* and the BBC interview, Helen Corke said that 'The Saga' was finished in about three months: 'That would have been in the June 1910, the end of June, 1910' (BBC interview 5/5).

<sup>59</sup> *Letters*, i. 168.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* 169–70. DHL wrote to Helen Corke from Eastwood on 31 July without mentioning 'The Saga' (173).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.* 175.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.* 178. DHL wrote in December 1911: "'The book" he [Hueffer] said "is a rotten work of genius. It has no construction or form – it is execrably bad art, being all variations on a theme"', and he believed that Hueffer 'was prejudiced against the inconsequential style' (339, 330).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.* 339. See also pp. 317, 330. For Edward Garnett, see p. 19 below.

will give you – with no intermediary this time – my third novel, Paul Morel [the early title for *Sons and Lovers*], which is plotted out very interestingly (to me), and about one-eighth of which is written.<sup>64</sup>

Lawrence may have exaggerated the speed of composition, expecting a negative response from Pawling, and so representing ‘The Saga’ as a very rough draft. The promise, which Helen Corke claimed he made to her, to wait five years before publishing ‘The Saga’ perhaps also continued to trouble him.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, he may have been concerned that others – the public as well as the publishers – might be critical of the novel, as Hueffer had been, and that this would hurt his reputation.

Lawrence then waited for Heinemann to return ‘The Saga’ manuscript. He later recalled that it had been in the publisher’s hands for three months when Atkinson wrote, after reading part of the novel: ‘I don’t care for it, but we will publish it.’<sup>66</sup> Lawrence had probably received this letter when he wrote to Atkinson on 11 February 1911 outlining his own criticisms:

You are going to tell me some nasty things about [‘The Saga’]. I guess I have told them, most of them, to myself – amid acute inner blushes. The book is execrable bad art: it has no idea of progressive action, but arranges gorgeous tableaux-vivants which have not any connection one with the other: it is ‘chargé’ as a Prince Rupert’s drop (if you know that curiosity): its purple patches glisten sickly: it is, finally, pornographic. And for this last reason, I would wish to suppress the book, and beg you to return the MSS to me, with any additional comments. I shall not publish it ever in its present state; and in any state, not for some years.<sup>67</sup>

The decision not to publish may have been the result of a ‘great long’ but ‘very friendly’ letter that Lawrence had recently received from Hueffer.<sup>68</sup> Atkinson did not reply and on 15 March Lawrence wrote once more requesting the manuscript and adding that he was working on ‘Paul Morel’ again.<sup>69</sup> The implication may have been that, since a more acceptable novel was in progress, Heinemann need not be anxious about ‘The Saga’.

Lawrence was still concerned that ‘The Saga’ might damage his reputation. In June 1911 he informed Martin Secker the publisher, who had recently sought material from him, that he did not want to publish it ‘because it is erotic. . . I am afraid for my tender reputation’.<sup>70</sup> The ‘erotic’ reference may have been prompted by another letter from Hueffer.<sup>71</sup> The coincidence of correspondence from Hueffer and Lawrence’s use of words like ‘porno-

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 184.

<sup>65</sup> Corke, *As I Saw Him* 9.

<sup>66</sup> *Letters*, i. 339.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. 229–30. A Prince Rupert’s drop is molten glass dropped into cold water, when it takes the shape of a tadpole; it disintegrates with a loud bang if its tail is broken.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. 228.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. 240.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid. 276.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.



graphic' and 'erotic' is noticeable. Some months later Lawrence recalled that he had informed Hueffer of his decision not to publish 'The Saga', and Hueffer had replied: 'You are quite right not to publish that book – it would damage your reputation, perhaps permanently.'<sup>72</sup> In December 1911, more than a year after receiving Hueffer's original comments, Lawrence still seemed anxious about them: 'Is Hueffer's opinion worth anything, do you think? Is the book *so* erotic?'<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless at the end of the same month Lawrence, having finally received the manuscript from Heinemann, started to revise 'The Saga'.

### *The Trespasser (the second version)*

Helen Corke saw the Lawrence of 1911 as 'a changed man, whose prevailing mood was ironic and bitter'.<sup>74</sup> Despite his engagement to Louie Burrows, he continued to make sexual demands on her. In a letter of 12 July 1911, the state of their relationship is clear.

Surely, surely it is *my* tenet, that an emotion is genuine even though next day an antagonistic feeling supplants it. What we are to each other, we are. Some of you I should always love. Then again, I must break free. And I *cannot* marry save where I am not held...

What is between you and me is sex. I was good on Saturday so long as I remained just sufficiently dimmed by alcohol. But in the end comes the irony that you know is stultified passion...

But I will never ask for sex relationship again, never, unless I can give the dirty coin of marriage: unless it be a prostitute, whom I can love because I'm sorry for her. I cannot stand the sex strain between us – that's all my judgment – And I'll never ask you again, nor anybody. It is a weakness of mine – I can't stand the sex strain. Of course, with a girl like Gussy, it doesn't act – it merely runs by titillation into harmless flirting. But there has been more between you and me.<sup>75</sup>

The struggle between Helen's nature and Lawrence's can be seen in the 'Helen' poems; in 'Intimacy', the first draft of the story 'The Witch à la Mode'; and in *The Trespasser*. Only in 'Intimacy' (which he had completed by 10 September 1911)<sup>76</sup> does he imagine Helen Corke yielding willingly to him; and there it is the man who ends the embrace, in the knowledge that he is betraying his fiancée. Unlike the version published in 1934 as 'The

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. 339.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Corke, *As I saw Him* 11.

<sup>75</sup> *Letters*, i. 285–6. 'Gussy' may be Gussie Cooper, Rooks Nest, Whytecliffe Road, Purley, entered under G, at first without her surname, in an address book of Lawrence's now owned by the Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. 299–300, 301, 307. See below, n. 170, for discussion of paper.

Witch à la Mode', 'Intimacy' gives conscious motivation to the act of upsetting the lamp and starting a fire. Lawrence inserted in an intermediate version, 'The White Woman': 'He saw her thus, knew she wanted no more of him than that kiss.'<sup>77</sup> The description of the passionate embrace in 'Intimacy' suggests a date of composition before Lawrence's conviction that Helen Corke would never be physically responsive to him. The original description of the embrace agrees with the conception of the Helena of 'The Saga', written when Lawrence could imagine Helen Corke yielding to a lover. When he ceased to believe in that possibility, perhaps because of his own failure to arouse her, he altered the characterisation – at each later stage of composition – of both the woman in 'Intimacy' and the heroine of *The Trespasser* – towards a final portrait of something close to frigidity.

The issues here are delicate, and the answers can only be inferences; but the questions arise naturally, and they affect our understanding of *The Trespasser* and the relationships behind it. It is suggested in chapter VIII that the two lovers consummate their love. The narrative implies that a certain type of woman satisfies the desires of a 'physical' man out of affection:

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.<sup>78</sup>

So Siegmund is given his own fulfilment, even if it is not mutual; in the earlier version of this passage, the fulfilment was shared: 'That night, she met his love with love as blazing as his own.'<sup>79</sup> But Helen Corke did not see the final version before publication, and this may be the passage which she referred to as the 'one imaginary scene' where Lawrence had 'heightened' the 'eroticism'.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> All three MSS are in the possession of the Ellen Clarke Bertrand Library, Bucknell University (Lindeth Vasey, ed. 'A Checklist of the Manuscripts of D. H. Lawrence', in Keith Sagar's *D. H. Lawrence: A Calendar of his Works*, Manchester, 1979, E438a–c).

A later portrayal of Helen Corke appears in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, where Mellors recalls the women with whom he has been involved. 'Then I took on with another girl, a teacher, who had made a scandal by carrying on with a married man and driving him nearly out of his mind. She was a soft, white-skinned, soft sort of a woman, older than me, and played the fiddle. And she was a demon. She loved everything about love, except sex. Clinging, caressing, creeping into you in every way: but if you forced her to the sex itself, she just ground her teeth and sent out hate. I forced her to it, and she could simply numb me with hate because of it' *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, chap. xiv.

<sup>78</sup> See below, p. 87.

<sup>79</sup> MSII 14. For the complete passage, see below, pp. 34–5.

<sup>80</sup> Corke, *Infancy* 216.