

The Epic Elements in D.H. Lawrence's *The Trespasser*

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The Trespasser における叙事詩的要素

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Abstract

It is well known that D.H. Lawrence's *The Trespasser* is his reworking of Helen Corke's "The Freshwater Diary," from which Lawrence took inspiration for his novel. In it, Lawrence explores phases of Siegmund unstated in Corke's original work. This article is concerned with the assimilation of epic elements into the novel, drawing upon the existing literature on the relationship between Lawrence and Corke and upon M. M. Bakhtin's genre theory in his "Epic and Novel." Focusing on the epic elements in *The Trespasser*, this paper discusses the different artistic standpoints between Corke and Lawrence and the different perspectives between the main couple, Helena and Siegmund in the novel. Lastly, the possible reason for Lawrence's concentration on Siegmund's hardships is also considered from a Bakhtinian perspective.

Introduction

It is well known that *The Trespasser* (1912) is based on Helen Corke's "The Freshwater Diary" (written in 1909), which Lawrence read in 1910 and from which he took inspiration for his "The Saga of Siegmund," the original work of *The Trespasser*. Corke's work provided Lawrence with its leitmotif, the tragic portrayal of a middle-aged musician's short exile with his young pupil-lover on a distant island and his final decision to kill himself out of despair; in the diary, Corke reworked her tragic affair with her violin teacher, H. B. Ma-

cartney. In addition to Lawrence's acquaintance with Corke and her writing, the fact that the second half of *The Trespasser* portraying Siegmund's unhappy domestic life is Lawrence's original creation has received much scholarly attention.

This article proposes a reading of *The Trespasser* as a text that illustrates Lawrence's aspiration for an assimilation of epic elements into the novel, drawing upon some of the existing accounts on the relationship between Lawrence and Corke and also upon M.M. Bakhtin's account of two literary genres: the epic and the novel.

When Bakhtin contrasts the epic with the novel in his "Epic and Novel," he is particularly concerned with how "the hierarchy of times" (30) in the epic genre—the absolute division between the sublime past and "the real, dynamic time of the present" (19) as well as the future—dissolves in the novel. According to Bakhtin, in the novel, "the [epic] zone of the distanced image, a zone outside any possible contact with the present in all its openness" (19) is replaced by a novelistic zone of contact with the inconclusive present. As a result, the object can no longer assume any inaccessible heroic image as in memory and is thus brought into contact with "the ongoing event of current life" (Bakhtin 30) in which the author or the authorial consciousness is also involved.

The Bakhtinian model of the interaction between the two distinctive literary categories helps us consider the functions of epic elements in *The Trespasser*. For example, Bakhtin's model allows us to notice the differing standpoints from which Corke and Lawrence approach Siegmund's exile and the latter's commitment to the aftermath of Siegmund's epic experience. Bakhtin's genre theory is also helpful when we examine the tensions between the characters (Siegmund and Helena) and those within the hero (Siegmund), all of which are the main concerns in the following discussion.

"The Freshwater Diary" was written in 1909 and published in 1975 as an appendix to *In Our Infancy*, Corke's only volume of autobiography, followed by *Neutral Ground*, her autobiographical novel, which was written in 1918 but not published until 1933. According to Jane Heath, Helen Corke's implicit desire to submerge "the event"—her tragic encounter with Macartney on the Isle of Wight in 1909—is apparent in both works. In Heath's reading, Corke avoided "rework [ing] 'The Freshwater Diary' when she came to write *In Our Infancy*. As a text, 'The Freshwater Diary' remains hermetic and enigmatic. In the context of *In Our Infancy*, 'The Freshwater Diary' has a uniquely *literary* relevance" (340). In considering the "highly literary" (Heath 340) form, Heath speculates on the "traumatic nature" (341) of the experience on the island that haunted Corke's mind.

Heath's emphasis on Corke's prioritizing "the literary importance of 'The Freshwater Diary' over the [actual] events themselves" (341) is based on Corke's treatment of the past as inaccessible. Because she does not want to be overwhelmed by the traumatic memory, she conceives of the experience in remote, dreamy images, hence her particular represen-

tation of the past. Such a way of seeing the past characterizes Corke's authorial orientation towards temporality; she privileges the past over other categories of temporality, especially the present.

From a Bakhtinian perspective, this kind of artistic construction inevitably creates a fissure between the author and the object of representation. As Heath argues, Corke needed to render "the experience on the Isle of Wight" as "a mystical, dreamlike, and highly literary form" (340). In "The Freshwater Diary," the narrator or the assumed Sieglinde-Corke is presented as a dreamy monologist. The poetic memoir centers on a first-person narrative of Sieglinde-Corke where direct speech of Siegmund is rare. Besides, the narrator's evocations of Siegmund apparently deal with him as a man in memory. This distance between the writing consciousness and the written object appears to be what Corke ultimately pursues.

In contrast, Lawrence's treatment of "the event" is not congealed in a dreamy past; Lawrence contemplates "the event" as one exposed to the present. In Lawrence's rendition, the authorial consciousness and the represented event are situated on the same plane of temporality—the inconclusive present—rather than on separated ones—the distanced past and the contemporary reality. In this respect, Lawrence is, as far as his involvement in "the event" is concerned, more aware of the vague border between life and fiction. For instance, his portrayal of Siegmund's unhappy domestic life presents the character not as a wooden, unrealistic man, but as a man who may have found a modern counterpart in Lawrence himself. John Worthen points out some bitter affinity between Siegmund and Lawrence:

During 1911, there had been times when Lawrence had contemplated his projected marriage [with Louie Burrows] with just the kind of irritable realism with which Siegmund contemplates his. Lawrence, too, had tried to escape the responsibilities of his engagement in the company of Helen Corke (Helena's original), who had (in turn) refused to sleep with him. (336)

Sharing with his hero "the dilemma of a man who loves life, but who is reduced to hopeless despair" (Worthen 336), Lawrence presumably found it difficult to work on Siegmund's dilemma as a distanced, literary event. Lawrence's contemplation of Siegmund thus demonstrates how he strove to diminish the distance Corke had struggled to establish between the writing subject and the written object. His representation of the hero is, as we shall see, far from consigning the relationship between Helena and Siegmund to such distant categories as remoteness, dream and memory—all of which deny access to contemporaneity.¹

¹ As for the possible affinity between the young Lawrence's dilemmas and Siegmund's, Akiko Kamata briefly mentions a relevant matter in her essay on *The Trespasser*, and Akiko Yoshida also dwells on Lawrence's relationships with Louie Burrows and Helen Corke in relation to *The Trespasser*. See Lawrence Research Group, ed. *Lawrence Studies: The Trespasser* (Asahi P, Tokyo, 2003) 13 (Kamata) and 301-20 (Yoshida).

While Corke sets the past as the starting point of her creative activity, Lawrence designates the present as the starting point of his artistic imagination. This difference in their way of setting the center of artistic representation reminds us of what Bakhtin calls “[t]he revolution in the hierarchy of times” (30). As Bakhtin argues, “...when the present becomes the center of human orientation in time and the world, time and world lose their completeness as a whole as well as in each of their parts” (30). So, when Lawrence transposes Corke’s original writing into his own, the immutable state of “the event” gradually collapses. In this way, he replaces the epic, poetical nature of Corke’s work with a novelistic mode of representation.

In *The Trespasser*, Helena, a character modeled on Corke, with whom Lawrence was once involved both creatively and personally, often appears as a dreamy woman who cannot readily adapt herself to the actual world. This visionary tendency affects her perception of things and her lover, Siegmund. Critical attention has been paid to these points. At one moment in the Isle of Wight part of the novel, Helena goes down to the sea alone and “clothes everything in fancy” on the seashore (*The Trespasser* 75)²

‘That yellow flower hadn’t time to be brushed and combed by the fairies before dawn came. It is towzled...,’ so she thought to herself... The rippling sunlight on the sea was the Rhine maidens spreading their bright hair to the sun. That was her favorite form of thinking. The value of all things was in the fancy they evoked. (TP 75-76)

This fanciful projection of phenomena onto her favorable, lovely world is, as Michael Black puts it, “based in a disgust for the realities which will not adapt themselves to her taste for the pretty, the small—all those things which can be manipulated because they are known to be a conscious fantasy” (101).

Moreover, Helena’s aversion to the physical reality in favor of “her favorite [poetic] form of thinking” shapes her attitude towards Siegmund. As John Harrison has argued, Helena is one of the dreamy female characters in Lawrence’s early works, “for whom the “dream is always more than the ‘actuality’ ” (35) and who flinches in the face of the physical man, “to whom she coweringly offers herself, as Miriam does to Paul, ‘to sacrifice’ ” (35).

Whether she perceives things around her or her beloved man, “her favorite form of thinking” indicates her (and Corke’s) disposition to evoke a certain distanced category of time to replace all the physical realities that disgust her.

Constructed on such a temporally distanced realm, Helena’s thoughts are inseparable from the epic rigidity which cuts itself off from reality—whether the reality in question is that of seaside scenery or that of a living, imposing man. In other words, she needs to in-

² *The Trespasser* will hereafter be abbreviated as *TP* in citations.

sist on the irreducible distance between her imagined world and "vulgar, ugly" reality (*TP* 76). For this reason, the distance between her idealized Siegmund and the real, brutishly physical Siegmund is a constant dilemma to her. In a sense, the kind of world she tends to imagine is more like an epic world which is whole and self-sufficient and thus has no need to negotiate with the outer world. Not surprisingly, Helena, finding herself in Siegmund's tight embrace, recoils at his physical self as an intrusion into the integrity of her poetic self: "The secret thud, thud of his heart, the very self of that animal in him she feared and hated, repulsed her. She struggled to escape" (*TP* 126).

This "agony of disillusion" (*TP* 125) takes place towards the end of their short stay on the Isle of Wight. The despair derives from her awareness of "the discord" between "her dreams and fancies" and the "contemptible surroundings," or the outer reality (*TP* 124). The quoted part describes the moment when "her favorite thinking," a fanciful one, is about to break down. Helena here seems to acknowledge how she has belied herself by fitting "the real Siegmund" to the moulds of her imagined Siegmund, "whose face was a panorama of passing God" (*TP* 125) to her.

Since the epic, completed world is for Helena more significant than the incomplete present world, from whose contemporary perspective *The Trespasser* is written, she can't help regarding the physical Siegmund as destructive, compared to her dreamed Siegmund. Here Helena's frenzied adherence to the imagined world puts us in mind of what Bakhtin calls the "absolute epic distance": "The epic world is constructed in the zone of an absolute distanced image, beyond the sphere of possible contact with the developing, incomplete...present" (17). To put this another way, Helena's rigid way of thinking makes it difficult for her to allow the real Siegmund to displace her dreamed Siegmund, her eternal source of rest and peace. In this sense, Helena's self-indulgent quest for an idealized Siegmund at the expense of the real Siegmund can be seen as an epic evasion. Understandably, this way of thinking is torture to Siegmund, who, caught up in the grim reality, desperately needs Helena's support to break free from that entanglement.

At one climactic moment in *The Trespasser*, Lawrence provides a memorable portrayal of Siegmund's last struggles. It might be argued that Lawrence eagerly responds to the submerged parts of Siegmund's crisis by describing the scene. One remarkable feature of the scene is the way the balance between Siegmund's body and mind is thrown into crisis. Lawrence's presentation of his hero's imminent collapse differs sharply from Corke's, since she deals only with what, to her mind, is worth remembering about Siegmund (Macartney).

Lawrence's concentration on Siegmund's last moments is reminiscent of the growing gap between the epic hero's outward and inward selves Bakhtin proposes: "The epic wholeness of an individual disintegrates in a novel...[as] a crucial tension develops between the external and the internal man..." (37). This Bakhtinian concept of the fading in-

tegrity of an epic hero helps us consider Lawrence's commitment to Siegmund's last moments, which is absent in Corke's writings: there is no corresponding scene in "To Siegmund's Violin" or "Aftermath"³—both pieces are written as prologue and epilogue to "The Fresh-water Diary"—or within the diary itself.

Lawrence describes Siegmund's final hours in a manner that reveals the discord between his body and mind. Caught in a haunting delirium after parting with Helena at Waterloo station, he gets back home and struggles to sleep, only to exacerbate the frenzy: "Immediately he lapsed into a kind of unconsciousness. He would have called it sleep, but such it was not. All the time he could feel his brain working ceaselessly, like a machine running with unslackening rapidity" (*TP* 198).

This nightmarish experience symbolizes the growing gap between a character's outward and inward selves, which characterizes the dwindling integrity of the epic hero in Bakhtinian terms. The discord between the body and the mind forces Siegmund to experience moments of torment; struck by his inability to restore any harmony between the body and the mind, he feels it easier to yield to the growing gap. As a result of such a disorder of thought and action, "[e]ach time he had a glimmer of consciousness he wondered if he made any noise" (*TP* 198), "disturbing the family" (*TP* 199). Siegmund is afraid of his family detecting the tension between his consciousness and his uncontrollable physical movement.

Focusing on Siegmund's devastating experience with the division between his outward and inward selves, Lawrence, perhaps unconsciously, nullifies Corke's elevation of Siegmund to a distanced, inaccessible, elevated category. He brings Siegmund down from such a higher realm, thereby making the epic integrity of Siegmund's experience subject to the crude adjustment to the contemporary reality.

The analogy between Lawrence's treatment of Siegmund and Bakhtin's account of a hero in the novel suggests that Lawrence may have discerned significance in his portrayal of Siegmund's last moments. At first glance, Lawrence's treatment of Siegmund's final hours seems to impoverish his hero's epic experience as well as his hankering for "the epic wholeness." But Lawrence, by creating the scene under consideration, may have sought "human possibilities" (Bakhtin 37) for his modern hero. Lawrence explores those other "human possibilities" of Siegmund to liberate him, if temporarily, from the epic limitation within which Corke imagined her Siegmund as a ready-made figure who is immaculate as an epic hero, but is far from the real Siegmund.

From a Bakhtinian perspective, Siegmund's humiliation and disillusionment after an epic experience on the Isle of Wight suggests that Lawrence is imagining his protagonist

³ Whether Lawrence had access to these pieces of Corke still remains unclear. But A. R. Atkins claims that these materials had influence on Lawrence's creation of "The Saga." See A. R. Atkins, "Textual Influence on D.H. Lawrence's 'The Saga of Siegmund,'" *D.H. Lawrence Review* 24.1 (Spring, 1992) 7-26.

in novelistic, not in epic terms. In the second half of the novel, Siegmund is compelled to face that challenge of “a zone of contact with the present in all its openendedness” (Bakhtin 7)—in the present case, the bitter reality—which Bakhtin sees as the main component of the novel as opposed to the epic. Siegmund's confrontation with this unpleasant reality can be read from such a Bakhtinian perspective. In the first place, this reading requires us to regard him as a man caught up in a tangle between an ideal reality and a crude one. Then we need to consider Siegmund's quandary in relation to the assimilation of the epic elements into the novel.

Siegmund's confrontation with reality is comparable with what Bakhtin calls the “pre-requisites for the novel” (10) set up by such prominent 18th—and 19th—century figures as Henry Fielding, Friedrich von Blankenburg and G.W.Hegel. The preconditions of the novel include “(2) the hero of a novel should not be “heroic” in either the epic or the tragic sense of the word.... (3) the hero should not be portrayed as an already completed and unchanging person but as one who is evolving and developing, a person who learns from life.” (Bakhtin 10)

It may follow that such a hero cannot be confined to some distant, heroic images of life, but is likely to find himself exposed to a particular context that renders him as at once serious and ridiculous. From this viewpoint, the kind of challenge Siegmund faces is the latter case—the impoverishment or travestying of what he believes has made him whole, complete through a living contact with the pristine earth: “Siegmund woke with wonder in the morning. ‘It is like the magic tales,’ he thought, as he realised where he was; ‘and I am transported to a new life, to realise my dream. Fairy-tales are true after all’” (*TP* 72).

In contrast to this epic exultation, Siegmund's enmeshment in a prolonged domestic disaster reflects a significant lack of epic grandeur. When Lawrence turns to Siegmund at home, his artistic imagination centers on the hero's human limitations rather than continuing to celebrate his communion with nature on the island. Compare, for example, the following two passages: “He was a poor swimmer. Sometimes a choppy wave swamped him.... Then he stooped again to resume his game with the sea. It is splendid to play, even at middle age, and the sea is a fine partner” (*TP* 73). His pleasant interaction with the all-embracing sea later fades away as he becomes aware of his wretched position at home:

All his unnatural excitement, all the poetic stimulation of the past few days had vanished. He felt flaccid, while his life struggled slowly through him. After an intoxication of passion and love, and beauty, and of sunshine, he was prostrate. (*TP* 179-80)

The second passage can be read as a cynical denial of Siegmund's association with “his poetic activity” in all its aspects. The sinister realism continues until Siegmund's death,

implying at different points his inability to deal with the present, uncomfortable circumstances.

Equally striking is the way Siegmund loses paternal authority. His isolation from his family at home illustrates this point. Not only is he rejected by his most beloved daughter, Gwen, “from whom he might have expected friendship” (*TP* 179), but he is also compelled to see himself as a completely neglected father in the house: “No one spoke to him as he sat to the table....He remarked nothing, not even the extravagant bowl of glasses placed where he would not have allowed it, on his piano.... He merely sat down in an arm-chair, and felt sick” (*TP* 179). As this harrowing passage suggests, Siegmund is made to realize that he will never be able to exercise any authority over his family. Having shirked his responsibility as a father, he is now exposed to his family’s sarcastic, disapproving gaze.

In this connection, we should consider music, too, since it provides another example of Siegmund’s sapped epic energy. Wagnerian grandeur shrinks when Lawrence presents Siegmund’s domestic life and his life as a musician. Music seems to have lost its hold on Siegmund; he was once mad about the violin and did not care about anything else when he rushed into a marriage to his wife, Beatrice. But few traces of this passion for music can be found in Siegmund when he, now middle-aged, plays music only to support his family. Under the circumstances, he smiles at his audience while inwardly mocking at himself for playing music to people who only want to be entertained.

These features allow us to see Siegmund as potentially ridiculous, absurd or insignificant, despite his epic experience on the island. They illustrate the kind of entrapment that impoverishes his epic life. It is worth noting that his entrapment is typical of the contemporary reality, not of the epic, absolute past. This contact with the present loosens Siegmund’s association with the grand, epic hero who “is a fully finished and completed being” (Bakhtin 34). Furthermore, Siegmund’s shifting images from noble to ludicrous in the story recalls Bakhtin’s account of “the hero’s inadequacy to his fate or his situation” as a basic internal theme of the novel : “[the hero] cannot become once and for all a clerk, a landowner, a merchant, a fiancé, a jealous lover, a father and so forth” (37). There is little doubt that the transformation of the hero is well reflected in Siegmund; he often falls short as a romantic lover, a father, and a musician. Presumably it is this theme of the hero’s incongruity that underlies Lawrence’s artistic standpoint from which he portrays Siegmund’s reflections in his last days.

Siegmund’s increasing involvement in the reality towards the end of the novel reflects Lawrence’s particular artistic position from which he contemplates his hero. Being a novelist who is, in Bakhtinian terms, able to break the highly hierarchal epic distance from the present, Lawrence seems to feel constrained to imagine and present Siegmund in relation to the present rather than to the past. This artistic position shows a striking affinity with Bakhtin’s idea about the relation between authorial image and representation:

"important here is the fact that the underlying, original formal author (the author of the authorial image) appears in a new relationship with the represented world" (27).

In *The Trespasser*, Siegmund appears as a figure who holds a nostalgia for the epic world where everything is whole, completed, and totally free of the hustle and bustle of human affairs. He is now and then subject to a poignant longing for a certain distant, mythical world where Wagner's heroes/heroines sing songs of innocence, love, sorrow and death, a world where the main note carries "Wotan's wrath," "Siegfried's dragon," "the call of the horn across the sea to Tristan" (*TP* 58), and "the Rhine Maidens" (*TP* 75) dancing to the sun. He hopes that the epic world relieves him of the unbearable reality. However, his aspiration remains a mere thought; he ends his suffering by committing suicide.

Still, Lawrence's attitude towards his hero and his rendition of the character's suicide as part of some uncanny force beyond the hands of mortals seems sympathetic rather than just cruel or critical. A possibility of Siegmund's renewal can be found in his contact with the vast nature or epic world; he could have rediscovered himself in the embrace of nature, wherein lies a chance to trespass the moral constraints of humanity. Lawrence reflects on the morality of nature—some force of nature that governs and drives everything irrespective of human desires—and that of humanity surrounding great literary heroes in his "Study of Thomas Hardy" (1914).

In Lawrence's account, the morality of humanity determines the fates of Anna (Karennina), Tess, Jude and Sue, and the morality of the vast, unknown nature those of "Oedipus, Hamlet, [and] Macbeth" (*Phoenix* 420). While the great classical heroes "find themselves set up against the unfathomed moral forces of nature" (*Phoenix* 420), the protagonists of Tolstoy and Hardy are almost blind to such unfathomed aspects of nature and thus end up being subject to "the lesser, human morality, the mechanical system" (*Phoenix* 420).

What constitutes the difference between the two sides is a dynamic involvement in the greater morality on the part of the great tragic figures. These men confront a formidable morality until they die. In contrast, those modern characters like Tess, Vronsky, and Jude seem so entangled with "the little human morality" (*Phoenix* 419) that they have few chances to face the vast morality of nature; their participation in the action of unfathomable nature is, compared to that of those classical heroes, passive rather than active. This makes a great difference.

When it is applied to Siegmund, Lawrence's account of the contrast between epic tragic heroes and modern ones reveals the ambivalent character of his hero. The two main plots of the story, one focusing on his epic experience and the other tracing his urban life, do not favor one at the expense of the other. Both lines of the story constitute Siegmund's life, since he faces both the thrust of the unknown morality and the "judgment of man" (*Phoenix* 420) upon him. In this sense, Siegmund is somewhere in-between; the kind of

path he leads in the novel can be associated with the epic tragedy on the one hand and with the modern tragedy on the other hand. Seen in this way, Siegmund's odyssey can be seen as a kind of prologue to the two strands of tragedy Lawrence speculates on later in "Study of Thomas Hardy."

Siegmund's intermediary position directs our attention to what Lawrence pursues by adding Siegmund's last days to Corke's original work. Siegmund's exposure to both an epic event and to a distressing modern event can be considered to be Lawrence's attempt to create some kind of connection between the two episodes. In a sense, Siegmund is Lawrence's agent who mediates between the absolute past in the epic and the dynamic present in the novel. Lawrence creates, as it were, an opportunity for an interaction between the two distinct genres' elements to happen, portraying first Siegmund's epic experience in a primitive, mythical setting and then his contact with the harsh reality. In this respect, it could be argued that Lawrence wishes to see the transition from the mythical (primordial, epic, etc.) to the critical (modern) not as the replacement of one by the other, but as a certain kind of negotiation between them.

This paradigm of genre interaction is explored further in *The Rainbow* (1915) when Ursula Brangwen grows up into the world. Indeed, the way the novel portrays Ursula's struggling adaptation of herself to the changing circumstances (from the agrarian, quasi-mythical world to the modern industrial world) seems to provide a variant of the negotiation between the epic and the novel in *The Trespasser*. This allows us to see Ursula as a successor of Siegmund in acting as Lawrence's agent to undertake the same negotiating task as Siegmund's.

Before concluding this article, let us explore one last time Siegmund's reflections as an example of his attempt to assimilate his epic experience into his real life.

Later in the novel, Siegmund tries to draw an analogy between his tragic path on the irreversible, grand course of nature and the modern world. There are two passages that illustrate this point. One of them portrays the cycle of the bee's life, and the other the busy traffic in London. In both scenes, Siegmund finds himself caught in a flash of illumination.

Though constructed in different settings, the natural (the cycle of the bee's life) and the urban (the busy traffic in London), these two scenes are bridged by Siegmund's desire to be included in the great cycle of life: "the humming of life" (TP 166) and "the vast miracle of movement" (TP 169). Images of bee and hive are common to both passages. A bee whose life is usually short, that is, doomed, is like an agent which collects as much honey (or life) as possible throughout its life: "I have laid up a fine cell of honey" (TP 166). The incandescence of a bee's life also corresponds to Siegmund's volatile and intense life on the Isle of Wight: "the iridescence on the wings of a bee" (TP 166) and the image of a "great burning bee" (TP 169). In addition, the hive is presented in both scenes as the source of

life under whose great scheme every creature is eventually subsumed: "Since the iridescence and the humming of life *are*, always, and since it was they who made me, then I am not lost" (*TP* 166) and "They [the trams idealized by the enraptured Siegmund] went like great burning bees in an endless file into a hive" (*TP* 169).

Michael Black reads Siegmund's momentary ecstasy as follows: "his attempt to find a grain of dignity and some significance, however humble, in the fate to which he acquiesces gives him imaginative strength" (99). In other words, his "humble" but serious reflection combined with "imaginative strength" gives him a sense of participation in "the humming of life" or "one of God's campaigns" (*TP* 169). This is, as Black puts it, a "notional comfort that Sigmund has to seek, as his determination grows to rejoin that 'great mass,' hoping that it may be, in some form, life" (96). Although it remains notional, it is a great comfort for Siegmund, who feels like "a limb out of joint from the body of life" (*TP* 201), to think that his epic experience could somehow have significance.

What Siegmund attempts to seek through such a "notional comfort" in those epiphanic moments can be read as a kind of negotiation between the epic past and the ongoing present, both of which are considered incompatible in Bakhtinian terms. Siegmund's projection of himself onto an imaginary setting implies a transposition of his sublime experience into the cycle of life that keeps unfolding itself in this world, whether the world imagined is of nature or of a modern city (London). Siegmund, in those moments of trance, seeks to transcend the distance between his involvement in the epic world and that in the contemporary world, likening his epic life to that of a working bee that "burns bright" "in the humming of life" as well as discerning "one of God's campaigns" in a phantasmagoric modern night scene. In these ways, Siegmund seems to embody Lawrence's hidden aspiration for the possible reconciliation between the epic and contemporary worlds.

Ultimately, Siegmund fails to realize Lawrence's craving for such reconciliation. Still, this hero's odyssey in Lawrence's early work can have significance as an illustration of Lawrence's lasting interest in the harmonious assimilation of epical elements into the (modern) novel, which he, as seen in "The Study of Thomas Hardy," continues to contemplate in his creative writing.

Conclusion

What has been argued in this article is that the Bakhtinian model of "the epic and the novel" that emphasizes different temporal orientations between the two literary genres can contribute to our reading of Lawrence's *The Trespasser* on different levels. Bakhtin's genre paradigm helps us explore the ways the authorial consciousness (Corke or Lawrence) approaches the object of representation and trace the ways the characters (Helena

and Siegmund) see the world by adapting themselves to the world, dreamy or actual. More importantly, the Bakhtinian approach also indicates how Lawrence presents Siegmund's struggle to lessen the gap between his epic experience and the harsh reality as an important part of the assimilation of the epic elements into the novel. This shows Lawrence's strenuous effort to be responsive to those unstated phases of Siegmund in Corke's writing.

On 1 February 1912, about a few months before the publication of *The Trespasser*, Lawrence, as Elizabeth Mansfield quotes it in her "Introduction" to *The Trespasser*, writes to Corke about his concepts of the novel as " 'a work of fiction on a frame of actual experience,' and as *his* presentation of that experience: 'The necessity is not that our two views should coincide, but that the work should be a work of art'" (22). The implication here is that he was aware of a certain difference between her work and his before the latter went into print (23 May 1912). What a Bakhtinian reading of *The Trespasser* tells us is that Lawrence, by that stage, may have come to perceive keenly how his own work had grown beyond the fields of vision in Corke's original work. Lawrence's view of their two works reflects his struggle to find a unique form for his novel instead of just reworking Corke's epic, distanced model. Reading *The Trespasser* in light of a Bakhtinian genre paradigm reveals this unique form.

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