THE MAKING OF UNDER THE VOLCANO: AN EXAMINATION OF LYRICAL STRUCTURE, WITH REFERENCE TO TEXTUAL REVISIONS

by

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to investigate how Lowry expanded *Under the Volcano* beyond the narrative level and yet also managed to infuse this dense, expanded structure with an organic unity. Passages from the earlier drafts of the novel have been juxtaposed with the printed version in order to reveal salient aspects of method and purpose in the novel's composition.

Chapter I attempts to demonstrate that *Under the Volcano* is essentially a lyrical novel and discusses the background and aims of this twentieth century genre. What chiefly distinguishes the lyrical from the non-lyrical novel is that it transcends chronological time, to some degree, and presents a spatial pattern.

Chapter II discusses the cosmic outlook which prompts a writer to aim at presenting simultaneity rather than succession, and examines textual revisions which reveal Lowry's intention to give his theme a cosmic or universal scope.

Chapter III examines how Lowry has expanded moments in the narrative through the use of leitmotif. In tracing these flexible motifs, we see that Lowry has used variation to make one symbol or image embrace both positive and negative poles and thus render his central theme, the dichotomy of human experience.

Chapter IV traces how Lowry has used another musical device, counterpoint, to expand moments or scenes in the narrative and thus suggest simultaneity.

The final chapter discusses the prevailing atmosphere of poised tension and the wave pattern which emerge from the novel's structure and how this pattern
not only gives the expanded structure a unity, but also renders theme.
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CHAPTER I
THE LYRICAL NOVEL

Although the form of the novel has never been fixed or rigid, twentieth century experimentation with the use of lyrical techniques in the novel has resulted in a new category of fiction. This new type of fiction has been described by a variety of terms. James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) has been classified as an "orchestrated novel"; Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* (1931) has been called a "lyrical novel"; Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) has been described as a "psychological novel"; and all three of these experimental novels have been described rather vaguely as "stream-of-consciousness" novels. The term "lyrical novel" is the least confining of these labels and therefore seems the one best suited to describe this new category as a whole. It implies only that some poetic techniques have been used in the composition of the novel.

The construction of Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* presents a unique variation of the lyrical novel form. For the sake of clarity, this analysis of its construction has somewhat artificially grouped the various elements of composition under the headings "Leitmotif," "Counterpoint," and "Pattern." The aim of this thesis, however, is not to dissect *Under the Volcano* into labelled parts in order to categorize the novel as a whole but rather to investigate just how Lowry has infused this novel with its dynamic immediacy, tension, and density. Throughout this analysis method will be closely linked with purpose for "in art beauty and truth are indivisible and one." As Mark Schorer argues in his essay "Technique and Discovery,"

Modern criticism has shown us that to speak of content
as such is not to speak of art at all, but of experience; and that it is only when we speak of the achieved content, the form, the work of art as a work, that we speak as critics.

Although technique and content are closely linked in any artistically unified novel, they become inseparable in the lyrical novel which seeks to render rather than report experience.

The impetus behind this desire to render experience lyrically within the novel form has been aptly summarized as simply an attempt "to serve twentieth century needs." The need to find new ways of embracing the complexity of modern life prompted the poet's turn to the novel form and the novelist's experimentation with lyrical techniques. As Lowry explains, "the better kind of poet writes in novel form because life doesn't frame itself kindly for him in iambic pentameter." Virginia Woolf also felt that the inadequacy of existing poetic forms in the modern context created a need for a new type of novel which could assume some of the functions of poetry. She believed that poetry had become too limited a vehicle for the expression of the present because of its past associations:

Poetry has remained aloof in the possession of her priest. She has perhaps paid the penalty for this seclusion by becoming a little stiff. Her presence with all her apparatus - her veils, her garlands, her memories, her associations - affects us the moment she speaks. Thus when we ask poetry to express this discord, this incongruity, this sneer, this contrast, this curiosity, the quick, queer emotions which are bred in small separate rooms, the wide, general ideas which civilization teaches, she cannot move quickly enough, simply enough, or broadly enough to do it.

Modern life also does not frame itself kindly in the traditional novel form. David Daiches has described this
traditional form as "a patterning of imagined events set against a clearly realized social background" and "what was significant was what altered a social relationship—love and marriage, quarrelling and reconciliation, gain or loss of money or of social status." Ralph Freedman has defined the conventional novel in a similar way; he says that in "its main tradition (the tradition we think of when 'novel' comes to mind) . . . man . . . pits his moral or amoral sense against the values of others." After the First World War, however, there was no general public agreement as to what "the values of others" were or what they should be. In the words of Walter Allen,

the war split the landscape of time like an enormous natural catastrophe, obliterating long-established boundaries, blowing sky-high landmarks that for years had been taken for granted.

For the artist, "the result of this chaos is in the first place a problem of style." The challenge facing modern novelists is to create a type of fiction which does not need to depend on any assumed landmarks. Some have responded to this challenge by using lyrical techniques which enable them to create an autonomous artistic reality within the novel. In other words each lyrical novelist creates a unique, independent framework or order for his vision of experience by rendering it within a formal design; he builds this framework by creating his own symbolic landmarks. Man and environment, the setting for man's actions, become elements of a closely-knit pattern.

Sometimes we are very aware of some omniscient hand formally designing this combination of man and world. In *The Waves*, for example, each group of monologues represents a common stage in the characters' life cycles and
each of these groups is preceded by a prose poem depicting corresponding stages in the natural world. According to the movement of the sun over the garden, the prose poems cover the time span of one day but the changing position of the sun is accompanied by seasonal changes which traces the annual life cycles in the natural world. Although the prose poems and the monologues are linked together by common images, we are very conscious that some formal pattern has been superimposed on the author's vision.

Another way of bringing the outer world into a pattern and investing it with relevancy is to define it in terms of a character's unique perception of it. The character "mirrors the world as he sees it and lends it a specific color or shape." Lowry uses this technique effectively in *Under the Volcano*. When the Consul and Yvonne confront each other in silence, their former gestures of love now paralyzed, the Consul senses an "almost tactile" silence in the natural landscape so pervasive that the trees are "apparently shaking to it." This illusion invests the "whole scene before his eyes with horror."

The Consul's sense of doom affects even the flowers in the garden and they take on menacing qualities; the scarlet flowers become "flaming swords" (UV, 317) and the leaves of the plantains seem "savage." (UV, 103)

Although there is no general agreement as to what constitutes a "lyrical novel," most critics point to this fusion of the inner and outer world as a dominant characteristic of novels employing poetic techniques. Virginia Woolf said that one of the main goals of the lyrical novelist was to make his reader aware that "a large and important part of life consists in our emotions towards such things as roses and nightingales, the dawn, the sunset."
J.A. Hirschman, in his study of *Ulysses*, says that James Joyce has distilled the usual narrative methods by "effecting the world of his character through the character's own consciousness." In an analysis of Mrs. Woolf's *The Waves*, R.G. Collins says that "while conventional narrative seeks precision of character or action by separating it from the matrix of its occurrence," Virginia Woolf tries to present "that very matrix in relation to the human character." Freedman asserts that what distinguishes the lyrical from the non-lyrical novel is "a different concept of objectivity": while the traditional novel "separates the experiencing self from the world the experiences are about," the lyrical novel "seeks to combine man and world in a strangely inward, yet aesthetically objective form."

Although we earlier described Lowry's combination of man and world as a "technique" used to give the outer world some meaningful definition, it also represents a thematic thread in the total form of "achieved content" of the novel. Geoffrey Firmin's analysis of the change that has taken place in his relationship to the outer world clearly indicates that the fusion of inner and outer worlds represents a symptom of the process of disintegration that takes place in the individual in the face of public chaos:

*When he had striven upwards, as at the beginning with Yvonne, had not the 'features' of life seemed to grow more clear, more animated, friends and enemies more identifiable, special problems, scenes, and with them the sense of his own reality, more separate from himself? And had it not turned out that the further down he sank, the more those features had tended to dissemble, to cloy and clutter, to become finally little better than ghastly caricatures of his dissimulating inner and outer self.* (UV,591)
The Consul's use of the phrase "striven upwards" implies that he had once seen in the outer world certain "identifiable" goals worth climbing towards. Now, however, he dismisses the plan of Hugh and Yvonne to climb the volcano (which in one of its aspects seems symbolic of the world's challenge) as a "pathetic joke." (UV,320) Throughout the novel even public signs, which usually provide some sort of superficial order or guidance, are only confusing, menacing, or useless. The sign in the public garden threatens eviction. The only sign that seems appropriate for the narrow sunken road between Quauhnahuac and Tomalin is "Public Footpath to Lostwithiel." (UV,270) For Yvonne, signs no longer have any stable form; she sees "as might the Consul, the sign in the Town House window 'Informal Dancing in the Zebra Room' turn 'Infernal'. " (UV,294) The weather-beaten arrow pointing to the waterfall by the Salon Ofelia is "hardly visible" (UV,347) and when Hugh and Yvonne are searching for the Consul, they come across "a sad useless" arrow pointing back the way they'd come, to the burned Anochtitlan. (UV,363) To the Consul these signs emphasize the chaos that he senses both in the outer world and within himself, this inner turmoil being, in part, a product of that threatening external environment. On another level, these signs serve as indicators to the reader of Lowry's view of the modern world; in scattering these signs throughout the novel, Lowry seems to be emphasizing the need for the defining pattern he has created within the novel.

Although any novel must be read page by page, by weaving narrative into a formal design the lyrical novel ultimately focusses our attention upon a total picture. It is in this suggestion of a pattern that this "hybrid genre" approaches the function of a poem. As Lowry asserts
in his discussion about "the best kind of novel," "everything which is good and has order and inner cohesion is a sort of poem."\(^2\) Mallarme's explanation of how verse differs from prose can also be used to describe how the lyrical novel differs from the non-lyrical novel:

Verse, in its attempt to express the idea proceeds like an arrow aimed at a target, with an attempt less at succession than at simultaneity, and manages to reduce duration to a spiritual division proper to the subject; it differs from the prose sentence by its development in time, playing pranks upon it, deceiving it in a thousand ways.\(^2\)

Similarly, the lyrical novel is "constructed more on a spatial reference than on a time sequence."\(^2\) Joseph Frank coined the term "spatialization of form" to describe the method of construction used in novels which, to some degree, transcend chronological time. However, as Frank notes in the work of Joyce, the use of spatial reference in the novel does not completely destroy time sequence.

We are aware of time sequence in Under the Volcano for throughout the narrative there are references to the specific time of day. Yvonne arrives in Quauhnahuac in "the seven o'clock morning sunlight." (UV,71) Later the Consul can hear that "somewhere a clock was striking nineteen. Twelve o'clock." (UV,176) As he approaches Laruelle's house, Firmin notes that the time is "1:20 P.M." (UV,224) During the bus ride Hugh observes that the clock in the market "said ten to three; but it was twenty to." (UV,267) But although we are aware of the passage of time, the dominant impression that emerges is that of a spatial pattern rather than a linear progress, on through chronological time. Lowry thought of the novel's form as "that of a wheel, with twelve spokes."\(^3\) In order to comprehend the
nature of the world under the volcano, one must stand at the hub of the wheel and observe how the twelve chapters are bound into a meaningful design by an intricate web of symbols and images, language patterns and structural analogies. The final form of Under the Volcano was the result of extensive revision; Lowry was dissatisfied with the first version of the novel because "the pattern didn't emerge properly." Although he believed that the first version had achieved "a spiritual victory," it did not represent "an aesthetic one." The revisions and "Working Notes" in the manuscripts which followed this first version reveal a careful working towards the aesthetic victory of the printed version. Harvey Breit has said that Lowry's letters indicate that he had "a minute knowledge of what he was up to in his work," and this is equally true of his manuscripts.

Although in outlining general characteristics, we have been using the term "lyric novel," there is certainly no "standard" lyrical novel any more than there is any "standard" poem. The application of this label to Under the Volcano does not mean that we will attempt to compare Lowry's work to some fixed genre form. As Lowry himself asserts, only in "novels written by not quite true poets" is there "preoccupation with form that vitiates the substance." Lowry was not so preoccupied with form that we can only appreciate Under the Volcano by fitting all of the references and cross-references into a pattern as, for example, we must do in Ulysses. He rightly claims that the "top level" is "so compellingly designed that the reader does not want to take time off to stop and plunge beneath the surface." Although some critics have compared Under the Volcano to Joyce's Ulysses (and seem to indicate that in doing so they are complimenting Lowry),
Lowry himself did not regard Joyce's work as an inspiring model for his own. He felt that Joyce's novels were too "full of inventories" and, in reply to a suggestion that Under the Volcano reveals, among others, a Joycean influence, says: "I have imitated none of the tricks of the writers you mention." Lowry implies that Joyce's techniques are not organically related to substance, that they often represent only unnecessary elaboration. Comparing his own technique with Joyce's Lowry says

my own approach with all humility is opposite ... to that of Mr. Joyce, i.e., a simplifying, as far as possible, of what originally suggested itself in far more baffling, complex, and esoteric terms, rather than the other way round."

Despite his protestations it seems improbable that Lowry was not in any way influenced by Joyce. At the same time, however, Lowry's criticisms of Joyce's work seem valid. As the many official guides to Joyce suggest, in order to understand Ulysses it is necessary to work through an esoteric maze; and sometimes this laborious trek through method adds little to an understanding of purpose. Although Joycean critics "usually perform their duties with simple reverence" that does not question his central aims and methods, Lowry is not entirely alone in his objection that Joyce indulges in superfluous verbal games. Herbert Muller, while acknowledging the fascination and skill of Joyce's art, concludes that Ulysses is "more an exhibition than an experience." But although Lowry "compellingly designed" the top level of Under the Volcano, he also hoped that some of his readers would plunge beneath the surface. He asserts that "the conception of the whole thing was essentially poetical" and that "poems often have to be read several
times before their full meaning will reveal itself,"
before the reader can grasp the "poetical conception of
the whole..." The lyrical nature of Lowry's conception and
purpose is evident in the way he expanded narrative to
create this unified "whole."
NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1 J.A. Hirschman uses this term in his doctoral thesis, "The Orchestrated Novel" (Indiana University: 1961). He outlines the "compositional possibilities" of the orchestrated novel as follows:
   a) a patterned use of verbal (imagic) leitmotif(s) out of which characters and events emerge;
   b) an acutely conscious, if not self-conscious, concern with structure (organic, symbolic and synthetic), in consequence of which the 'narrative momentum' of successive temporality is tampered with; and
   c) an acutely conscious, if not self-conscious, use of language as the primary means for achieving connotational depth.

2 Leon Edel applies this term to The Sound and the Fury in The Psychological Novel (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1955). However in the preface to the revised edition of this book (1964), Edel says that he now feels the term "psychological novel" is actually narrow for his purpose and that, except for the confusion it would have caused, he would have changed the title of his study to "The Subjective Novel."


Joseph Warren Beach, in *The Twentieth Century Novel* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1932), applies the term "post-impressionist" to the novelist who seeks to build this autonomous artistic reality. Unlike the "impressionist," who is primarily concerned with representation of nature, the aim of the "post-impressionist" is "out of the elements derived from nature, to make an abstract composition for rendering some truth of his own conceiving." (p.32)

Freedman, p.9.


Woolf, p.225.

Hirschman, p.13.


Freedman, p.2.

This phrase is used by Freedman, p.1.


Freedman, pp.261-62.


Lowry, Selected Letters, p. 67.

Ibid., p.39.

Ibid., p.38.


Lowry, Selected Letters, p.28.

Ibid., p.59.

Ibid., p.28.

Ibid., p.144.

Ibid., p.66.

Richard H. Costa, in "Ulysses, Lowry's Volcano, and the Voyage Between: A Study of an Unacknowledged Literary Kinship," University of Toronto Quarterly (April 1967), discusses how "Lowry did move, especially in technique, ever closer to Ulysses, but did so through an intermediary." (p.336) This "intermediary" is Conrad Aiken, whose Blue Voyage (published in 1927, five years after Ulysses) clearly reveals "the subjective emphasis of Joyce." Costa discusses how "the structure as well as the content of Blue Voyage recalls Ulysses" and how Lowry, in turn, modelled his first novel, Ultramarine, on Blue Voyage. Costa goes on to demonstrate thematic and technical similarities between Ulysses and Under the Volcano and adds that for "a parallel to, a precedent for, the 'tragic' joy of Lowry's novel - its insistent humour amidst hellish demons - one can only turn to Ulysses." (p.336).

Muller, p. 316.

Lowry, Selected Letters, p.59.
Although lyrical fiction and poetry certainly cannot be regarded as identical forms, we have used Mallarme's distinction between verse and prose to describe how the lyrical novel is similar to poetry in intention. Mallarme's description of the impulse behind poetry as an aim at simultaneity is similar to the thesis developed in a recent study of twentieth century poetry, Start with the Sun. In this book the authors assert that although modern poetry seems to be dominated by "the New Puritanism — that tradition of rigorously-honed intellectualism,"¹ there are actually two main streams of poetry in the twentieth century. In addition to the intellectual Eliot tradition, there is the "Whitman tradition" of "New Paganism."² Karl Shapiro says poetry in the Whitman tradition is essentially anti-causal and suggests that only anti-causal poetry can encompass the true nature of experience. Constructed on the principle of simultaneity, anti-causal poetry reflects the "cosmic consciousness"³ of its creator. Shapiro says this cosmic outlook is rare in Western society which usually finds the concept of simultaneity difficult to grasp because of its scientific tradition:

While the Western mind carefully sifts, weighs, selects, classifies, isolates, the Chinese picture of the moment encompasses everything down to the minute and nonsensical detail because all of the ingredients make up the observed moment.⁴

In order to present a cosmic scope a writer must be aware of the chance aspect of events and be able to see the observed moment as a significant, complex unit in itself, rather than
merely as one of a series to be labelled and accounted for.

Similarly, in the early 1920's Virginia Woolf said that in order to present a comprehensive vision of reality, the "novel of the future," the lyrical novel, would have to focus upon "what composes the present moment," with all its "visual and sense impressions" weaving to and fro in the mind. In her diary she describes her struggle during the writing of *The Waves* "to put everything in" in order "to give the moment whole."

The density and tension of *Under the Volcano* reflect Malcolm Lowry's own intention to "put everything in." Lowry uses the phrase "the surface" to describe the actual story in *Under the Volcano* because he has very consciously built layers beneath the narrative level. In other words, several levels of expression are operating simultaneously.

In order to apply the term "simultaneous" to the operation of these levels, it is obviously necessary to qualify it according to the limitations of the printed page. Although two or more musical notes may be played and heard at the same time, we must read a novel word by word, line by line. As Hermann Broch asserts, the novelist "striving for simultaneity . . . cannot avoid the necessity of expressing the interwoven by means of the successive." But the effect of simultaneous interaction can be achieved in a novel by enrichment or expansion of an incident or moment so that its several implications reverberate in our minds. The term "simultaneity" is often used to describe this effect.

Hirschman says that essentially the term "simultaneity" refers to artistic form which, through intensive psychological investigation, results in a compression and economy of the point of narrative view at the same time that it allows for the expansion of expressive means through musical structures or symbolic . . . levels of sug-
gestion made simultaneously contemporaneous with the
dramatic action or movement of the work.9

Although the phrase "intensive psychological investigation" seems rather vague in this context, Hirschman later explains it as a recognition and exploration (by the writer) of the fact that "perception functions on an axis of simultaneity" while "analysis of perception functions on an axis of successiveness."10 Broch also stresses the anti-causal structure of the novel aiming at simultaneity; he says that the objective of the lyrical novelist is to unify a succession of impressions and experiences, to force the current back into the unity of the simultaneous, to relegate time-condition elements to the timelessness of the monad; in short, to establish the supratemporal nature of the work of art in the concept of indivisible homogeneity."

Although in Under the Volcano there is a definite progression of caused events set within the time-span of one day on the narrative level, the layers built beneath the surface play tricks with chronological time so that the structure of the novel is essentially anti-causal. In the first chapter the concept of chance as a significant indicator is suggested in Jacques Laruelle's experiment with "sortes Shakespeareanae." (UV, 61) As Laruelle is thinking about the Consul's downfall, he shuts his eyes, opens a book of Elizabethan plays, and brings his finger "down firmly upon a passage" describing the "hellish fall" of "this learned man," Faustus. Some of the books in the learned Consul's room reflect his own interest in that which transcends ordinary laws; Hugh is fascinated by titles such as Sub-mundanes, or the Elementaries of the Cabbala and Physio-Astro-Mystic, with an Illustrative Appendix from
the work Demaniality. And although the character Geoffrey Firmin must not be confused with his creator, Malcolm Lowry, it is interesting that Lowry's own reading, as revealed by his letters, included books such as *The Book of the Damned* -

I look upon the day I first hit upon *Lei* . . . as a red-letter day in my life. I know of no writer who has made the inexplicable seem more dramatic than Charles Fort.  

By expanding the narrative through the effects of simultaneity, Lowry is able to transcend the temporal, cause-and-effect world of the "explicable"; he is able to extend the microcosm of Geoffrey Firmin to the point where it presents a vision of the twentieth century macrocosm.

Some of the comments in Lowry's letters suggest that he had at first conceived of the novel as an interesting and original study of an alcoholic. In a letter to his publisher discussing the manuscript of "the new *Under the Volcano*" Lowry mentions that the recent publication of another novel about alcoholism, *The Lost Weekend* by Charles Jackson, had been a "considerable blow." He explains that in re-writing his own novel he has "hoiked out" any passages which seemed too similar to any in *The Lost Weekend* and, commenting upon the popularity of Jackson's book, says rather bitterly: "And how many times has this author Lowry not been told that that theme of all themes couldn't sell, that nothing was duller than dipsomania!" His "dipsomania" is still present in the final version but it has become a metaphor for a universal condition.

Lowry realized that a macrocosmic theme demanded settings and characters capable of suggesting convincingly or providing credible vehicles for universal implications. Accordingly, many of Lowry's revisions are aimed at subtly
expanding settings and characters which, in the first version, are sometimes too narrow in scope.

The very first paragraph of Chapter I represents an addition to the first version and points to Lowry's intention to give his narrative a broader framework. While the first version plunges us immediately into the conversation between Laruelle and Dr. Vigil, the final version makes us descend slowly to this particular scene from a panoramic view which locates Quauhnahuac on a world map at about the same latitude as the Revillagigedo Islands to the west in the Pacific, or very much further west, the southernmost tip of Hawaii — . . . or very much further east, the town of Juggernaut, in India, on the Bay of Bengal. (UV, 29)

As Lowry mentions in his letters, he has included much "local colour" which suggests an atmosphere in one sense peculiar to Mexico, but at the same time he often gives the impression, as in the novel's opening paragraph, that he has one eye on Quauhnahuac and the other on a world map. Reminiscing about his childhood in India, the Consul tells Hugh that the Mexican volcanoes remind him of the Himalayas — "just as this valley does of the Valley of the Indus" (UV, 105). When Yvonne suggests they start a new life together somewhere far away from Mexico, the Consul replies that "all the streets are the same," (UV, 111) implying that geography is finally irrelevant to man's actions. The "wild torrential scenery" in the pictures of Kashmir looks "vaguely Scottish," and "the Shalimar looked more like the Cam than ever." (UV, 110) Later, as the Consul remembers the horrors of a night spent by the train station of a small American town, he concludes, "That was Oakville. — But Oaxaca or Oakville, what difference?" (UV, 314)
Deletions from the original version have also indirectly expanded the novel's scope. In the final version Lowry has omitted several passages in the first version which tend to delineate characters as national types. We are still aware that the Consul is British (his snore is compared to "the muted voice of England, long asleep" (UV,125)), that Yvonne is American, and that Hugh is British and has just spent some time in the United States. But passages such as Yvonne's argument with the Consul about the Spanish Civil War, in which she accuses him of being "just like that old unhappy John Bull in the forest beautiful," have not been included in the final version. Similarly, patriotic comments by Hugh (who is an American in the first version) was also deleted during revision. In Chapter IX of the first version, Hugh declares that "Spain's the last frontier but one of our democracy" and adds:

And by the spirit of Nathaniel Hawthorne, and his Grey Champion, sir, and as I'm a good American, by God, that's true. (FV,IX,9)

In the final version Hugh is still very concerned about the outcome of the Spanish War but his own decision to return to Spain seems to be based more upon a sense of some personal obligation to the world rather than upon patriotic or political reasons. Man's guilt is one of the major strands in the novel's theme and Hugh seems to consider his return to Spain a kind of sacrifice which will somehow atone for the way he has spent his first thirty years. It is interesting that while in Chapter IV of the "Working Notes" Hugh tells Yvonne -

I've been trying to persuade England not to cut her throat for seven years ... now I sometimes feel like telling her to do just that. 18

- in Chapter IV of the final version he says:
Try persuading the world not to cut its throat for half a decade or more, like me... and it'll begin to dawn on you that even your behavior's part of its plan. (UV,130)

This revised form of Hugh's statement reveals expansion not only from national to international concern, but also from a sense of detachment to a sense of identification with the macrocosm. Hugh has come to see himself as a significant representative of the very forces shaping world events; he is developing a "cosmic consciousness."

Most important of all, revision of the first version has changed the nature and significance of the Consul's character. To embody a universal tragic experience a character must himself have a certain heroic stature. Otherwise the most carefully constructed levels of suggestion surrounding him would seem mere padding. As mentioned earlier, Lowry's letters indicate that the portrayal of Geoffrey Firmin was originally conceived of as an interesting study of dipsomania. Accordingly, in the first version, the Consul is regarded with pity by his daughter Yvonne and her fiancé. Hugh refers to the Consul as that "poor old fellow" (FV,VI,2) Yvonne often treats him with open contempt and impatience. And even the Consul feels sorry for himself; when Yvonne and Hugh make plans to climb Popo together, we are told that "it hurt him to be excluded from these arrangements." (FV,X,6) In the final version, however, the Consul, with a weary superiority, dismisses their plan as "a pathetic joke."

The Consul finished his mescal: all a pathetic joke, of course, still, this plan to climb Popo, if just the kind of thing Hugh would have found out before arriving while neglecting to much else; yet could it be that the notion of climbing the volcano had somehow struck them as having the significance of a lifetime together? Yes, there it rose up before them, with all its hidden
dangers, pitfalls, ambiguities, deceptions, portentous as what they could imagine for the poor brief self-deceived space of a cigarette was their own destiny. (UV,320)

Not only the Consul's reaction but also the way in which we are informed of this reaction is different. In the first version an omniscient storyteller has explained to us how Geoffrey Firmin feels. In a sense a short cut has been taken; we are presented with only the end result of a probe into the Consul's mind. In the final version, however, Lowry usually lets the reader himself peer into the Consul's mind by actually recording his thoughts. The one comment - "it hurt him to be excluded" 0 becomes a record of the twists and turns in the Consul's mind.

Similarly, in the first version the Consul's change of mood during the abortive attempt at love-making is presented rather abruptly and unconvincingly; Firmin suddenly thinks of the cantina and we are told that he declares to himself: "But as he kissed her, he thought of the Farolito, in the early morning. Chaos, then Cathedral." (WN,III,12)

But in the final version we are able to experience firsthand the details and images passing through the Consul's mind:

But he could feel now, too, trying the prelude, the preparatory nostalgic phrases on his wife's senses, the image of his possession, like that jewelled gate the desperate neophyte, Yesod-bound, projects for the thousandth time on the heavens to permit passage of his astral body, fading and slowly, inexorably, that of a cantina, when in dead silence and peace it first opens in the morning, taking its place. It was one of those cantinas that would be opening now, at nine o'clock... This image faded also... then he imagined he really saw Hugh coming through the gap... But now, now he wanted to go, passionately he wanted to go, aware that the peace of the cantina was changing to its first fevered preoccupation of the morning. (UV,117-8)
Here the transition has been effectively rendered.

This rendering of the Consul's thoughts and sensations enables us to better understand and sympathize with his behavior. As Firmin declares to Hugh and Yvonne near the end of the novel:

The act of a madman or a drunkard . . . or of a man labouring under violent excitement, seems less free and more inevitable to the one who knows the mental condition of the man who performed the action; and more free and less inevitable to the one who does not know it. (UV,338)

In a letter to his publisher, Lowry says that one of his aims in the first part of the novel was to establish the Consul "in the Grecian manner as a fellow of some stature, so that his fall may be tragic."\(^4\) When we know the "mental condition" of the Consul at various moments in the narrative, his actions certainly become "less free and more inevitable"; like the doomed heroes of Greek tragedy, the Consul seems controlled more by fate than by his own arbitrary whims. A comparison of the following passage from the Working Notes with its revised form in the final version of the novel makes clear the new emphasis Lowry wishes to give the Consul's character:

True he had not had before, as one might have expected, the haggard look of a depraved, worn out old man. Why should he? With a start Hugh remembered Geoff was only ten years older than he. Yet it was as though the passionate narcissism drinking entailed had fixed his age at some time in the past. (WN,VI,14)

In the final version this passage reads as follows:

True, he had not before the haggard look of a depraved worn-out old man: why should he indeed, when he was only twelve years older than Hugh himself? Yet it was as though fate had fixed his age at some unidentifiable moment in the past. (UV,213)
In the final version the Consul is not only a fascinating individual but also a remote hero who has somehow attracted the wrath of the universal power, fate. In other words, Geoffrey Firmin can move from microcosmic to macrocosmic level according to the demands of simultaneity, the dense form Lowry has chosen for his novel.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1 James Miller, Jr., Karl Shapiro and Bernice Slote, *Start With the Sun* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1960), p.

2 Ibid.

3 Shapiro, p. 31.

4 Shapiro, p. 34.


9 Hirschman, p. 17.

10 Hirschman, p. 17.

11 Cited by Hirschman, p. 159.


15 Lowry, *Selected Letters*, p. 64.

The Malcolm Lowry Papers, UBC, Special Collections IAbl(B) Box 2. Further references to this First Version of Under the Volcano will appear in the text as FV, followed by the chapter and page reference. (Here the term "First Version" refers to the manuscript for the first novel-length version of Under the Volcano. The true "first version" of the book is the short story of the same name, the embryo from which the novel grew. This short story version has been recently published in Canadian Winter's Tales, edited by Norman Levine. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968). )

The Malcolm Lowry Papers, UBC, Special Collections IAbl(H) Box 3. Further references to these Working Notes for Under the Volcano will appear in the text as WN, followed by the chapter and page reference, where possible.

Lowry, Selected Letters, p. 70.
CHAPTER III
EXPANSION AND PATTERN THROUGH LEITMOTIF

In his definition of simultaneity, Hirschman says that the narrative surface of the lyrical novel is accompanied by levels of suggestions often "through musical structures." One such musical structure in Under the Volcano is leitmotif. Lowry often associates a theme with a particular image or symbol and the movement of these images and symbols as they are repeated and expanded in the narrative is similar to the movement of the leitmotif in Wagnerian musical drama. According to one standard American dictionary, the term "leitmotif" means "a marked melodic phrase or short passage, expressive of, or associated with, a certain idea, person, or situation, and accompanying its reappearance." Transferring it to literary terms, Robert Humphrey defines "leitmotif" as "a recurring image, symbol, word, or phrase which carries static association with a certain idea or theme." Melvin Friedman describes this association as "programmatic" since the leitmotif "must refer to something beyond the tones or words which it contains." Hirschman stresses that leitmotifs recur in "different contextual environments" and Friedman similarly points out that leitmotifs shift their emphasis or meaning according to the context and can gather special significance as the situation which they symbolize develops.

The first chapter of Under the Volcano has been compared to the Wagnerian overture "where all the themes are suggested and compounded":

Ce premier chapitre, purgatoire des impatients,
In a letter to his publisher Lowry defended the first chapter against the complaints of "les impatients," asserting that the complexity and the often slow movement of this chapter was the result of careful planning and necessary to the artistic whole for "while the story itself is being unfolded, the themes and counterthemes of the book are being stated."²

Although Lowry himself does not use the term "leitmotif" to describe the form in which these themes are presented, it is interesting that his own analysis of the novel often employs musical terms. He asserts that the "Taskersen episode" in Chapter I is "justified in itself musically and artistically."⁴ The drunken horseman is intended to sound "the chord of Yvonne's death."³ Lowry believed that Chapter IX, "musically speaking, ought to be an exceedingly good contrast to 8 and 10."⁵ In the text of the novel itself, the Consul's statement about free will is compared to

a piece on a piano, it was like that little bit in seven flats, on the black keys . . . like that little piece one had learned, so laboriously, years ago . . . until one day one got drunk in such a way that one's fingers recalled the combination. (UV,338-9)

To use the Consul's analogy, in the first chapter we are introduced to many "little pieces" or germinal leitmotifs, the full significance of which, as Fouchet observed, we do not yet really understand. As each symbol, image, or phrase recurs in the following chapters, however, we become so aware of its thematic associations that we can "recall the combination" almost automatically. In the first chapter,
for example, Laruelle's reaction to the railway tracks and station suggests only a reluctance to leave his home in Quauhnahuac:

the sense of departure, of its imminence, came heavily about him again as, childishly avoiding the locked points, he picked his path over the narrow-gauge lines. Light from the setting sun glanced off the oil tanks on the grass embankment beyond. The platform slept. The tracks were vacant, the signals up. There was little to suggest any train ever arrived at this station, let alone left it. (UV,33-4)

However, with the recurrence and development of train images in later chapters, and the repetition of the phrase "A corpse will be transported by express," we come to automatically associate the train theme with death. Now we can understand why Laruelle avoids "the locked points" which knit the rails into a rigid path for trains from which "none descends." (UV,31l)

Friedman points out that in fiction the leitmotif has been used in two different ways:

the way Proust used it, by suggesting a theme and then returning again and again to it until the sense of linear development has been destroyed; and the way Dujardin used it, by repeating little phrases often no longer than two or three words.

The thematic leitmotif may recur in varying forms, but always retains one dominant image or symbol to which the reader has linked certain thematic associations. By evoking an automatic response in the reader (once its thematic significance has been established), the leitmotif offers the lyrical novelist an unobtrusive device for expanding the implications of an incident or situation. Several levels of suggestion can be rendered in a passage to achieve the effect of simultaneity. The novelist does not have to interrupt the flow of the narrative with lengthy explanations which would destroy the sense of simultaneous reverberations.
During Hugh and Yvonne's frantic search for the Consul, for example, Lowry has only to comment that "the whole precipitous bulk of Popocatepetl seemed to be coming toward them" (UV,353) to indicate that they are going to find (and, perhaps, are unconsciously looking for) much more than the Consul at the end of the path. We recognize and absorb this suggestion spontaneously because the volcano symbol has already been given certain thematic associations. The swift movement and driving rhythm of the desperate search is not interrupted by didactic interpretations.

The repetition of leitmotifs also helps the lyrical novelist establish the sense of an overall pattern or design. The unchanging form of the second type of leitmotif described by Friedman, the "little phrase," makes it especially useful as an organizing principle. In Under the Volcano Lowry often uses the repeated phrase or "verbal formula" to emphasize the pattern built into the narrative.

Sometimes the phrase-motif occurs very naturally in the narrative. The phrase "absolutamente necesario," for example, first appears in Chapter II simply as the barman's answer to the Consul's query as to the necessity of transporting corpses by express. (UV,70) The association of the phrase with the death theme is very casual here and does not attract special attention. However when repeated later by Fernando, Yvonne notes that "absolutamente necesario" is "the Consul's phrase doubtless" and it begins to take on the power of a motif. As it reappears the phrase serves to accent the fatalistic mood surrounding the Consul's downfall. Firmin says to himself ironically that the very "intrusive necessity" for a drink of strychnine (supposedly a cure for alcoholism) "Cancels its innocence." (UV,96) Later he escapes to a cantina in order to have "a couple of necessary drinks" (UV,104). Hugh, struggling with his own
burden of guilt, thinks - "if only it were not so absolutely necessary to go out and hang oneself." (UV,138) After playing "sortes Shakespeareanae" and finding "The gods exist, they are the devil," the Consul thinks of "Los Borrachones" (drunkards) falling "eternally into the flames" and tells Laruelle that it is "absolutamente necesario" that they have a drink in the square. (UV,239)

The fatalistic mood which this word-motif accents, however, does not imply that Lowry is trying to present the Consul as a helpless puppet. Incidents such as the belated arrival of Yvonne's postcard subtly belie the uncompromising "absolutamente necesario":

Yet what about that belated postcard, now under Laruelle's pillow? It proved the lonely torment unnecessary, proved even, he must have wanted it. (UV,244)

Laruelle angrily tells the Consul, "the suffering you do endure is largely unnecessary." (UV,249) Just as Adam enjoyed freedom of choice until he made the wrong choice and was evicted from the garden, so the Consul has, by his own choice, committed himself to the lonely path through hell in hope of acquiring greater knowledge:

right through hell there is a path, as Blake well knew and . . . sometimes lately in dreams I have been able to see it . . . . I seem to see now, between mescals, this path, and beyond it strange vistas, like visions of a new life. (UV,63)

Just as Lowry emphatically asserts that Chapter IX is an "absolutely necessary" part of the pattern to which he has committed his novel, so the Consul's actions become "absolutamente necesario" once he has made his decision.

Sometimes the leitmotif which consists of a repeated
groups of words does not arise naturally out of the narrative but is instead a "staccato thrust." Such a verbal motif in Under the Volcano is the enigmatic statement, "A corpse will be transported by express." Lowry's description of how these words first enter the narrative suggests a movement similar to Friedman's "staccato thrust":

'A corpse will be transported by express.'

The tireless resilient voice lobbed this singular remark over the Bella Vista bar windowsill into the square. (UV,70)

When part of this singular remark next appears, we learn that Firmin is quoting from the Mexican National Railways timetable which stipulates that a corpse must be accompanied by a first class ticket. Given this prosaic context, the strange phrase becomes ironically comic as we hear the matter-of-fact voice of the transport official dictating rules to the dead who have already made their last trip. The quotation from the timetable next appears at the end of the passage in Chapter X describing the Consul's nocturnal vigil by the railway station:

What had the Station Master said? The dead. Do they sleep? Why should they when we cannot . . . . And he had placed the poor ragged cornflowers reverently on a neglected grave . . . .

A corpse will be transported by express . . .

Oozing alcohol from every pore, the Consul stood at the open door of the Salon Ofelia. How sensible to have had a mescal. How sensible! (UV,314)

Since the form and implications of this phrase are now familiar to us, it serves as a signpost that links the Consul's reverie with an earlier part of the narrative. We recall that even upon first meeting Yvonne in the morning, the Consul had been preoccupied with "talking of corpses" (UV,78).
and it seems probable that the quotation from the railway timetable has jogged his memory into reliving the nightmare by the train station. The now familiar quotation also serves as a bridge from the shadowy world full of "portents of doom" to the very solid world of "cawliflowers and pootootsies" (UV,320) in the Salon Ofelia.

Another phrase - "No se puede vivir sin amar" - appears only three times in the novel but it stands out clearly in the narrative as an uncompromising declaration of one of the major themes - the need for love and compassion in the modern world. Laruelle first refers to it - "'No se puede vivir sin amar', . . . . As that estupido inscribed on my house." (UV,32) It is soon clear, however, that Laruelle knows only too well the truth of the inscription. During his walk to town he mourns his "love which came too late." (UV,36) When Yvonne and Geoffrey pass Laruelle's house, Yvonne is very aware of the inscription but does not want to see it for she realizes its implications for her and Geoff. As Fouchet has paraphrased the motto, "Être sans amour, c'est donc Être mort."17 When Firmin reads the inscription, he becomes aware that he is walking on the "Street of the Land of Fire. 666." (UV,239) In the Bible the number 666 is the sign of the Beast; the book of Revelation prophesies that this number will be stamped on the forehead of those who worship the Antichrist and forsake the love of God. The Consul is haunted by the number 666 for he has alienated himself from love and his fellow men.

In addition to these "word-phrase motifs" which reinforce the pattern being woven into the narrative, Lowry makes extensive use of symbol and image leitmotifs which actually render a pattern. Of course, the very repetition of these symbol and image motifs draws attention to the fact that a form or order is being established. Unlike the word-phrase motif, however, the form in which they are
presented and the significance of these repeated symbols and images vary according to their context.

E.M. Forster has defined rhythm as "repetition plus variation" and Lowry's variation of symbol and image motifs creates a rhythm which saves his leitmotifs from being merely "tethered banners." Instead, variation allows motifs to develop organically within the narrative and gives them a certain vitality. As Forster asserts, "A banner can only reappear, rhythm can develop."

Lowry's variation of motif significance not only saves the leitmotif from monotonous rigidity but also creates a pattern which actually renders the very theme dominating the novel as a whole. As Lowry says in letters, Under the Volcano is concerned principally with man's "ceaseless struggling toward the light under the weight of the past." The quotations on novel's title page emphasize the dichotomy in the human experience. Sophocles praises man's strength and "wind-swift thought" which brings him victory over "baffling maladies," but also points out that man "shall . . . call for aid in vain" against Death. John Bunyan describes the two sides of his spiritual condition: although he realizes that without salvation his soul will perish "under the everlasting weight of Hell or Sin," nevertheless he "could not find with all [his] soul that he did desire deliverance." And similarly, in the hell of his alienation-and loneliness, the Consul will not accept the salvation of communication and love offered in Yvonne's letters - "I cannot read them." (UV, 65)

It is this dual nature of experience, this promise of light in the shadow of guilt that constantly tortures the Consul. Lowry's refusal to pin down the exact cause of this haunting guilt only makes it all the more credible. In the first version of the novel we are told clearly that the Consul was not responsible for the atrocity on the
Samaritan - "the firemen had knocked out the officers on the submarine with slice bars and burnt them alive in the furnaces." (FV, V, 2) In the final version we are told only that

the Germans had been put there and . . . . someone had to take the blame.

So the Consul had not received his decoration without first being court-martialled. He was acquitted. (UV, 59)

In the final version the Consul is not labelled as clearly innocent or clearly guilty; evil has been done, all are to some extent guilty, and someone must take the blame. The Consul's equivocal position represents a universal condition - "Firmin innocent, but bears guilt of world on shoulders." (UV, 165)

Even during the happiest period of his marriage Firmin was haunted by a sense of "the two sides of everything":

For too soon it - their marriage- had begun to seem too much of a triumph, it had been too good, too horribly unimaginable to lose, impossibly finally to bear: it was as if it had become itself its own foreboding. (UV, 231)

During the one day in which the story is set, the Consul's own statements are often in opposition to one another. He scorns "what sort of creatures we are" and asks Hugh, "How can you have much respect for mankind or any belief in the social struggle?" (UV, 334) Yet he also asserts twice that "The will of man is unconquerable" (UV, 120, 235) and he tells Laruelle of his"battle for the survival of the human consciousness." (UV, 247)

In Lowry's own words, not only the Consul but the whole novel "teeters between despair . . . and hope." Earle Birney uses this same image in his introduction to
Selected Poems of Malcolm Lowry: Birney says that the poems "have his Lowry's stance, teetering on a rope ... between exultation ... and agonies."^26 Birney's description is accurate for in Lowry's poems there is a constant insistence upon the dual nature of the world and human experience. A ship heading straight for the rocks is "Never so proud as in her hour of doom."^24 In "The Volcano is Dark" the poet thinks of "men in the act of procreating" but this act of love and vitality takes the form of a very sterile, immobile image:

I see their organ frozen into a gigantic rock
Shattered now . . . .^15

The final lines summarize this dichotomy:

And the cries which be the groans of the dying
Or the groans of love —

In "Grim Vinegarroon" Lowry declares ironically that man's charity and selfishness and are merely the two poles of one impulse: "What knots of self in all self-abnegation."^26 In "The Drunkards" the "hearts to be doubly broken" are "set/ By the surgeon of peace in the splint of woe."^17 In "Saint Malcolm Among the Birds," there are seeds of hate in humility: the "retreat to love from stalemate" is "merely the rearguard action of my hate."^29

It is this "teetering" which gives Under the Volcano its dramatic tension. One reviewer has said that Lowry's book is "asking to that of Elizabethan tragedy" and certainly some of this kinship stems from Lowry's recognition of the fact that "the two sides of everything, good and evil, are the necessary and unalterable poles of human experience."^29 In Tragedy: A View of Life, Henry Meyers argues convincingly that it is this very recognition which gives Shakespeare universal scope and the lack of it which
makes many modern writers "either utopian optimists or prophets of disillusion." Lowry's "view of life" makes him capable of including both of these poles - the exuberance of the optimist and the gloom of the pessimist - and he has presented this dichotomy not only in the reactions and statements of the characters or in the movement of the plot, but has actually built this duality into the network of leitmotifs. By expansion and variation of motifs, he is able to make one symbol or image embrace both the positive and the negative poles.

In tracing the movement of the volcano-fire leitmotif, for example, we find that sometimes volcanoes suggests the fire of destruction or punishment, sometimes the fire of purification or rebirth. Fire lends itself very naturally to this dialectical treatment for, as Gaston Bachelard has summarized,

Fire is the ultra-living element. It is intimate and it is universal. It lives in our heart. It lives in the sky. It rises from the depths of the substance and offers itself with the warmth of love. Or it can go back down into the substance and hide there, latent and pent-up, like hate and vengeance. Among all phenomena it is really the only one to which can be so definitely attributed the opposing values of good and evil. It shines in Paradise. It burns in Hell. It is gentleness and torture. It is cookery and it is apocalypse. It is a pleasure for the good child sitting prudently by the hearth; yet it punishes any disobedience when the child wishes to play too close to its flames. It is both well-being and it is respect. It is a tutelary and a terrible divinity, both good and bad. It can contradict itself; thus it is one of the principles of universal explanation.

The fire which goes "back down into the substance" and hides there "latent and pent-up" describes well one aspect of the volcanic fire which hovers in the background throughout Under the Volcano, emphasizing the sense of doom.
Whether the volcanoes dominating the landscape suggest a threat or a promise often depends upon through whose eyes we are seeing them. The volcanoes are first mentioned when Yvonne returns to Quauhnahuac; on seeing them again she feels a familiar admiration: "over the valley ... rose, eternally, her volcanoes, her beautiful beautiful volcanoes. Ah, how familiar it all was." (UV,71) On their next appearance Popocatépetl and Ixtaccihuatl are viewed silently by Yvonne and the Consul as they stand together on the porch:

Beyond the barrance the plains rolled up to the very foot of the volcanoes into a barrier of murk above which rose the pure cone of old Popo, and spreading to the left ... the jagged peaks of Ixtaccihuatl. For a moment they stood on the porch without speaking, not holding hands, with with their hands just meeting, as though not quite sure they weren't dreaming this, each of them separately on their far bereaved cots, their hands but blown fragments of their memories, half afraid to commingle, yet touching over the howling seas at night. (UV,94)

After a year's absence Yvonne has returned to the Consul but "hasn't yet entered at all" (UV,94) the house. If Yvonne and Geoffrey can cross the barranca, the gulf not separating them from each other and their former happiness, they may rise above the murk of their lives and reach the promise held out by Popo and Ixta, "that image of the perfect marriage." (UV,120) Later, however, the volcano looks to the Consul "like a gigantic surfacing whale" and suggests the loneliness and danger of "Ahab's solution." Another description of Popo renders this dichotomy in terms of form:

Popocatépetl loomed, pyramidal, to their right, one side beautifully curved as a woman's breast, the other precipitous, jagged, ferocious. (UV,270)
As this volcano motif recurs in various forms determined by a character's reaction to it, the motif becomes a kind of index to the current mood or mental state of the viewer. Yvonne often admires the volcanoes, but always from a distance, and they seem even more beautiful to her when viewed indirectly - "Popocatepetl seemed even more beautiful for being reflected." (UV, 286) She admires yet fears them, identifying the volcano with the old woman with the dominoes that "chilled her heart . . . like an evil omen":

For a second she'd had the awful sensation that, not Popocatepetl, but the old woman with the dominoes that morning, was looking over her shoulder. She closed the compact with a snap. (UV, 287)

For Yvonne the volcano is both beautiful and ominous; she "couldn't get poor Ixta the "female" volcano in the limits of her mirror and begins to sense her dream of a new life with Geoff will never be fulfilled. Just as her father failed when he "attempted to harness the volcano" to his own dream, so Popo suggests failure to Yvonne. (UV, 288)

To Hugh the volcano represents both a challenge and lost opportunity. He discusses plans with Yvonne to climb the volcano, yet also knows very well that he will never do it:

Hugh felt a pangé. On the way down he'd entertained a quite serious notion of finding time to climb Popo, perhaps even with Juan Cerillo. (UV, 151)

Hugh naturally thinks of his Mexican friend for the expedition for Juan is a "human symbol" (UV, 134) to Hugh of heroic action. And it is also natural that Hugh looked forward to climbing the volcano for he has a medieval belief in trial by fire. After his miserable sea voyage he felt that "having gone through hell, through fire," he had the "right" to a "reward." (UV, 149) However, in spite of
its offer of heroic challenge, Hugh does not forget that the volcano is capable of what he considers meaningless destruction:

that earth looked parched, those stones, unmistakably, volcanic. Everywhere . . . were attestations to Popocatepetl's presence and antiquity. And here the damned thing was again. Why were there volcanic eruptions? (UV,269)

Hugh is especially puzzled by the fact that "movies of eruptions" are always charged with opposite emotions:

In movies of eruptions people were always seen standing in the midst of the encroaching flood, delighted by it. Walls fell over, churches collapsed, whole families moved away their possessions in a panic, but there were always these people, jumping about between the streams of molten lava, smoking cigarettes. (UV,269)

The Consul, however, would understand this strange scene very well; in fact, he would be one of those jumping into the lava. He acknowledges the potential destructive power of the beautiful cones but he also feels a certain empathy with their lonely grandeur:

the Consul was . . . lifting his face towards the volcanoes and feeling his desolation go out to those heights where even now at midafternoon the howling snow would whip the face, and the ground beneath the feet was dead lava, a soulless petrified residue of extinct plasm. (UV,172)

Later Popo reappears in another image of loneliness:

half on the pavement, there was another, utterly desolated, safe roundabout. The little chairs circulated beneath a frilled canvas pyramid . . . . Here it was, this little Popocatepetl, nestling far away from the swooping flying machines, far from the Great Wheel (UV,251)
Here the Consul thinks of the volcano as a kind of refuge from the Great Wheel of life which allows him no rest from torment.

Later, as he stands by the Farolito where he will soon be murdered, Firmin fears the volcano and can well understand why "the ancient had placed Tartarus the place of punishment in Hades under Mt. Aetna a volcano." (UV,369) He is haunted by the picture depicting "Los Borrachones" falling into the fires of hades. But he also believes that "Save in the thickest flames there is no courage." (UV,263) and that "right through hell there is a path, as Blake well knew." (UV,63) The Consul points out that, according to the Indo-Aryans, fire can not only destroy but can also help man. The "sacred fire, Agni, called down from heaven, with his firesticks, by the priest"(UV,377) is one of the principal gods in the Vedic mythology of India. Agnia aids man in his search for divinity by acting as messenger between gods and men. And, in the Rig Veda, sacrificial fire is presented as not only helping but also as actually creating new life; this sacred Hindu book depicts the creation of the universe as a "cosmic sacrifice":

From this sacrifice . . . were produced horses . . . cattle . . . . The moon sprang from his thought-organ, the sun was produced from his eyes.35

It is interesting, however, that even when fire is exalted to the position of a god with great power for good, "in art he Agni is depicted as ruddy with two faces, one beneficent and one malignant."34

During his "discussion" about the Hindu gods, the Consul goes on to directly link the volcanoes with Agni:

the Vedic Gods . . . were not properly anthropomorphized, whereas Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl . . . Or were they not? In any even the Consul, once more, was talking about the sacred fire, the sacrificial fire. (UV,337)
Probably his own sense of kinship with the volcanoes leads Firmin to believe that Popo and Ixta were more "properly anthropomorphised."

The volcano motif also serves as an index to the proximity of disaster. The closer the Consul and Yvonne come to their deaths, the closer come the volcanoes. Earlier in the day the volcanoes seem very far away. But during the bus ride "Popocatepetl came in view, an apparition already circling away, that beckoned them forward." (UV, 267)

This description invests Popo with alluring, sinister quality. Farther along the road, the volcano "looms" (UV, 270) into view. As the Consul runs towards the Farolito, where he will be murdered, "before him the volcanoes, precipitous, seem to have drawn nearer." (UV, 345) And, as Hugh and Yvonne wander farther into the forest where Yvonne will be killed, "Popocatepetl seemed to be coming toward them."

Yet even when the Consul has reached the Farolito and is sitting in the bar with Popocatepetl towering through the window and the barranca, with its suggestion of hell-fire, directly below, he turns to Yvonne's letter for comfort and finds hope expressed in the image of a flame. Yvonne asserts that their love has the vitality of a never-ending flame "which can never go out, but burns now so frightfully low." (UV, 395)

This movement of the volcano-fire leitmotif from positive to negative pole makes the volcano a powerful and compellingly enigmatic symbol for the novel's central theme. In spite of its threat of retribution for the past, Yvonne, Hugh, and the Consul never stop "struggling toward the light."

To further increase this sense of dichotomy, even the "light" in Under the Volcano is two-sided. Throughout
the narrative Lowry has woven a subtle strand of light imagery. Sometimes the light is man-made; sometimes it has a natural source such as the sun or moon; and sometimes "light" emanates from no tangible source whatsoever. As these forms of "light" recur as symbols and images, they work together to form another dialectical motif.

Just as the signs scattered through the novel are so confusing they only emphasize the chaos of the modern world, so many of the man-made lights in Under the Volcano metaphorically emphasize the moral darkness, the lack of perceptive vision of this age. When a faltering light first appears we do not attach any thematic significance to it. Sr. Bustamente, manager of the local cinema, simply complains that "the wires have decomposed . . . . Every blessed week something goes wrong with the lights." (UV, 52) But when Yvonne reiterates Bustamente's complaint - "And the lighting is always failing" (UV, 37) - and then the image of a failing battering light is used to describe the Consul's disintegration, these unsteady lights begin to take on the power of a motif:

how it heightened the torture . . . to be . . . conscious of the whole horrible disintegrating mechanism, the light now on, now off, now on too glaringly, now too dimly, with the glow of a fitful dying battery. (UV, 173)

When Yvonne wandered along a New York street on "a freezing winter night," the "illuminated news aloft travelling around the Times building" told only of "disaster, of suicide, . . . of approaching war, of nothing at all." (UV, 295) The "electric arrows" of the twitching neon lights "thrust at her heart"; these lights were "cheating" because "she knew, increasingly frightened by it, that darkness to be still there, in them, of them." (UV, 296)
And to Hugh, on another winter night in another city, London, the stars suggest incongruity rather than beauty or illumination:

above them the monstrous deceptions twitched on and off, and around them the black soulless buildings stood wrapped in a cold dream of their own destruction. (UV,181)

As Hugh talks to the "poor little hot dog man" who had been "cozened into" setting up his futile business, the bright stars only seem to mock the desolation and moral darkness he senses in the city.

Although the Consul's eyes are bright, it is a "bemused unfocussed brightness." (UV,77) He walks "poking at the dust with his stick, making little patterns ... like a blind man." (UV,89) As he gropes for understanding of what is going on around him, he senses the outline of a pattern but cannot grasp all its details:

he knew not that they'd been talking about him, but, obscurely from the bright fragment of overheard conversation, its rounding meaning, just as had he at that moment glimpsed the new moon with the old one in its arms, he might have been impressed by its complete shape, though the rest were shadowy, illuminated only by earthlight. (UV,170)

Since "earthlight" is faltering everywhere, Firmin dreams of a new "certainty of brightness," some new existence, power, or knowledge which will free him from his burden of guilt and sorrow: "promise of lightness, of light, light, light, and again, of light, light, light, light, light, light." (UV,154)

This "promise of lightness" is held out by the images and symbols at the opposite pole of the light motif. Alongside the faltering, deception lights, Lowry has built a
chain of lights which suggest perception, order truth. For example, the beacon, a guide or warning light, recurs in images of hope. In the midst of his own confusion about what has value in his life, Hugh thinks with relief of Cambridge "whose enduring beauty" was the result of "the strange dream of some old monk . . . whose . . . house . . . shone like a beacon out of the mysterious silence and solitude." (UV,205) When the Consul hopes to break away from the others and find peace in the cantina,

he was gripped by thoughts like those of the mariner who, sighting the faint beacon of Start Point after a long voyage, knows that he will soon embrace his wife. (UV,231)

 Appropriately, the name of this longed-for cantina is "Farolito" - "The Lighthouse, the lighthouse that invites the storm, and lights it!" (UV,229) The lighthouse image is especially appropriate here for a storm has been building up all day.

A form of natural light associated with storms, lightning, also suggests a positive and guiding power. In a letter to Yvonne the Consul describes the beauty of "thunderless gold lightning in the blue evening, unearthly" (UV,66) and refers to the "path of God's lightning back to God." (UV,66) Firmin feels "the fire of the tequila run down his spine like lightning striking a tree which thereupon, miraculously, blossoms." (UV,245) During the evening storm "it was as if a heliograph of lightning" were stammering messages across the wild landscape." (UV,353)

Another form of natural light, the sun, is associated with the hope for peace and order. Yvonne feels exhilarated as she watches "the terrific onslaught of sunlight while the earth turned yet in shadow." (UV,72) When Yvonne
mentally asks Geoffrey, "must you go on and on forever into this stupid darkness" (UV,77), he replies,

you misunderstand me if you think it is altogether darkness I see . . . . if you look at that sunlight there, ah, then perhaps you'll get the answer, see, look at the way it falls through the window: what beauty even can compare to that of a cantina in the early morning? (UV,77)

Later the Consul thinks again of the sunlight shining into the cantina called, appropriately, "El Puerto de Sol":

Ah none but he knew how beautiful it was, the sunlight, sunlight, sunlight flooding the bar . . . flooding the watercress and oranges, or falling in a single golden line as if in the act of conceiving a God. (UV,117)

When Hugh and Yvonne pass the model farm, a vision of order and peace, sunlight pervades the scene:

A row of shining milk pails stood outside the stables in the sun. A sweet smell of milk and vanilla and wild flowers hung about the quiet place. And the sun was over all. (UV,132)

The last sentence in this passage has the ring of a benediction. The happy stable boy reminds Hugh of how, in Mexico City, "in the early morning suddenly everyone in sight would seem to be running, laughing, to work, in the sunlight." (UV,132)

Of the three main characters, it is Yvonne who most strongly believes that a new life is possible for Geoff and her; accordingly, she is often associated with sunlight. When the Consul first sees her in the bar she appears "a little blurred . . . because the sunlight was be-
hind her." (UV,73) Later the Consul notes that she is "brown as a berry . . . You look as though you've had plenty of sun." (UV,98) She seems to have drawn vitality from the sun for she is "bronzed and youthful and ageless." (UV,99) When Hugh first sees Yvonne in the garden she appears to be "clothed entirely in sunlight." (UV,122)

Even sunlight, however, suggests a paradox. Yvonne knows that "the sun turned grief to poison and a glowing body only mocked the sick heart." (UV,81) In the face of her hopes the reality of her present condition is all the more horrible. When she makes a "gesture of appeal" which seems to epitomise the "eternal hopes of their marriage," the Consul responds by putting on his dark glasses. (UV,114)

He tried to protect himself from the intensity of her hope and well-intentioned probing. Firmin also avoids the sunflower for it is an "enemy"; he tells Dr. Vigil, "I know it watches me and I know it hates me." (UV,172) It is significant that sunlight he praises in the two passages cited earlier shines through windows and is set within the confines of a cantina. He avoids direct sunlight for he had lost the sun: it was not his sun. Like the truth, it was well-nigh impossible to face; he did not want to go anywhere near it, least of all sit in its light facing it. (UV,235)

He has turned to the shelter of the cantina, to alcohol, as an escape from the pain of watching "doomed men . . . crowding into the warmth of the sun," the pain caused by vision which senses the terrible discrepancy between what the world and his own life could be if love and compassion prevailed and what it actually is. Hugh, experiencing a similar pain as he rides over the beautiful countryside, compares his condition to that of Judas after the betrayal:
Christ, how marvellous this was, or rather Christ, how he wanted to be deceived about it, as must have Judas, he thought - and here it was again, damn it - if ever Judas had a horse . . . riding like this under the dazzling sky of Jerusalem - forgetting for an instant, so that it really was joyous - how splendid it all might be had I not betrayed that man last night, even though I knew perfectly well I was going to, how good indeed, if only it had not happened though (UV,138)

The Consul's guilt has no such specific act to focus upon; his is a "sourceless sorrow" that simply mourns man's betrayal of man -

the sun shining brilliantly in all the world before him could not lift his spirit. The sunlight could not share his burden of conscience, of sourceless sorrow. It did not know him. (UV,103)

The landscape of the Consul's world, however, does seem to share his burden of suffering. As mentioned earlier, Lowry has made man and environment elements of a closely-knit pattern. One of the bonds between these elements is the water leitmotif which unites man and land in a common need for new vitality. The Consul is searching for some "ultimate reality, external, conscious, and ever-present" (UV,66) which will give his world some positive meaning and direction and he often conceives of this ultimate answers in terms of a water image. When a stranger's Trinity tie reminds him of Cambridge and its fountain he asks, "Might a soul bathe there and be clean or slake its drought?" (UV,107) He wonders if the answer which constantly eludes him lies in the knowledge men have already accumulated. Later he asks the same question as he studies Laruelle's book collection. (UV,237) Hugh, also burdened with guilt and frustration, envies the Catholic who can "rise refreshed from the cold bath of confession." (UV,135)
This orthodox release is also impossible for the Consul, who waited "in an agony for the shock of cold water that never came." (UV,177)

The surrounding landscape is also waiting in an agony of thirst. Oaxaca, which means divorced - "sundered, severed," - is surrounded by a parched and "desolate cactus plain." (UV,76) The plants in the Consul's garden, "perishing on every hand of unnecessary thirst," proclaim "tragedy". (UV,92) When Yvonne returns to Quauhnahuac she notices the grass has lost its lush green colour - "there must have been a dry spell, though the gutters on either side of the road were brimful of rushing mountain water." (UV,85) Ordinary water cannot slake the thirst of the land under the volcano just as "this rain, that fell only in the mountains, did not assuage his Firmin's thirst." (UV,153)

Like the light and the fire motif, however, the water motif includes image not only of salvation but also of destruction. Laruelle thinks of the approaching war in terms of a flood and fears "the dark waters rising outside to engulf his own zucuali in the Calle Nicaragua, his useless tower against the coming of the second flood." (UV,56) Yvonne fears "the rising waters of possible catastrophe," (UV,90) and Hugh later hears news of a terrible flood on the radio. (UV,183)

Once again a symbol has been so varied and expanded that it becomes a flexible vehicle for the pattern of duality. And, as we have seen in the tracing of these dialectical leitmotifs, they are flexible not only in that they include both positive and negative poles but also in that they can convincingly move back and forth between man and environment. Man has both hopes for a new life or salvation and fears of destruction; the landscape both pro-
mises and threatens. As Laruelle has summarized in Chapter I, in a sort of overture to the role of environment, "How continually, how startlingly the landscape changed . . . . fatal or cleansing as it happened to be." (UV,36) The leitmotifs weld man and environment so that by the end of the novel we get the sense of a total picture and not just the uncomfortable feeling that the author has tried to superimpose form.

In this total picture there is not only ambivalence but also the suggestion of equivalence, of reconciliation. Throughout the novel there is the suggestion that holocaust is in fact a necessary step in rebirth or purification. Hugh comes to the conclusion that "Revolution rages in the tierra caliente of each human soul. No peace but that must pay the full toll to hell." (UV,136) The Consul suggests that "the disaster might be found at the end to contain a certain element of triumph." (UV,168) Later he prays, "Let me sink lower still that I may know the truth." (UV,319) In the Farolito, minutes away from his death, his mind is clear - "It was as if, out of an ultimate contamination he had derived strength." (UV,384)

Although the Consul and, by extension, the world, are suffering in chaos and violence, the final page suggests that this suffering is at an end and that a new world may arise, like the phoenix, out of their ashes. Although on one hand the burning volcano suggests negative destruction, it also conveys a suggestion of purification through fire. In his examination of the origins of the many myths surrounding fire, Bachelard says that fire has always been associated with change, for "from the primitive point of view, only those changes that are caused by fire are the deep, striking swift, marvellous and definitive changes"; "through fire everything changes" so "when we want every-
thing to be changed we call on fire." As the Consul and the "ten million burning bodies" are consumed, the "world itself" is "bursting into black spouts of villages" (UV, 406), small but new seeds of social life.
NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1 There is no attempt here to equate musical leitmotif with literary repetition. We use the term simply as a convenient analogy that suggests the rhythm possible in a novel. The following comment by Zola expresses well just how far the analogy can be taken:

What you call repetitions occur in all my books. This is a literary device that I began using with some timidity, but have since pushed perhaps to excess. In my view it gives more body to a work, and strengthens its unity. The device is somewhat akin to the motifs in Wagner, and if you will ask some musical friend of yours to explain his use of these, you will understand pretty well my use of the device in literature. (Cited by E.K. Brown in Rhythm in the Novel (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950), p. 28.


3 Humphrey, p. 90.

4 Friedman, Stream of Consciousness, p. 15.

5 Hirschman, "Orchestrated Novel," p. 5.

6 Friedman, p. 122.

7 Friedman, p. 13.


9 Lowry, Selected Letters, p. 70.

10 Ibid., pp. 68-9.

11 Ibid., p. 69.

12 Ibid., p. 80.
13 Friedman, p. 128


15 Friedman, p. 15.

16 Friedman, p. 15.

17 Fouchet, p. 27.

18 Forster, p. 240.

19 Forster, p. 238.

20 Forster, p. 239.


22 Ibid., p. 81


24 Lowry, *Selected Poems*, p. 11.


26 Ibid., p. 27.

27 Ibid., p. 40.

28 Ibid., p. 52.


30 Meyers, p. 102.

32 Lowry, *Selected Poems*, p. 11.


34 "Agni," *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

35 Bachelard, p. 57.
CHAPTER IV

EXPANSION AND PATTERN THROUGH COUNTERPOINT

Lowry reveals his perception of and aim towards simultaneity not only in the use of two-sided leitmotifs but also in the contrapuntal structure dominating the novel. This affects the novel as a whole as well as individual scenes. In the first version of Chapter VIII, while Hugh and the Consul are arguing about what should be done for the dying Indian, Lowry included a revealing statement about the purpose directing his use of counterpoint:

Out of the fugue of words, two themes of protestations, the Consul's and Hugh's, argued with rather than against one (with another like two musical instruments. (FV, VIII, 16)

Lowry's analogy is an accurate one, for just as a musical fugue "expands structurally from its point of focus by a contrapuntal style," 1 so the "fugue of words" in Under the Volcano expands through counterpointed themes, tones, dialogues, and scenes. And just as musical counterpoint simultaneously combines "two or more melodies to make musical sense," 2 so Lowry intended to expand and suggest simultaneity in the novel through literary counterpoint. While two or more tones or themes cannot actually be presented simultaneously in a novel, they can be so arranged as to "give a convincing illusion of the same effect." 3 As Conrad Aiken says in the essay "Counterpoint and Implication," "contrasting and conflicting tones and themes" can create the effect of "a kind of underlying simultaneity in dissimilarity." 4

But it is not enough to merely present contrasts and conflict; counterpointed elements must be arranged so that, as Lowry says, they work with one another to form a total
pattern, the ultimate goal of simultaneity. As E.K. Brown says in *Rhythm in the Novel*, controlled variation is the key to pattern: "between exact repetition and unlimited variation lies the whole area of significant discourse." In the first version of *Under the Volcano* Yvonne exclaims, "There's such a unity about everything that we can't understand. We're so helpless!" (FV,XI,16) Through counterpoint Lowry manages to expand the narrative and fit apparently dissimilar elements into a pattern and thus suggest this underlying unity.

Just as leitmotifs suggest simultaneous implications and expand the moment, so counterpoint expands chronological time. Counterpoint gives depth to the linear time of the narrative surface by suggesting how different thoughts and movements are going on at the same time. During some of the counterpointed scenes in *Under the Volcano* chronological time seems to stand still and expand. In Aldous Huxley's *Point Counterpoint*, the artist John Bidlake describes these expanded moments as intersections in the "human fugue":

> The parts in the fugue have their separate lives; they touch, their paths cross, they combine for a moment to create a seemingly final and perfected harmony, only to break apart again.

In some of the additions to the first version of *Under the Volcano* we can see Lowry deliberately working towards the sense of multiplicity in these expanded moments. He expands scenes in the narrative so that we become aware of two or more reactions occurring simultaneously. In the first version of Chapter VII., for example, while Hugh shaves the Consul he jokes about his days at Cambridge and glances out at the garden when the wind attracts his attention:
Hugh wiped the razor on some tissue paper and looked up through the open bathroom door into Geoff's bedroom - the windows were open too, the curtains blew inward softly; it was the leeside, but the wind must have dropped. The scents of the garden were heavy about them. "Thalaveltiparothian," Hugh said, pleasantly menacing. "Now then don't be careful, as the Mexicans say I'm going to shave the back of your neck."

"Do you see that maple tree outside there, propped up with those crutches of cedar?" (FV, VI, 9)

In the final version of the novel two paragraphs have been inserted between Hugh's warning and the Consul's comment on the maple tree. In the first of these added paragraphs the garden and the sound of the wind serve as springboards from which Hugh jumps back in time to his youth. From the nautical term "leeside" in the first version, a central image has evolved:

... don't be careful, as the Mexicans say, I'm going to shave the back of your neck."

But first Hugh wiped the razor with some tissue paper, glancing absently through the door into the Consul's room. The bedroom windows were wide open;

... Hugh heard the wind starting to blow again on the other side of the house, the fierce breath of the Atlantic, flavoured with wild Beethoven. But here, on the leeward side, those trees one could see through the bathroom window seemed unaware of it. And the curtains were engaged with their own gentle breeze. Like the crew's washing on board a tramp steamer, strung over number six hatch between sleek derricks lying in grooves, that barely dances in the afternoon sunlight, while abaft the beam not a league away some pitching native craft with violently flapping sails seems wrestling a hurricane, they sway imperceptibly as to another contro. (UV, VI, 208)

The sea had always been a symbol of romance to Hugh: at seventeen he had signed on board the S.S. Philoctetes in order to escape the monotonous restriction of Cambridge and also to get sensational publicity for his songs. At the
time Hugh had seen himself as a heroic rebel, despite the fact that he pragmatically informed every newspaper he was leaving and finally went with his family's approval. Just as the trees in the garden and the curtains barely dancing in the calm, sunny afternoon are "unaware" of the "fierce breath of the Atlantic" on the other side of the house, so young Hugh had been happily ignorant of how pretentious he was, of how he was making a fool of himself.

In the second paragraph inserted at this point in the narrative, we see that Hugh has made a natural transition from the sea image, with its close relationship to his youth, to what has become another symbol of his early vanity - the guitar:

(Why did I stop playing the guitar? Certainly not because, belatedly, one had come to see the point of Phillipson's picture, the cruel truth it contained... they are losing the Battle of the Ebro - And yet, one might well have seen one's continuing to play but another form of publicity stunt, a means of keeping oneself in the limelight, as if those weekly articles for the News of the World were not limelight enough! ... the guitar as an end in itself at last seemed simply futile; no longer even fun - certainly a childish thing to be put away-) (UV, 208)

Just as the fierce wind threatens to collapse the maple tree "propped up with these crutches," so when Hugh became "aware of the world" (UV, 200) he abandoned the "guide and prop" of his illusions, the guitar. His songs seemed weak and childish in the face of the wind's vigorous "wild Beethoven."

Alongside the surface level - the shaving scene and casual conversation, and the inner level - the stream of Hugh's thoughts, still another level is operating simultaneously. While the Consul is trying to understand the cryptic comments in the newspaper, supposedly a communication medium, and Hugh is struggling to free himself of the
past by exorcism, another struggle for freedom is taking place in Spain. But the Loyalists, who to Hugh represent the spirit of freedom, are "losing the battle of the Ebro" because much of the outside world, because of inefficient or distorted communication, does not understand and therefore will not help their cause.

By inserting these two paragraphs, Lowry has so expanded the moment between Hugh's glance at the garden and the Consul's comment that we are aware of three different activities going on at the same time. Moreover, Lowry has carefully selected and presented these three levels in such a way that there is a thematic comment implicit in their simultaneous operation. In other words, we not only are aware of three levels but can see a relationship between them. The comical and often senseless jargon of the Mexican newspaper is only one aspect of the widespread lack of communication and order which the Consul sees in the world. As Lowry comments, there is a great "nonsense and yet at the same time far more desperate seriousness" in "the shaving scene." Hugh, a newspaper correspondent, has difficulty translating his own motives and past to himself and feels that he must first understand his own struggle before committing himself to the larger cause involved in the Spanish Civil War. And the cause of the Loyalists in this war is hampered by the general ignorance and lack of concern for the truth in the world as a whole.

In his revision of Chapter IX Lowry again expanded a moment in the narrative so that, in the final version, we are aware of two simultaneous reactions. In the first version of the chapter, as Hugh, Geoffrey and Yvonne leave the hot dusty bull ring, they see a cool, inviting lake glittering before them. They soon realize, however, that this lake is actually a glass roof and are depressed by the discovery:
... as they dismally looked at it Hugh felt that his keen sense of disappointment was shared by Yvonne who save a little shiver. "That's dreadful somehow," she said. (FV, IX, 3)

In the final version of this scene we are still aware of the general mood of disappointment, but another dimension has been added to the moment:

The lake was a broken greenhouse roof belonging to El Jardin Xicotancatl: only weeds lived in the greenhouse.

But their house was in her mind now as she walked: their home was real: Yvonne saw it at sunrise. (UV, 309)

This revised scene manages to suggest both frustration with the present and hope for the future. In the greenhouse near the arena only weeds grow. One of the first things Yvonne had noticed on her return home was that the flowers in the Consul's garden were dying; just as his sanity is being threatened by the world's madness, so his private garden has been "truncated" (UV, 156) by the wire fence of the new public one. But in the face of this dying landscape Yvonne still believes that she and Geoff will be able to start a new life together "in a forest," a flourishing natural environment; she can picture clearly their future home surrounded by "small new leaves" (UV, 301) and dogwood blossoms.

The position and nature of these two additions to the first version of Under the Volcano show clearly that Lowry did not carelessly "elaborate" and "overreach himself" with "shovelfuls" of local colour and "eccentric word-spinning"; the texture is dense, but this density is a product of very careful construction - "all that is there is there for a reason." The manuscripts reveal Lowry was working towards a very definite aim - thematic expansion through counterpoint.
On the broadest level Lowry has placed whole chapters in counterpoint and, within these chapters, he often used contrapuntal structure to present different yet simultaneous reactions in the characters. On a third and very subtle level, Lowry used variations in language and rhythm to create the counterpoint of tones.

M. Friedman describes one form of literary counterpoint as "orchestration" - "the plausible effect of different instruments given by varying procedure in the novel"; for example, "when each chapter appears to make a fresh start and may be distinguished, technically, from each of the others." Lowry revised the first version of Under the Volcano so that each chapter is written from the point of view of only one character and he varies this viewpoint so that no two consecutive chapters are seen through the same pair of eyes. In the first version of Chapter VIII we can see into the minds of all three main characters. When the bus passes the clock in the market, we are told that Yvonne, still following in her mind a train of associations which the clock had set in motion . . . . was only vaguely aware of these things. For the time being she was back at Cambridge. (FV, VIII, 2)

We also see what is going on in the Consul's mind - "Pelado, the Consul thought, what a multiplicity of meanings the word had." (FV, VIII, 4) But in the final version of Chapter VIII we observe events only through the eyes of Hugh. The clock is associated not with Cambridge but with "the one in Rupert Brooke," a church clock that stood always "at ten to three" in the equally stable hamlet of Grantchester. The poem referred to, "the Old Vicarage, Grantchester," was written in 1912, just three years before not only the village clock but all time was to stop for Rupert Brooke with his death in the First World War. Since this is one of Hugh's chapters, the association is very appropriate, for Brooke, like Hugh, was a young
romantic who saw war as a purifying experience and believed passionately in the importance and glory of fighting for a cause.

The pelado is thus described in terms which suggest Hugh's concern with political and historical forces. The Consul's interpretation of the word is still given but only indirectly - "According to the Consul, this was only one meaning; pelados were indeed 'peeled ones,' the stripped, but also those who did not have to be rich to prey on the really poor." (UV, 264-5) Hugh goes on to define the word in broader terms:

It was perhaps one of those words that had actually been distilled out of conquest, suggesting, as it did, on the one hand the thief, on the other the exploiter. Interchangeable ever were the terms of abuse with which the aggressor discredits those about to be ravaged. (UV, 265)

The difference in the emphasis each man has given the word pelado points to a fundamental difference in their outlooks. Although Hugh is angered by a world that lets the Indian and the Loyalists perish, nevertheless he still has a certain faith in public frameworks and collective action. He believes that the course of history can be explained by cause-and-effect relationships and that it can be changed or directed by careful planning and group action. He says that just as "Christianity was a new spirit in the Roman world destined to act in that world as its dissolvent," (UV, 33) so the modern communist organization will dissolve the present structures and then reconstruct a better world. The Consul, however, no longer believes in any frameworks or movements; for him all external or public structures are irrelevant for they have nothing to do with the individual "survival of the human spirit." (UV, 340)
For the Consul action is worthwhile only on the personal level. When Hugh compares Nazism to a shark -

A shark was netted with a shoal of other fish and killed ... This struck me as a pretty good symbol of the Nazi system which, even though dead, continues to go on swallowing alive struggling men and women! (UV, 334)

- the Consul replies that Hugh's symbol "would do just as well for any other system ... Including the communist system." (UV, 334) Since public signs and systems only threaten or confuse the individual, the Consul says that people should "mind their own damned business!" (UV, 341) Men's efforts to direct history are futile for "there's a sort of determinism about the fate of nations." (UV, 340)

In Hugh's Chapter VII, the interpretation of the word pelado is only one of the many passages reflecting his concern with the political framework. The busdriver's pride in the white pigeons, "little secret ambassadors of peace," becomes ironic for the driver doesn't know "how much nearer even in these moments the Governments were to losing to the Ebro." (UV, 262) When the bus passes the railway station, Hugh sees it *as* the starting point of his mission to help save the Loyalists - "on that lonely platform tonight he himself would stand, with his pilgrim's bundle." (UV, 265)

(But in Chapter X, one of the Consul's chapters, the railway station is a symbol of death, the end of the journey.) Hugh still has faith in plans and verbal rituals - "May everything come, somehow right. May we all be happy. God bless us." (UV, 267) Even the burned, blackened church by the road is to Hugh a symbol of a beginning rather than an end; the destruction of the church makes way for a new and better social structure. The sounds in the bus become a chant in Hugh's mind - "I'm losing the Battle of the Ebro, I am losing Yvonne." (UV, 267) When seen through Hugh's eyes,
the helpless, frightened chickens in the bus are symbols of the nations who by failing to act, have let aggression flourish and will soon pay a heavy price for their default—"Poor things, they had signed their Munich agreement too. One of the turkeys even looked remarkably like Neville Chamberlain." (UV,268) When the drying Indian is discovered, once again Hugh wants decisive action and cannot understand the passive attitude of the others. After the pelado has stolen the Indian's money, Hugh analyzes his behaviour in terms of Italy's aggression in Abyssinia—"his possession of it was open and above board, for all the world to know about. It was a recognized thing, like Abyssinia." (UV,282)

By revising this chapter so that it presents only one point of view Lowry is thus able to establish one dominant outlook or bias within it; in his analysis of the novel he repeatedly refers to each chapter as a "unit" and makes it clear that the distinctiveness of each unity is important to the overall pattern of the novel. He defends Chapter II against any cuts the publisher might want to make, saying: "it was written with extreme care; it too is absolutamente necesario . . . it is an entity, a unity in itself, as are all the other chapters."

By varying point of view so that no two consecutive chapters are seen through the same character, Lowry is able to place these viewpoints in counterpoint and thus create a sense of multiplicity. And by varying this viewpoint in such a way that complements and contrast are formed, Lowry builds a sense of balance and pattern within this very multiplicity.

Hugh's Chapter VIII, for example, is followed by a chapter seen through Yvonne's eyes, "as it must be for the sake of balance, if you reflect . . . . musically speaking
ought to be an exceedingly good contrast to VIII and X." Because Hugh is disgusted with the way the Indian was abandoned, Chapter VIII ends on a note of morbid irony. When the Consul says "Everybody happy, including me," Hugh thinks

And including those . . . who effortlessly, beautifully, in the blue sky above them, floated, the vultures - xopilotes, who wait only for the ratification of death. (UV,283)

Chapter IX, however, is a new, distinct unit and makes a fresh start; via the still hopeful Yvonne we are plunged immediately into the gaiety of the fiesta. The opening lines of Chapter IX resemble the stage directions a dramatist might use in order to establish a new scene and mood:

Arena Tomalin . . . .
-What a wonderful time everybody was having, how happy they were, how happy everyone was! (UV,284)

The beginning of the first version of Chapter IX (which is not limited to Yvonne's point of view) is merely a continuation of the note on which Chapter VIII ended; Hugh tries in vain to find a telephone in the tavern so that he can send help to the Indian and Yvonne, shocked by the incident and, feeling that she has had some "mysterious share in a murder" (FV,VIII,5) is crying. As this version of Chapter IX develops, we see incidents also through the eyes of Geoffrey and Hugh. We are given the Consul's interpretation of the bullthrowing:

To the Consul, giving himself over to a succession of delicious, caddish thoughts, the attitude of those in
the ring was precisely that of Mexican salesmen towards the gringo tourist. (FV,IX,11)

We see into Hugh's mind as he faces the bull in the ring - "Very well I don't like the bull either. These thoughts smote his mind, rigid with concentration upon subduing the bull." (FV,IX,29)

But in its revised form this is definitely Yvonne's chapter; a clean break is made with Hugh's attitude at the end of Chapter VIII and all events are observed through Yvonne's eyes. Passages in the first version not closely related to Yvonne's interest and outlook have been cut; the argument between Hugh and the Consul about the Spanish Civil War, for example, is omitted in the printed version of Chapter IX. Like Hugh, Yvonne is concerned with building a new world but her vision is a very personal one; she wants to build a private world where she and Geoff can recover their old love. The final version of the chapter still includes Hugh's reaction to the bull but only indirectly, and in such a way that his concentrated struggle is no longer the moment's center of interest but instead has become a backdrop for the chapter's central movements - Yvonne's struggle with the past and her hopes for the future. Even as he sits in the stands, Hugh seems "an interloper, a stranger, part of the scene below." (UV,300) As he faces the bull Yvonne smiles at him indulgently and accurately interprets his reactions:

he was simply submitting to that absurd necessity he felt for action . . . All his thoughts now were bringing that miserable bull to its knees . . . . Somehow one had little anxiety watching him . . . . One felt, even, half ironically, that this was the kind of thing Hugh might be best fitted to do. (UV,306)

She finds Hugh's method of emotional release through danger
all very well in its place but rather limited in effec-
tiveness. Yvonne also has been upset by the events of the
day, but her reaction is to start planning a retreat for
Geoffrey and herself. During the bullthrowing she mentally
constructs an idyllic future home and life. In revising the
first version of this chapter, Lowry inserted a tense dialogue
concerning this new life just at the high point of Hugh's
struggle and Yvonne's desperate attempt to convince the
Consul clearly upstages the forced game in the ring below.
The chapter ends on a note of precarious hope; the conver-
sation between Yvonne and the Consul is interrupted and
moored, like a boat, in a dangerous position near the rocks,
but Yvonne has hopes that she can later "drag it up fur-
ther, where it was safe." (UV,310)

The next chapter, however, is one of the Consul's, and
just as the opening lines of Chapter IX were sufficient to
set a mood of hope, so the first sentence of Chapter X
immediately signals a swing of the pendulum to despair -
"'Mescal', the Consul said, almost absentmindedly." (UV,311)
The mood at the end of Chapter IX is far from exuberant, but
the final image of the old Indian carrying the cripple
nevertheless makes a positive statement; in spite of "the
weight of the past," man still struggles forward. In spite
of the weight of her own past, with its failures and sor-
rows, Yvonne has begun to lay the foundations for a future
triumph. But the one word "mescal" at the beginning of
Chapter X suggests the beginning of the end for the Consul
and for Yvonne's dreams. Earlier Firmin had told Laruelle,
"But if I ever start to drink mescal again, I'm afraid, yes
that would be the end." (UV,246) In the first version of
novel Chapter X began with a less abrupt statement: "fin-
ally they walked down towards the Salon Ofelia ... - in
silence." (FV,X.1) As he did with Chapter IX, Lowry re-
vised the opening so that it decisively sets the mood for the chapter's dominant outlook and makes an abrupt break with the preceding unit. And once again, later passages in the chapter have been revised so that we see everything from the Consul's eyes. In the first version of Chapter X the waterfall by the tavern is described very matter of factly:

Outside it a waterfall crashed down into two levels, the lower being a swimming pool. The water on the upper level raced to another falls which, below, nourished a stream leading through thick jungle to a much larger cascade out of sight. (FV,X,1)

But in the final version the description of this waterfall reflects the Consul's tortured state of mind:

A natural waterfall crashing into a sort of reservoir built on two levels - . . . the sight less cooling than grotesquely suggestive of some agonised ultimate sweat; the lower level made a pool where Hugh and Yvonne were still not yet swimming. (UV,315)

Similarly, the conversation between Yvonne and Hugh by the pool has been revised so that we hear it in a form reflecting the confusion of the Consul's consciousness. As he sits in the tavern drinking, the fatal "ether-smelling" mescal dulls his senses and only fragments of the conversation float to the surface of his mind. The following lines from the first version of the chapter -

'—not forgetting the limes either!'
'Why limes? Yvonne began to laugh. 'Where do we start from?'
'To prevent mountain sickness. Oh, Amecameca.' (FV,X,5)

- are altered in the final version so that we find them
slightly confusing on a first reading:

'not forgetting the limes-
'-where is it we start from, Amecameca-
'To prevent mountain sickness.' (UV,320)

Not only does the Consul find it difficult to communi-
cate himself, but he also has to struggle even to under-
stand the communication between others. By presenting the
dialogue as it is heard by Firmin, and thus forcing us to
share this struggle to understand, Lowry is able to convey
the Consul's predicament with a vivid sense of immediacy.

Another product of revision in Chapter X is the
scene in the bathroom where the Consul studies the travel
folder. By adding this scene Lowry is once again able to
suggest the Consul's confusion; along with Firmin, who is
lost in his own "Tlaxcaltecan fantasy," (UV,32) we hear
only fragments of Yvonne and Hugh's conversation in the
next room. Throughout the chapter, in fact, environment
and events are coloured by the Consul's sense of dislo-
cation and horror. The mists from the waterfalls "seemed
to be dancing" to the "plaintive discords" produced by the
mescal. Firmin sees the movement of the mists as "a
phantom dance of souls," seeking permanence "in the midst
of what was only perpetually evanescent or eternally lost."
This image reflects the Consul's own sense of futility in
the face of the inevitable doom. The shadows in the bar-
room are snake-like"coils" which seem to spring at him,
ready to reduce to chaos what little order there is left
in his private garden. Even the rooster seems menacing
as its "wild yellow eyes pierced the gloom." (UV,316)
The bathroom "looked like a tomb" and Hugh becomes a
threatening enemy "advancing as if to decapitate him."
(UV,316) A curtain floating in the window "had come in to
strangle him." (UV, 344) The chapter ends appropriately with an ominous image of the volcanoes - "massive interests moving up in the background." (UV, 345)

In each of these three chapters there is a downward movement. In Chapter VIII, Hugh's good spirits give way to disgust when no one will make a move to help the dying Indian. Yvonne's exuberance at the beginning of Chapter IX fades as the effect of her drink wears off. By the end of Chapter X the Consul can no longer distinguish illusion from reality; he thinks he is presenting a lucid discourse on the traditions of various cultures when actually he has not uttered a single word. (UV, 338) But by giving each of these chapters a distinct unity and outlook of its own, Lowry is able to place them in counterpoint and thus modulate tone and mood within the general downward movement. Throughout all twelve chapters there are images and suggestions of doom, for the characters in each chapter all lie under the threat of the volcano. But Lowry has so varied viewpoint that he creates a sense of multiplicity.

Within this contrapuntal series of chapters, mood teeters back and forth between hope and despair, order and confusion.

The first chapter, the only one presented from Laruelle's point of view, is also the only one having a slow moving introduction to action and mood and the only one which does not emerge as a unit with a dominant outlook. It is presented entirely from Jacques Laruelle's point of view, but it does not bear the stamp of one particular outlook or attitude, for Laruelle is really only a mouthpiece through which Lowry presents background information and suggests the themes to be developed in the novel. Chapter II, however, is presented from Yvonne's point of view and definitely reflects her own tense frame of mind. Her return is based on the belief that the marriage can be saved but
she is also aware that the very urgency of this hope renders her vulnerable to disappointment and she treads cautiously. By the end of the chapter hope outweighs fear and Yvonne lets herself believe in the "sense of a shared, a mountain peace." (UV, 91) But Chapter III is one of the Consul's chapters and soon upsets this precarious equilibrium. In the opening sentence the "tragedy" of his ruin is "proclaimed" by the very plants dying in the garden. The stilted conversation continues as in Chapter II, but now we see what is going on in the Consul's mind during the awkward silent intervals: we see his despair, chaos and desperation.

In Chapter IV there is a return to and a strengthening of the tentative hope of Chapter II. The opening passage, a copy of a news dispatch commenting on the political situation in Mexico, proclaims immediately that this is one of Hugh's chapters. The formal official language also signals the beginning of a new phase of order. Hugh and Yvonne quickly "get the hell out of" the ruined garden and go for a ride in the countryside where they find a beautiful model farm, a vision of order and peace. In this secure "caravan" (UV, 134) Yvonne first broaches her plan for escape to Canada and a new life with Geoffrey. But the opening passage of Chapter V, one of the Consul's, has "an ironic bearing on the last words of IV." Although pilgrims "with souls well disciplined" reach "the northern region" they will never find their goal, only tantalizing promises of it — "promise of lightness, of light, light, light." (UV, 154) Once again the scene is the ruined, chaotic garden bounded by the threat of eviction and we see the action and environment through the Consul's hazy "amber glow." (UV, 167) Alongside the yearning for time past in the chapter's final line — "Oh come to me again as once in May," there is a sense of futility, the realization that there will be no rebirth
of past happiness, only an end to present misery - "you're for it now straightened out - in a coffin!" (UV,178)

The following Chapter VI also focuses on the passage of time, but this chapter is presented from Hugh's point of view. There is a marked contrast in mood for Hugh, as the opening line announces, is "in the middle" of his life - "Nel mezzo del bloody cammin di nostra vita mi retrovai in." (UV,179) At twenty-nine he feels regret for time past, but also hope for the future "sixty-seven years." When the road image recurs at the end of the chapter, what lies ahead is unknown but at least there is still some distance to be travelled: "The road turned a little corner in the distance and vanished." (UV,223)

The sense of order created by Hugh's careful reconstruction and analysis of his past is abruptly shattered by the opening paragraph of Chapter VII which clearly announces this unit will be presented from the Consul's point of view: "On the side of the drunken madly revolving world hurtling at 1:20 p.m. toward Hercules butterfly the house seemed a bad idea, the Consul thought." (UV,224) Once again the presentation and interpretation of environment and action reflect Firmin's sense of despair and persecution: Laruelle's house is seen as a menacing fortress equipped for war; the motion of the flying machines at the fair look "like gesticulations of pain." (UV,226) The people on the golf course resemble crawling "scorpions"; (UV,226) the tourists are "vandals in sandals;" (UV,241) the looping-the-loop machine suggests "some huge evil spirit, screaming in its lonely hell." (UV,251) The closing line of the chapter is appropriately ominous - "Es inevitable la muerte del Papa." (UV,260)

In Chapter VIII we again see events through Hugh's eyes and, until they find the dying Indian, an optimistic outlook prevails. At the beginning of Yvonne's Chapter IX
the depression at the end of Hugh's chapter is forgotten in the excitement of the bullthrowing and dream of a new home but in Chapter X, one of the Consul's, environment again takes on a sinister aspect and events are partially lost in the muddle of Firmin's mind.

The threat suggested by the towering volcanos at the end of Chapter X takes on a definite form and result: in Chapter XI when Yvonne is killed by a runaway horse. This is the third and last chapter presented from Yvonne's point of view and, in spite of the fact that it contains her death, it nevertheless reaffirms the note of hope in her other two chapters. So strong is her belief Geoffrey will be found that Yvonne imagines she sees him in El Popo. (UV, 354) In the form created by two poles and beams of light she sees the "exquisite beauty" of a "ruined Grecian temple." (UV, 361) The air has "a sweet cleanly smell" as soft rain falls in the woods where Hugh and Yvonne search. Although she is finally forced to abandon her "burning dream," the chapter ends with the positive and graceful upward movement on which it began. Just as in the opening lines "eddes of green and orange birds" are scattered "aloft with ever wider circlings like rings on water!" (UV, 346) so in the final paragraph of the unit Yvonne "felt herself suddenly gathered upwards and borne towards the stars, through eddies of stars scattering aloft with ever wider circlings like rings on water." (UV, 366)

The opening line of Chapter XII marks the beginning of the final downward movement in the novel. Like Chapter X, the Consul's last chapter begins with him ordering a drink of mescal. But this time the order is not given "almost absentmindedly" and the Consul makes no effort to delude himself, as in Chapter X, that it will not be "a serious mescal." As he himself earlier prophesied, this drink is the beginning of the end; even his own reflection in the
mirror now glares at him "with stern familiar foreboding." (UV, 367) He is acutely aware of "the ticking of his watch, his heart, his conscience, a clock somewhere" for his time is running out. As presented through Firmin's final confusion and desperation, the Farolito becomes the "paradise of his despair," the perfect setting for his own private hell to which all hopes are now condemned.

To some extent this classification of chapters in terms of upward or downward movements, or in terms of hope and order or despair and chaos, is an oversimplification. Often within one chapter a leitmotif may appear in both a positive and negative form. Lowry said Hugh and the Consul argued with one another "like two musical instruments" and although one dominant character or instrument stamps each chapter with his particular outlook, he does not blare one unrelieved note throughout the unit. In the confusion and despair of the Consul's Chapter II there is a temporary moment of peace and elation when "they were embracing, or so it all but seemed, passionately." (UV, 97) During the happy pilgrimage in Hugh's Chapter IV, there is a moment of temptation to give way to complete despair - "And here indeed it was again, the temptation, the cowardly, the future-corruptive serpent." (UV, 138) In the Consul's Chapter V there is a hilarious scene between Firmin and his neighbour, De Quincey. But each chapter does finally emerge as a distinct unit with a dominant, if modulated, outlook and together these units form a contrapuntal series. They are independent in emphasis and yet related in impetus. They argue with rather than against one another for they represent variations on a central theme: Hugh, Yvonne and the Consul are each struggling with the problem of alienation.

In addition to the contrapuntal arrangement of the chapters, Lowry has used counterpoint within the chapters to expand moments or scenes and reveal simultaneity.
Whether he is counterpointing one dialogue with another, a character's thoughts with his own or some one else's spoken words, or one entire scene with another, there is a common pattern: in each case the inner world is placed in counterpoint to the outer world. Usually this inner world is distinguished from the outer not only by its content but also by its tone and style. Lowry clearly realized that "the subjective is the realm of tone" and that, to communicate on that level, he needed something beyond the traditional narrative techniques used to present surface. Accordingly, in Under the Volcano presentation of a character's thoughts or of a scene representing his inner landscape is marked by a heightened mood and rhythm. While the novel as a whole is poetic in structure and texture, these counterpointed passages rendering the inner world are lyrical in their very tone and use of language. Proust wrote, "an atmosphere of poetry surrounds those truths within ourselves, to which we attain." These passages are not awkward "purple patches," for the texture of the novel leads us to expect the rhythm and the perspective of poetry. But they do stand out as intensifications of the moods and themes running through the novel.

When Virginia Woolf spoke of the need for the novelist to adopt a more flexible medium that would have "something of the exaltation of poetry, but much of the ordinariness of prose," she said that what the modern age needed, in effect, was to fill the gap left by the death of poetic drama. It was not up to the novelists to supply, in a form acceptable to modern tastes and habits, the equivalent of the poetic drama of the Elizabethan age, of "what has in the past served to express" the "contrast and collision" of life. In defending his use of lyrical prose, Lowry points to this very gap in modern literature:
... in our Elizabethan days we used to have at least passionate poetic writing about things that will always mean something and not just silly ass style and semicolon technique; and in this sense I am trying to remedy a deficiency, to strike a blow, to fire a shot for you as it were, roughly in the direction, say, of another Renaissance.

And, as if to illustrate just how adeptly he could encompass the collision of modern life and swing smoothly from the clouds to the ground, he adds wryly that this shot "will probably go straight through my brain but that is another matter. Possibly too the Renaissance is in full swing but if so I have heard nothing of this in Canada."

Often the heightened tone of the lyrical passages depicting the inner world is a desperate one and there is a driving, urgent quality to the rhythm. In Chapter II Yvonne and Geoffrey's casual conversation on the outer level is counterpointed by a tense, straining undercurrent of silent communication. When the Consul first sees her, Yvonne announces almost flippantly, "Surprise party. I've come back." (UV,74) and Firmin responds by inquiring about her travel route. When Yvonne finally does venture into a more serious region, asking "What have you done," Firmin gives only a superficial answer—"Well, actually I've only been away once. To Oaxaca." (UV,75) But on the inner level, Yvonne is crying for some explanation, some reassurance, and the Consul is trying desperately to explain his predicament. Yvonne's "thoughts were saying, her love saying, through the gloom of the bar,"

... oh Geoffrey, why can't you turn back? Must you go on forever into this stupid darkness, seeking it, even now, where I cannot reach you, ever on into the darkness of the sundering, of the severance! (UV,77)
And the Consul "seemed to be saying,"

you misunderstand me if you think it is altogether darkness I see . . . . for not even the gates of heaven, opening wide to receive me, could fill me with such celestial complicated and hopeless joy as the iron screen that rolls up with a crash . . . . All mystery, all hope, all disappointment, yes all disaster is here. (UV,77)

To increase the tension in this scene Lowry has counterpointed Yvonne and Geoffrey's conversations, spoken and silent, with another conversation going on in the bar "on the other side of the glass partition." (UV,74) Lowry explains that this "mysterious contrapuntal dialogue in the Bella Vista bar" is supplied by Weber, the smuggler mixed up with the loca thugs who finally shoot the Consul. The blundering, violent mood and staccato rhythm of Weber's comment suggest those very forces in the outer world which have driven the Consul to the point where he feels besieged on all sides and can no longer cross the barriers surrounding his isolation even to meet Yvonne halfway; he can only "seem" to give the explanations she asks for.

In Chapter VII the conversation in the mirador about Laruelle's films is counterpointed with the Consul's roaming thoughts as he escapes from his immediate surroundings through the binoculars. Just as "the world was . . . within the binoculars of the police" standing in the prison watch tower (UV,133), so the Consul sees his own world in the scene he focuses upon. He sees the landscape below as a huge golf course with the barranca as a treacherous "natural hazard." (UV,232) While on the surface Firmin is following the general conversation and offering witty contributions himself, on the inner level he plays with words and expands a metaphor as his thoughts
surge beyond the immediate scene in a lyrical flow:

Golf = gouffre = gulf. Prometheus would retrieve lost balls. And on that other side what strange fairways could be contrived, crossed by lone railway lines, humming with telegraph poles, glistening with crazy lies on embankments, over the hills and far away, like youth, like life itself, the course plotted all over these plains, extending far beyond Tomalin, through the jungle, to the Farolito, the nineteenth hole . . . The Case is Altered. ([UW,232]

Then, as if ashamed of the serious turn his metaphor has taken, the Consul parodies his poetic flight and returns to the mocking tone that usually characterizes his thoughts and comments:

Poet of the unreplaced turf - who holds the flag while I hole out in three? Who hunts my Zodiac Zone along the shore? And who, upon that last and final green, though I hole out in fore, accepts my ten and three score. . . ([UW,233]

As in Chapter II, the conversation going on at the surface level is casual and lighthearted in tone; Jacques, Hugh and the Consul are joking about Laruelle's attempts at film making. But, also as in Chapter II, there is a thematic connection between the surface and the inner level. The particular film discussed is based on Shelley's *Alastor*, the story of a youth who remains "aloof" from sympathies" with mankind as he searches in vain for "an intelligence similar to" himself; Alastor's "self-centred seclusion" is avenged by the furies and "he descends to an untimely grave."21 Similarly, as the Consul escapes from his kind via the binoculars, he wonders if perhaps he is looking for "some figment of himself."([UW,233) Just as Alastor was driven to seclusion by "too exquisite a perception,"[22 so the Consul's torturing awareness of the futility in the world around him paralyzes his "simple,
healthy" (UV, 237) impulses.

In Chapter IX the inner world of Yvonne's thoughts has been placed in counterpoint with the outer action, the bullthrowing event. During the first stages of the sport Yvonne's thoughts focus on her past life. This flashback has been criticized as unnecessary and tedious: "Without them the flashbacks, the book would have been easier to read and aesthetically more satisfying . . . . The more Lowry tries to authenticate Yvonne on a concrete base, the less convincing she becomes."25 But as Lowry says in his analysis of the chapter, "the flashbacks are not here though either for their own sake, or particularly for the sake of character, which as I said was my last consideration."24 The very point at which this flashback begins clearly indicates that it is not meant to be mere background but rather is intended as an implicit comment on and expansion of the immediate scene. Everyone around the ring is trying to attract the bull -

- the poor old creature seemed now indeed like someone being drawn, lured, into events of which he has no real comprehension, by people with whom he wishes to be friendly, even to play, who entice him by encouraging that wish and by whom, because they really despise and desire to humiliate, he is finally betrayed. (UV, 288)

-and after this passage the flashback begins and the thematic connection is obvious: "... Yvonne's father made his way toward her through the seats, hovering responding eagerly as a child to anyone who held out a friendly hand." (UV, 288) In the first version of this chapter Hugh makes a revealing comment about the intended significance of the bullthrowing: he refers to it as a "strange tribal ritual" and says of the favorite American ritual of baseball, "No runs, no hits, no errors. What sort of nonsense is that?" (FV, IX, 6). Hugh suggests that
games represent society's tendency to formulate frameworks of rules which finally lead the individual nowhere. Earlier in the novel the old woman playing a game of dominoes was described as an evil omen. The Consul, alienated from the public world, can no longer enjoy his once favorite game, golf, and he pictures life as one great treacherous golf course dotted with traps for the individual player. When Vigil and Laruelle decide to play a game of tennis, the Consul imagines the performance as a "weird gusty game of tennis under the hard Mexican sunlight, the tennis balls tossed in a sea of error." (UV, 236) In the counterpointed flashback we see first Mr. Constable and then Yvonne herself become involved and finally trapped in illusory, pointless games. Yvonne's father loses his money, self-respect, and sanity in a futile money-making schemes, "led on and encouraged" (UV, 288) by apparent friends. Yvonne is caught up in the "false flat bright enchantment" (UV, 291) of Hollywood and submerges herself in the "Boomp Girl" image, only to find later that she has been living in "a world without meaning, a world without aim." (UV, 296)

Later in the chapter the action in the arena is counterpointed with Yvonne's dreams of a new life. The future home in the north represents an alternative to the world of false frameworks and subsequent confusion. Here the inner level is distinguished by a quiet serenity and flowing lyrical rhythm well suited to her vision of a simple, happy future:

-the house, dappled with misty light that fell softly through the small new leaves, and then the mist rolling away across the water, and then mountains, still white with snow appearing sharp and clear against the blue sky, and blue wood smoke from the driftwood fire curling out of the chimney. (UV, 301)
The peaceful tone and beauty suggested by this idyllic scene contrasts sharply with the antagonism and ugliness of the performance in the bullring.

In Chapter X the Consul's thoughts are counterpointed not only with a conversation in the next room but also with the comments of a travel folder. In the first version of the chapter only two elements were placed in counterpoint - the Consul's thoughts and the conversation between Hugh and Yvonne - and Tlaxcala was referred to only briefly when Firmin pointed "to an advertisement on the wall which said in English: Tourists! Come to beautiful Tlaxcala!" (WN,X,14) But during revision Lowry reminded himself in a marginal note on this page to "Work up Tlaxalan thing from folder" and went on to expand the scene so that we are aware of three simultaneous moods or approaches.

On the outer level we hear Hugh and Yvonne discussing the events of the day, trying to understand just what had happened by the roadside. In a marginal note in the working notes Lowry says that "From here on they have just started dinner it should be written as a play, first: one must hear the dialogue." (WN,X,9) We hear this dialogue through the consciousness of the Consul who has left the table and is sitting alone in the Tavern's cold, grey bathroom that "looked like a tomb." If Hugh and Yvonne's conversation is to be read as a play, the Consul is a one-man audience; trapped within the tomb of his own isolation, he is an onlooker who can no longer participate. And yet there is also a sense of power in this position, for if Firmin cannot participate, neither does he struggle as Hugh and Yvonne do. He stands (or rather sits) aloof from the action and reads a comical travel folder, the "program" for the play. Once again Firmin is the "obscure man, sitting at the centre of the world in a bathroom . . . thinking solitary miserable thoughts" and "even while he
was thinking, it was as if behind the scenes certain strings were pulled . . . and calamity moved nearer." (UV,174)

As Hugh and Yvonne discuss Mexican society, politics, and history, the travel folder offers a methodical guide to the stage setting - the "geographic situation" (UV,325), the climate, hydrography, historic sites. The comments of the folder provide an ironic counterpoint to both the Consul's inner world and the outer world; the folder, with confident precision, locates the State of Tlaxcala in terms of latitude and longitude, but the dominant state of the Consul, Hugh, and Yvonne is one of dislocation. After the opening of the scene in the bathroom, when the Consul meditates on why he is there, we do not see directly into his mind for a while; we are aware of his presence only through the paragraphs he reads from the folder which are placed in a contrapuntal series with the comments in the next room. But soon the fragmented, disorderly quality of the outer scene is matched with confusion on the inner level as the comments read from the folder begin to reflect the Consul's state of mind:

The Capital of the state . . . has a beautiful Central Park . . . covered by . . . a garden clothed by many beautiful flowers: seats all over, four clean, seats all over, four clean and well arranged lateral avenues. (UV,327)

Finally the Consul's inner world takes over completely and instead of hearing Hugh and Yvonne's fragmentary conversation between the tourist folder paragraphs, we hear only a chaotic series of comments, consisting of remarks Firmin has heard or said during the day and is now remembering. Here the inner world does not take on a flowing rhythm, but it is marked by a heightened tone. The choppy rhythm of the incomplete, disjointed remarks creates a mood of desperation and suggests the intensification of Firmin's sense of persecution:
'I'm watching you . . . You can't escape me.'
'-this is not just escaping. I mean, let's start again, really, and cleanly.'
'I think I know the place.'
'I can see you.'
'-where are the letters Geoffrey Firmin ... '(UV,331)

The last of these remembered comments - "A corpse will be transported by -" is ironically followed by one final excerpt from the folder, the "Railroad and Bus Service" timetable. (UV,332) Like a curtain calmly lowered on a play, the orderly railway schedule signals the end of the scrambled dialogue.

In this expanded scene in the Salon Ofelia we are aware of three moods or outlooks operating simultaneously: at one end of the spectrum, on the inner level, is the Consul's aloof despair and confusion; at the opposite extreme there is the matter-of-fact complacency and superficial order of the tourist folder, representing the official, public level; and in between, on the level of interaction between individuals, there is both honest recognition of chaos and a hopeful attempt to make some sense out of it.

In the final chapter, as the Consul sits in the Farolito, the central focus of his consciousness, Yvonne's letter, is counterpointed with "an alien element," (UV, 395) the conversations carried on around him. In her letter Yvonne pleads with Geoffrey to "seize the immense potential strength you fight . . . restore to me the sanity that left when you forgot me." (UV,395) Again this inner level is distinguished from the external not only in subject matter but also in mood and style. The letter has an urgent, intense tone as Yvonne pleads for reconciliation and the paragraphs from it read like passages of free verse:
You are one born to walk in the light. Plunging your head out of the white sky you flounder in an alien element. You think you are lost, but it is not so, for the spirits of light will help you and bear you up in spite of yourself and beyond all opposition you may offer. (UV,395)

As in Chapter II, the external conversations going on in the bar suggest those very forces of blind brutality, stupidity, and confusion which have driven the Consul to the point where he cannot "seize the strength within him" but can only wait in paralyzed isolation for the death soon to come. We hear the voice of Weber again - "O Christ, it's a shame: the horses all go away kicking in the dust ... They plugged 'em too." (UV,395) A sailor announces, "I've got an awful mind." (UV,395) The radio futilely asks "¿Quieres usted la salvación de Méjico?" (UV,396)

As Firmin tries to concentrate on the letter, a pimp hangs onto him, jabbering incoherently.

This counterpointed scene in the Farolito is tragically ironic for it reminds us of the scene in Chapter I where Laruelle sits at a bar reading the Consul's desperate letter to Yvonne, written during one of his tortured nights, "the nightly grappling with death." (UV,62) Just as their most serious and desperate thoughts are doomed to the futility of silent communication which provides an ironic counterpoint to spoken dialogue, so both of these letters are futile for the Consul's is never mailed and Yvonne's letter is read too late. If these "two halves of a counterpoised drawbridge" (UV,228) could have somehow met sooner, perhaps Yvonne's faith that Geoffrey was "one born to walk in the light" (UV,395) could have saved him from his dark nights of horror.

The very fact that we can see this pattern, see the letters as "halves," parts of a unified whole, affirms
Lowry's statement that his multiple counterpointed elements finally work with rather than against one another, "like two musical instruments." The structure of the novel enables us to sense simultaneity in this multiplicity.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1 M. Friedman, Stream of Consciousness, p. 16.


3 Friedman, p. 125-6.


7 Lowry, Selected Letters, p. 75.

8 Ibid., p. 61

9 Ibid., p. 62.

10 Friedman, p. 126.

11 Lowry, Selected Letters, p. 72.

12 Ibid., p. 80.

13 Ibid., p. 73.


15 Cited by L. Edel, Psychological Novel, p. 126.

17 Ibid., p.12.

18 Lowry, Selected Letters, p.80.

19 Ibid., p.80.

20 Ibid., p.72.


22 Ibid., p.967.


24 Lowry, Selected Letters, p. 80.
CHAPTER V

THE END RESULT OF SIMULTANEITY: PATTERN

Through the use of leitmotif and counterpoint Lowry expanded moments and scenes to render multiple reverberations and moods, and the term "multiplicity" has been used to discuss this effect. But multiplicity, after all, is only a means to the end of simultaneity - to transcend succession and ultimately express a total pattern and idea. To stop at the assertion that Lowry succeeds in suggesting multiplicity is a rather limited conclusion. When F.J. Hoffman could take a study of Huxley's *Point Counterpoint* no further than this, he rightly objected that there is a serious defect in the novel aiming at multiplicity *per se* for it "actually escapes the responsibility of any interpretation of life by accepting and entertaining momentarily each of them." When the would-be writer Philip Quarles, a character mouthpiece in *Point Counterpoint* for some of Huxley's technical theories, expresses his ambition as a novelist, the limited nature of his aim is evident:

* Multiplicity of eyes and multiplicity of aspects seen. For instance, one person interprets events in terms of the price of flannel camisoles . . . . Each sees . . . a different aspect of the event, a different layer of reality. What I want to do is to look with all those eyes at once.?

This declaration suggests that even if Quarles did get his novel written, it would be just as vague and directionless as his personal life. The obvious reply to his statement is: To what end? The fact that people view the same event in different ways is not, after all, a startling revelation, and once one has demonstrated technical virtuosity in rendering this phenomenon on the printed page, where would his "new way of looking," his "musical-
ized fiction" lead to? As Hoffman concludes, although Huxley's new way of looking offers an interesting picture of the "vitality which ideas had in the 1920's," the final result is confusion.

R.G. Collins offers a similar warning about the danger inherent in presenting multiplicity when he says: "To attempt to present a view of chaos is to leave one's self open to the charge of presenting a chaotic view." Lowry, however, managed to suggest multiplicity and yet still achieve the ultimate aim of simultaneity - a self-contained pattern; he not only expanded but also gave that expanded structure a unity. Here the term "pattern" does not refer to any rigid form but rather simply to that which "causes us to see the book as a whole." As E.M. Forster summarizes, "'Pattern,' which seems so rigid, is concerned with atmosphere, which seems so fluid." The multiple moods and teeming reverberations in Under the Volcano do not merely clash with one another in a loose conglomeration but instead are held together by the prevailing atmosphere of dramatic tension. Within the total structure there is a continual rising and falling action, - the movement from hope and order, to despair and chaos, and back again; but Lowry has combined these movements so that, as in a lyrical poem, one dominant thematic mood results. Out of the multiplicity emerges the atmosphere of poised tension, the tension of a huge wave swollen to its height yet about to crash. Although the novel ends with a downward movement, because the wave pattern of rising and falling has been firmly established by the last chapter we do not feel that the conflict has been arbitrarily resolved but rather wait expectantly for the inevitable antithesis to this movement, looking back to the beginning of the cycle in Chapter I. Thus the structure
of *Under the Volcano* is circular rather than linear and transcends the events and chronology of the narrative.

And in this very structure method and purpose are closely linked, for the circular form not only forces us to view the novel as an autonomous whole, but also renders Lowry's vision of "eternal recurrence." As Collins points out, "Technique is not only discovery, as Mark Schorer has noted; in the work of some modern novelists technique becomes meaning itself." Just as the circle is never-ending, so the flux of life presented through the wave pattern is never-ending. As Alan Friedman emphasizes in *The Turn of the Novel*, the modern novelist's tendency to present an "open experience" reflects the twentieth century's vision of life: "when, in the created experience we call the novel, 'The End' consistently turns out to be another opening in experience, endlessness has become an end." This "endlessness" is especially relevant in *Under the Volcano* which focuses upon the constant struggle within the individual; even though the Consul has ceased to act, he is still groping toward an understanding of why he does not act. Yvonne notices that he makes "little patterns . . . like a blind man" (*UV*,89) with his stick and later he "traced a pattern on one of the porch tiles with his dress shoes." (*UV*,100)

The prevailing atmosphere of poised tension which gives the novel's circular motion its impetus is reinforced throughout by images of suspended motion. In the first chapter, when Laruelle held the Consul's letter into the candle flame, "the flare lit up the whole cantina with a burst of brilliance in which the figures at the bar . . . appeared, for an instant, frozen, a mural."(*UV*,68) In the darkened cinema, the men wait silently for the return of light - "a solid dark frieze carved into the wall, serious, moustachioed men, warriors waiting for the show to
begin, for a glimpse of the murderer's bloodstained hands." (UV, 55) When Yvonne returns to Quauhnahuac she focuses upon "their square, motionless and brilliant in the seven o'clock morning sunlight yet somehow poised, expectant." (UV, 71) She notes that the Calle Nicaragua is "full of lunar potholes and in that well-known state of frozen eruption." (UV, 85) As Hugh, just returned to Mexico, walks towards the Consul's house, he somehow instinctively stops on the edge of a deep pothole,

And then his heart and the world stopped too; the horse half over the hurdle, the diver, the guillotine, the hanged man falling, the murderer's bullet and the cannon's breath, in Spain or China frozen in midair, the wheel, the piston, poised - (UV, 122)

Beyond the moment of tension may lie a triumphant curve-the arc of a successfully executed jump or dive, or the downward path of destruction - the fall of the blade or the trap door on the scaffold. Here the individual's sense of suspension is extended to the macrocosm to include Spain and China, areas of crisis in 1938 as communist forces fought for control. Since Hugh sees the spirit of communism as the force which will save mankind, now on the brink of disaster, his extension is a natural one. But the Consul later emphasizes that even when one side has won, no stable permanent state will result; if the fascists triumph in the Spanish Civil War, "there'll only be a sort of 'freezing' of culture in Spain" (UV, 129) until the heat of ever-present friction produces a new crisis.

As the Consul wanders in his garden, where "extraordinary activity everywhere surrounded him"(UV, 168), he is fascinated by the spectacle of an insect on the brink of death yet still struggling in the poised jaws of Quincey's cat:
The creature had at last caught the insect but instead of devouring it, she was holding its body, still uninjured, delicately between her teeth, while its lovely luminous wings, still beating, for the insect had not stopped flying an instant, protruded from either side of her whiskers. (UV,168)

This time the deadlock results in a triumphant upward movement for when "Oedipuss" finally decides to end her victim's precarious existence, she makes the mistake of opening her mouth "and the insect, whose wings had never ceased to beat, suddenly and marvellously flew out, as might the human soul from the jaws of death, flew up, up, up, soaring over the trees." (UV,169) One of the Consul's hallucinations take the form of three hundred head of cattle "frozen stiff in the postures of the living." (UV,238) To Hugh, sensing the tension on the bus travelling to Tomalin, the peasant women appear "frozen . . . turned to stone." (UV,278) During the search for the Consul, as the thunder announces the coming storm, Yvonne senses "a poised avalanche" (UV,353) in the charged atmosphere. As in the cantina scene in Chapter I, light is juxtaposed with darkness and when the lightning stammers across the black landscape, Yvonne can make out "frozen, the minute black and white figures" of the people in the cemetery.(UV,353) Even El Popo has a "withdrawn waiting character." (UV,354) When there is a lull in the storm Yvonne senses

a moment like that of the tide's turning, and yet, that was filled with some quality of this morning's ride with Hugh, some night essence of their shared morning thoughts, with a wild sea-yearning of youth and love and sorrow. (UV,363)

In this suspended moment despair and hope are felt simultaneously. Later, just before Yvonne's death "the sky was a sheet of white flame against which the trees and the
poised rearing horse were an instant pinioned" and this expanded moment includes whirling visions of beauty and horror: the "hurricane of beautiful butterflies" and the burning home, (UV,365); a roof covered with white dogwood blossoms and writhing flowers, "blackened and burning." (UV,366) As Yvonne waits helplessly, she wonders - "and would this scene repeat itself endlessly and forever? - the horse, rearing, poised over her, petrified in midair."(UV,365) Later, as the Consul sits in the Farolito, he feels that his brain is "at an agonised standstill." (UV,375) Although he senses his death is near,

It was not the end quite yet. It was as if his fall had been broken by a narrow ledge, a ledge from which he could neither climb up nor down, on which he lay bloody and half stunned, while far below him the abyss yawned, waiting. (UV,392)

What makes this wave pattern of balanced tension so effective in Under the Volcano is its suitability to Lowry's mood and theme. As E.M. Forster comments, anyone can organize a pattern in a novel, and if this is all he does the reader's verdict will probably be "Beautifully done, but not worth doing." But Lowry's careful building of pattern in Under the Volcano was definitely "worth doing" for it actually renders his central theme—the "ceaseless struggling toward the light under the weight of the past," the constant tension in the individual consciousness and in the world's history. Through this charged atmosphere Lowry is telling us "something new about hell fire," for it is the Consul's very passionate awareness of the potential for "light" that tortures him so fiercely. If he had deliberately rejected the world and love as irrevocably doomed to darkness, his isolation would somehow be more bearable; but his isolation is the product of a paralyzed will rather than an act of will.
Even when he is sitting in the Farolito, well aware of the danger surrounding him, he makes no effort to escape, for "both his will, and time, which hadn't advanced five minutes since he was last conscious of it, were paralyzed." (UV, 399) Although he had himself made this dangerous situation possible by running away from Yvonne and Hugh, his flight from the Salon Ofelia seems somehow involuntary, as if he were being carried along in a tide of self-destruction in spite of himself:

He was running too, in spite of his limp, calling back to them crazily, and the queer thing was, he wasn't quite serious, running toward the forest, which was growing darker and darker, tumultuous above - a rush of air swept out of it, and the weeping pepper tree roared. (UV, 345)

Thus the dominant wave pattern and the atmosphere of poised tension actually reflect theme rather than merely providing a container for it. The conflicting impulses in the Consul result in tense paralysis just as the apparently conflicting movements in the wave pattern work with one another to form a tight atmosphere of balanced tension.

And just as pattern is well suited to theme, so the various moods contributing to theme are well suited to the characters presenting them. In The Age of Suspicion Nathalie Sarraute objects that whenever writers try to take their readers into unknown regions (such as a man's private hell) to tell them something of "the existence of the 'dark places,'" they make their characters commit unwonted, monstrous acts which the reader, comfortably settled in his own clear conscience and finding nothing in these criminal acts that corresponds to what he has learned to see in his own conduct, regards with proud, horrified curiosity, then quietly thrusts aside to return to his own affairs, as he does every morning and every evening after reading his newspaper, without the heavy shadow that submerges his own dark places having lifted for a single second."
Here Sarraute accurately points to the major problem facing the writer who tries to go beyond the everyday reality of "the life and death of some knight called Smith who did much for the poor of Liverpool and died last Wednesday of pneumonia." It is fairly easy to draw the reader into a variation of the world he sees everyday, but it is very difficult to make the world beneath the surface seem real and vital, not just some "labored phantasmagoria." To use Tolstoy's phrase, the reader must be "infected by the author's condition of soul" in order for this total submersion to take place. Lowry is able to submerge us in the world under the volcano and in the Consul's hell for he "infects" us with his vision of reality; he has welded man and outer world, the dark places of the mind and the outer reality, so skilfully that we cannot sit back as we read and say "this is part of my world" while "that is part of the curious Consul's world." Lowry disproves Sarraute's generalization for he manages both to tell us about dark places and yet still present actions which seem very "wonted" in terms of the autonomous world he has created within the novel.

Both Point Counterpoint and Under the Volcano are concerned primarily with ideas, but while Huxley merely loosely juggles or "toys with ideas," Lowry presents a vision of his idea through a rendered organic unity. John McCormick coined the term "cognitive novelist" to describe a writer such as Lowry who aims at presenting idea yet does not reduce his characters to "disguised ideas or disembodied editorials." Although a new label is not in itself very important, McCormick's definition of this term is relevant to a study of the making of Under the Volcano for it focuses upon what goes into the making of a man capable of writing such a novel:
The cognitive novelist, generally speaking, is the writer who has encompassed with his mind the order-defying history of our time, and he has in addition comprehended and accepted that history with his emotions to the degree that he is able to project the dual comprehension meaningfully in the novel.13

By confining each chapter to one character's point of view, Lowry was able to emphasize distinct outlooks and place them in counterpoint. But these chapters are emotional as well as intellectual units for "the intellectual positions belong firmly to the sensibility, the turn and bend of the characters."14 The idea dominating the Consul's outlook is that although "no se puede vivir sin amar," awareness of chaos and near destruction in both himself and the macrocosm so paralyzes the spirit that action in the direction of love is impossible. Firmin's constant alcoholic haze represents this suspended state - he is aware of what is happening around him and of what needs to be done, but is past effective coordination.15 But Firmin does not function merely as a "symbol" for the "times," the world's drunkenness, a "theatrical drunkard flinging himself at destruction"; instead "he rises from the page as a tragic, real rounded man of mind and emotion, beautifully realized from the inside."16 Because Lowry has carefully combined man and world into an organic pattern we do not have the uncomfortable feeling that "the thin layer of idea" could be easily removed, for, as McCormick summarizes,

in the cognitive novel ideas, character, and situation become meaningless if we attempt the operation of removing from their total dimension the objective framework of idea in which the characters live and have being.17

In tracing just how Lowry built this "total dimension" we have looked not only at the finished product but also at
the making of that product - the earlier manuscripts and revisions. Finally, of course, a finished work of art must stand on its own, and Under the Volcano certainly does. But by studying the making of the novel, we are able to see more clearly the purpose guiding that techniques, to see how the effect of a scene in an earlier version was changed by revision. R.G. Collins rightly says that while "the function of the artist is to explore what might be called the natural universe of meaning," the function of the critic is "to explore the artistic universe derived from the natural one." We do not judge a play by analyzing rehearsal techniques; we judge only by our own response to the polished production. But, since technique and purpose are so closely linked in Under the Volcano, by temporarily looking behind the scenes we have been able to see more clearly what Lowry was striving to "derive" from the natural universe and thus better understand the polished product. The effect his major revisions had on the earlier versions of the novel was to expand the narrative to achieve the sense of simultaneity and, in view of this evidence, we are encouraged to go beyond the narrative to see the universal scope of his theme. Lowry's achievement in Under the Volcano was that he was able to infuse this dense, expanded structure with an organic unity through dramatic tension so that theme and pattern become one and we not only understand theme but also experience it.
NOTES TO CHAPTER V


3 Hoffman, p. 200.


   In *Rhythm in the Novel* E.K. Brown builds upon Forster's definition of rhythm—"repetition with variation," as he discusses the effects achieved in novels through the use of "expanding symbols" and "interweaving themes." His summary of the general effect created by this varied repetition of theme and symbol is similar to Forster's description of "pattern": this repetition "solicits the reader's attention for something beyond the particular set of people, the particular sequence of events, the particular concatenation of settings." (p. 85) Although Brown does not use the term "pattern," his "something beyond" suggests the unified pattern which is the product of the various elements in the novel and yet also transcends them.

   Similarly, in *An Introduction to the English Novel* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1951), Arnold Kettle stresses that the pattern of a novel is not a rigid form superimposed on the "life" depicted in the novel, but rather is "the very essence of [the novelist's] vision of whatever in life he is dealing with." (p. 16) Kettle says that "life and pattern" are the two elements present in "all novels which are successful works of art" and while these elements are "to some extent separable," they are "emphatically not separate." (p. 13)

6 Forster, p. 215.


8 A. Friedman distinguishes his use of the term "open" from the way it is already generally used in literary criticism, referring specifically to *Strains of Discord: Studies in Literary Openness* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1958) by Robert M. Adams: "By 'open,' Adams means the deliberate
and major nonresolution of meanings in a work. I use 'open' to refer to an ending which does not contain or 'close off' the rising pressures of conscience in a novel." (p.xvi)


10 Forster, p. 235.

11 Lowry, Selected Letters, p. 80.


14 Lowry, Selected Letters, p. 80.


17 Ibid., p. 85.

18 Ibid., p. 85

19 Ibid., p. 87

20 There is an interesting resemblance between Geoffrey Firmin and what Peter Axthelm, in The Modern Confessional Novel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), calls the "confessional hero": "This . . . is the confessional hero - afflicted and unbalanced, disillusioned and groping for meaning. He faces many of the same problems which confront every modern hero but is distinguished by his reaction to them. He views his condition not with anger but with a deep internal pain; he rejects external rebellion in favor of self-laceration . . . for him the only possible order or value must be found in self-understanding. After Notes from the Underground, this hero becomes increasingly intellectual,
capable of philosophical meditations and prone to literary allusions. However, he never loses his huge capacity for suffering and is constantly torn by violent emotions and uncontrollable compulsions. The hero's confession often takes place in a cell. . . . " (p. 9) Firmin lacerates himself as he submits to the reproaches and persistent questions of his "familiars" and he himself compares the bathroom in the Salon Ofelia, where he sits isolated, to "a stone monastic cell." There he asks "Why was he here? Why was he always more or less, here?" and knows only too well that he can find the answer only in himself; "He would have been glad of a mirror, to ask himself that question." (UV, 324)

21 McCormick, p. 86.

22 Ibid., p. 85.

Simultaneity: In this thesis the term "simultaneity" refers to artistic form. Specifically, it refers to the effect of density and expansion Lowry achieved by enriching the narrative level through the use of leitmotif and counterpoint. In other words, Under the Volcano suggests "simultaneity" in that we are aware of several levels of expression operating at the same time.

Leitmotif: In musical terms, "leitmotif" refers to a melody associated throughout a piece of music with some person, situation, or sentiment. Transferred to literary terms, "leitmotif" refers to a recurring image, symbol, word or phrase which carries association with a certain idea or theme.

Counterpoint: In musical terms, "counterpoint" refers to the simultaneous presentation of two or more melodies. In literary terms, "counterpoint" refers to the arrangement of two or more tones, themes, or incidents so as to give the effect of simultaneous presentation.
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