at the close of “The Bear” he lays claim to a tree full of squirrels as his futilely hammers away at his broken gun, in an unequivocally masturbatory action. Like the explicit medieval references that thread through Faulkner’s works, the echoes of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight enable the productive juxtaposition of romantic medievalism and Yoknapatawpha realism—a juxtaposition that reveals both what the individual should be and what the individual is.

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2. Though critics have remarked on the use of the Tristan legend in The Wild Palms, they have not seen beyond Wagner’s Tristan. See Cleath Brooks, “The Tradition of Romantic Love and The Wild Palms,” Mississippi Quarterly, 25 (Summer 1972), 274-77, 282; Thomas McHaney, William Faulkner’s The Wild Palms (Jackson, Miss., 1975), pp. 52, 120n. Rather than postulating that Faulkner “need not have even seen a production of Wagner’s Tristan. All he needs to have done is have talked to someone who talked to someone who talked to someone who did” (Brooks, p. 282), one might simply assume that Faulkner read the translation of Gottfried von Strassburg’s poem: Tristan and Iseult, trans. Jessie L. Weston (London, 1910). Not only would it have been an accessible edition, but physically the book suggests the preparation of Mayday.


5. Marta Powell Harley, “Faulkner’s Sartoris and the Legend of Rinaldo and Bayard,” American Notes and Queries, 18 (February 1980), 92-93.

6. The slicing in two of horse and rider in “Carcassonne” may have been suggested by La Chanson de Roland; there is, also, a reference to Carcassonne in laisse 29 of La Chanson. The word chamfron, curiously repeated in “Carcassonne,” is not traceable to a medieval romance but may suggest Faulkner’s reading of Sir Walter Scott’s Ivanhoe; the word appears on p. 416 of the 1933 Modern Library volume Quentin Durward, Ivanhoe, Kenilworth, an edition found in Faulkner’s Charlottesville Cottage library. Joseph Botter, comp., William Faulkner’s Library: A Catalogue (Charlottesville, Va., 1964), p. 71.

7. An edition that would have been accessible to Faulkner is Jessie L. Weston’s Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, a Middle-English Arthurian Romance Retold in Modern Prose (New York, 1963). References to this text will be identified parenthetically.


March/April 1983

SOME RENAISSANCE ELEMENTS IN MALCOLM LOWRY’S UNDER THE VOLCANO

Malcolm Lowry’s imagination is vitally in touch with that of many other authors and artists, notably with English Renaissance writers. The most important of these is obviously Marlowe, whose Faustus has a marked and explicit resemblance to the Consul, as for example on p. 40 of the Penguin edition of Under the Volcano (I quote from the “Modern Classics” reprint of 1968), where Marlowe’s opening lines of “Elizabethan plays,” thinking of Marlowe’s Faustus and confronted with “Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight...etc.” The Consul’s “hellish full” is no doubt a warning to the “Shaken” M. Laruelle, and Lowry’s tendency to use Doctor Faustus for moral purposes is a central one in his book, as in the persistent dialogue between the good angel and the bad angel in the Consul’s mind. The average educated reader of English will have little difficulty recognizing the Marlovian influence and the way Lowry uses Marlowe’s masterpiece.

Other Renaissance influence is not so easy to detect, yet not without interest and importance. Not every reader will be aware that “The Case is Altered” on p. 27, which is used as (in M. Laruelle’s view) a queer name for a pub, is also the title of a rather obscure play by Ben Jonson. The fact seems to serve little purpose as far as any possible resemblance between Jonson’s play and Lowry’s novel is concerned; what is typical, it seems, is the way Lowry has remembered what must have been to him an arresting phrase, and appropriate after the Consul’s youthful initiation into the sexual life in “the Hell Bunker,” which is followed by the excursion to “The Case is Altered.” We may find the symbolism a little heavy-handed in both phrases, but a network of associations, both temporal and spatial, was clearly highly significant to Lowry in terms of both his artistic procedure and what implicitly he wished to say. “The Case is Altered,” as a Renaissance phrase, is to be connected with “the Hell Bunker” and thus, again, with Faustus, to understand that, in the Consul’s case as in Faustus’s, one sin is followed by another.

But more crucial and successful is Lowry’s allusion to Marvell’s “Clorinda and Damon,” and by implication to other Marvell poems, in the phrase Might a soul bathe there and be clean or slake its drought? which the Consul remembers verbatim on pp. 78 and 84.

Lowry may have known the poem in, for example, H.M. Margoliouth’s edition, The Poems & Letters of Andrew Marvell, which was first published by the Clarendon Press in 1927. Nothing in that edition would have particularly directed his attention to the poem; nor would such a critical work as M.C. Bradbrook’s and M.G. Lloyd Thomas’s Andrew Marvell, which was first printed by Cambridge University Press in 1940, and which it seems the more relevant to consider when it is remembered that Lowry had been a student at Cambridge and that Under the Volcano was first published by Jonathan Cape in 1947. It may be assumed, therefore, that the singing out of the poem is as likely
to have been a matter purely of Lowry's initiative as anyone else's. What would have attracted him to it?

Marvell is, amongst other things, a pastoral poet, and this poem typically evokes memories of the Garden of Eden, with Clorinda tempting a reluctant Damon towards "Loves Shrine." We must see a parallel with the Consul's garden, about which his wife Yvonne ("Eve-onne") says, also on p. 78, "Geoffrey this place is a wreck!" — the irony being that it is the Consul who destroys his Paradise rather than Yvonne. The sentence Might a soul bathe there and be clean or slake its drought? also assumes an ironic meaning in Lowry. In the Marvell poem, Clorinda states that near "Loves Shrine" there is "a Fountains liquid Bell" which "Tinkles within the concave Shell." It is in response to this that Damon asks his question. In the Consul's case, the memory of the Marvell poem is within the context of his obsession with liquor, in which he appears to be more interested than either his soul or Yvonne, although no doubt he has those, too, in mind when the fact that "The swimming-pool ticked on" reminds him of Marvell's fountain and a situation that does bear some resemblance to his.

The fountain occurs in yet another way, as an image, on p. 84. On p. 82 the Consul, having sneaked out of the house once he hears Yvonne in the bathroom, finds himself "face downward on the deserted street." He is reminded of Cambridge when an "English 'King's Parade' voice" calls out to him and he sees "the English striped tie, mnemonic of a fountain in a great court." This fountain is no doubt that of Trinity College Cam-

Queries

Jokes, Transmission of — There are, of course, all sorts of channels for transmission of jokes and tales. It has been said that the old-time Western Union and Postal Telegraph operators would tap out jokes and stories to each other to amuse themselves during hours when there was little business. Is there any literary or other docu-


Slain Messenger — What is the source of the much-alluded to story about the tyrant who, upon hearing news of his army's defeat, slays the luckless messenger? — Amy Anderson, Ann Arbor, Michigan.

Reply

Churchill quotation (XXI:81) — We immediately referred this query to Mr. John David Marshall, Murfreesboro, Tenn., whose fine Churchill collection is now in its logical depository, Westminster College, Fulton, Mo. The nearest he could get to it was on p. 139 of Kay Halle, ed., Irrepressible Churchill, a Treasury of Winston Churchill's Wit (1966), where Churchill says in the House of Commons: You [Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain] were given the choice between war and dishonesty. You chose dishonesty and you will have war." Mr. Marshall reports that he did not locate the quotation in Churchill's Second World War or in Martin Gilbert's official biography. He calls attention to the International Churchill Society and the periodical Finest Hour (Richard M. Langworth, ed.), P.O. Box 385, Contoocook, N.H. 03229. — Editors

Editor's Notes

In April 1983 the fourteenth series of the Franklin Jasper Walls Lectures were delivered at the Pierpont Morgan Library on "Monsters and Demons: Death and Life in the Ancient and Early Mediaeval World" by Peter H. von Blanckenhagen, John Boardman, and Wilfred G. Lambert. On 26 April the Hon. James Roberts spoke at the Morgan on the Holbein drawings at Windsor Castle.

The first edition of Hugo Riemann's Musiklexikon appeared in 1882 and went through twelve editions up to 1975 (2 vols. of biography, 1959-61; 1 vol., subjects, 1967; 2 vols., supplements, 1972 and 1975). Now this justly famous work is available in a single alphabet, brought up to date in every way, the new Brockhaus-Riemann-Lexikon (Wiesbaden, F.A. Brockhaus, 1978-79; 2 vols., DM 148.— per vol.), edited by Carl Dahlhaus and Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht. Although the latest editions of Grove and other music encyclopedias in English, French, and Italian will continue to be useful, the new Brockhaus-Riemann is the best general work available at present. There isn't much that can't be found here: Afro-Cuban jazz, Copyright, Duke Ellington, Gesamtausgaben, Musikhistorikog, eroticos, Orgeltabulatur, Tarantella, and some thousands of other entries. The set is particularly strong in biographical entries. There are no portraits (really superficial here), but there are numerous detailed drawings of instruments, sections of music, and diagrams. Editions of major works of composers are noted, and judiciously selective bibliographies (with nearly every article) cover basic works that appeared up to the publication date. There is an abundance of cross references wherever they are pertinent. The two volumes are sturdy bound to withstand the heavy use to which they will surely be put. Although the work is primarily for students of all aspects of music, it is valuable for general reference as well, particularly in the literary history of all countries.