

FAUST AND UNDER THE VOLCANO

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THE BEST INTRODUCTION to any critical study of *Under the Volcano* is Lowry's "Preface to a Novel", as presented in *Canadian Literature* No. 9, in which he analyzes "... that long first chapter which establishes the themes and counter-themes of the book, which sets the tone, which harmonizes the symbolism." The uppermost of these themes is that of Faust: "It is as if I heard a clock sounding midnight for Faust," writes Lowry in justifying his use of twelve chapters. The Consul Geoffrey Firmin, God-free and infirm, is a man fallen from Grace, in the Christian or Catholic sense, and a black magician on another plane. The entire novel is built upon the ramifications of his fall:

This novel, to use a phrase of Edmund Wilson, has for its subject the forces that dwell within man and lead him to look upon himself with terror. Its subject is also the fall of man, his remorse, his incessant struggle towards the light under the weight of the past, which is his destiny... Throughout the twelve chapters, the destiny of my hero can be considered in its relationship to the destiny of humanity.

The third epigraph to the novel is a quotation from Goethe's *Faust*: "Whosoever unceasingly strives upward... him can we save." Goethe himself set these lines in inverted commas in his masterpiece to emphasize them as a fundamental pronouncement. In his eighty-second year he spoke vital words to Eckermann about this passage:

In these lines the key to Faust's salvation is contained: in Faust himself there is an activity mounting ever higher and purer to the end, and from above eternal love which helps him in his need. All this is completely in harmony with our

religious conceptions, according to which we enter into bliss not by our own strength alone, but by the divine grace vouchsafed to us.

In terms of the Consul these lines are to be profoundly ironic.

The narrative of *Under the Volcano* opens on a “gigantic red evening, whose reflection bled away in the deserted swimming pools scattered everywhere like so many mirages”. The metaphor is reminiscent of the famous line of Marlowe’s Faustus: “See, see, where Christ’s blood streams in the firmament!”, as Faustus pleads for one drop of blood to save his soul. Geoffrey is first identified with Faustus through a related simile:

What had happened just a year ago today seemed already to belong in a different age. One would have thought the horrors of the present would have swallowed it up like a drop of water. It was not so. Though tragedy was in the process of becoming unreal and meaningless, it seemed one was still permitted to remember the days when an individual life held some value and was not a mere misprint in a communiqué.

Almost the last of Faustus’ pleas was, “O soul, be changed into little waterdrops,/ And fall into the ocean, ne’er be found!” In vain does Faustus seek an escape through anonymity. His tragedy, in fact, still serves as the best known archetype of its kind; likewise, the tragedy of the Consul’s death is unforgettable.

Chapter One of the novel is presented through the consciousness of Jacques Laruelle, acquaintance since childhood of Geoffrey, and sometime movie-producer who has been considering “making in France a modern film version of the Faustus story with some such character as Trotsky for its protagonist”. Unrecognized by Laruelle, Geoffrey’s life has been this very story; it is purposefully ironic that ten months later Trotsky is murdered in Mexico City, an exile with a short pointed beard like the Consul who, on the night of his death, is to be called “Trotsky”. To prepare for his movie, Laruelle has borrowed a volume of Elizabethan plays from Geoffrey himself, among which is Marlowe’s *Doctor Faustus*. Opening the book at random he reads, “then will I headlong fly into the earth: / Earth, gape! it will not harbour me”. He sits “oblivious of his surroundings, gazing at the words that seemed to have the power of carrying his own mind downward into a gulf, as in fulfilment on his own spirit of the threat Marlowe’s Faustus had cast at his despair”. Looking closer at the passage, he realizes he has misread the word “fly” for the actual word “run”. This simple slip is intensified when, several pages later, we hear the line, “where I come from they don’t run”. The speaker is Weber, a witness to Geoffrey’s murder, which, in Geoffrey’s own way, was a literally physical attempt to enact Marlowe’s quotation on his last night of life. The word “fly”

calls to mind the inscription on Faustus' arm, "*Homo fuge: whither should I fly*".

Playing the game of "sortes Shakespeareanae" Laruelle turns again coincidentally to a quotation from *Doctor Faustus*:

Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
And burned is Apollo's laurel bough,
That sometimes grew within this learned man,
Faustus is gone; regard his hellish fall —

Geoffrey had "gone" exactly one year ago; the play's next line, "Whose fiendful fortune may exhort the wise", is a potential warning to Laruelle and to the reader to observe, and profit from, the example of Geoffrey the damned soul who supposedly had once considered writing an occult volume to be entitled "Secret Knowledge".

Inside the book of plays Laruelle finds an unsent letter of Geoffrey to Yvonne, his divorced wife, imploring her to return to him "if only for a day". That the Consul could not bring himself to send the letter, a plea for salvation, indicates partially his inability to communicate this desire. He writes, "But this is what it is to live in hell. I could not, cannot ask you. I could not, cannot send a telegram". Despite the Good Angel, Faustus is also unable to communicate his desire for deliverance. To confirm this parallel situation Lowry subtly compares another reference to Faustus' predicament with the Consul's former plight. Faustus exclaims, "How! bell, book, and candle — candle, book, and bell, —/ Forward and backward, to curse Faustus to hell". Bell, book, and candle is the old ceremony of major excommunication. The bell announced this to all; the book represented authority; while the candle was believed to symbolize the possibility that the ban might be lifted by the repentance and amendment of its victim for, just as the candle was used and extinguished, so the excommunication itself might be. *Twelve* priests and a bishop all held lighted candles; the bishop recited the formula which ended:

We separate him, together with his accomplices and abettors, from the precious body and blood of the Lord and from the society of all Christians; we exclude him from our holy mother, the Church in heaven and on earth; we declare him excommunicate and anathema; we judge him damned, with the Devil and his angels and all the reprobate, to eternal fire until he shall recover himself from the toils of the Devil and return to amendment and to penitence.

Those present answered, "So be it!" The candles were extinguished by being dashed on the ground. The ceremony ended. Laruelle's misquotation of "fly"

for "run" is due to the "elusive flickering candlelight"; finishing the letter he holds it into the candle flame until it is extinguished. Then, "suddenly from outside, a bell spoke out, then ceased abruptly: *dolente . . . dolore!*" Again the ceremony has ended.

Geoffrey's affliction is drunkenness in its most compulsive and irremediable state. In the "Preface to a Novel" Lowry wrote, "on one level, the drunkenness of the Consul may be regarded as symbolizing the universal drunkenness of war, of the period that precedes war, no matter when." In his letter Geoffrey writes, "this is how I drink too, as if I were taking an eternal sacrament". It is essential to recall Faustus celebrating the sacrament of the Black Mass. Lowry certifies this intended analogy in the "Preface": "William James . . . might be in agreement with me when I affirm that the agonies of the drunkard find a very close parallel in the agonies of the mystic who has abused his powers." Indeed, in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James concludes a passage on this very subject with the statement that "The drunken consciousness is one bit of the mystic consciousness. . . ." Since Lowry also conceived of the drunken Consul as a universal symbol, the Faust theme expands to wide-ranging socio-political implications. In *The Decline of the West* Oswald Spengler characterized the spirit of modern Europe and America as Faustian, a condition which pictured man as ageing and wasted, but still hoping to comprehend and achieve everything, including the impossible. Nevertheless, western man, having become civilized, is effete, *infirm*, and defenceless, and therefore must perish. Visible then in the fall of Geoffrey is the fall of our Faustian civilization. Spengler, quoted by Hugh Firmin, Geoffrey's half-brother, is an important functional reference throughout *Under the Volcano*.

The symbolic importance of the frequent cinema advertisements for *Las Manos de Orlac* is due partially to the Faustian allusions in Maurice Renard's book, *The Hands of Orlac*, from which the film was adapted. Resine, the blonde wife of the pianist Stephen Orlac who, in an operation to save his hands, is given the hands of a supposed murderer, is haunted by a devil's head — a Mephisto — a Fantomo. Indeed, Yvonne refers to Geoffrey as a "phantom". For the Yvonne-like Rosine ". . . it was a partial and chance resemblance, inspired by the character in Faust." Stephen's studio, where he retrains his hands for the piano, becomes "the Temple of Hands. Here were installed the two electric machines, the practise keyboard, and all the physical and chemical apparatus with which he had provided himself. And there were also some special books in a pile. The place soon looked like Dr. Faust's den." Like Faustus, who "surfeits upon cursed necromancy", Stephen also becomes interested in the subject: he observes that ". . . necromants or necro-

maticians make it a practice to evoke the dead so as to obtain by their aid some light upon the future." Lowry's entire technique of literary allusion has particularly this same purpose. Apart from common references to Baudelaire and to secret and occult books, two motifs of *The Hands of Orlac* also run through *Under the Volcano*: "... from day to day he was slipping down into an abyss", and "The dead are coming back to life."

Into the third chapter Lowry introduces a pair of Faustian familiars who battle to direct Geoffrey's conscience. By definition, a familiar is a spirit supposed to attend and obey a sorcerer; also, in naming them "guardian angels" Lowry makes his allusion to Faustus' Good and Evil Angels obvious. The opening paragraph of this chapter includes a Faustus paraphrase: "Look up at that niche in the wall over there on the house where Christ is still, suffering, who would help you if you asked him: you cannot ask him". Faustus observes and does ask momentarily, "Ay, Christ, my Saviour,/ Seek to save distressed Faustus' soul!" The latter lines significantly follow the last pleas of both angels in the play. Likewise, Geoffrey's familiars do not finally abandon him until an hour before his end. The Evil Angel strikes first, urging the Consul to drink rather than think of Yvonne: "... the voice he recognized of a pleasant and impertinent familiar, perhaps horned, prodigal of disguise, a specialist in casuistry." The Good Angel angrily retorts: "Neither do I believe in the strychnine, you'll make me cry again, you bloody fool Geoffrey Firmin, I'll kick your face in, O idiot!" The "first familiar" wins this round as Geoffrey downs half the strychnine. The Good Angel threatens Geoffrey again, unsuccessfully. Both reappear before temporarily leaving the Consul, their battleground. The final reference to *Doctor Faustus* in this chapter comes when Geoffrey interjects, "please remind me to get back my Elizabethan plays".

Faust, as distinct from Dr. Faustus, is alluded to in this third chapter as Geoffrey thinks uneasily of "Goethe's famous church bell in pursuit of the child truant from church". Lowry has cleverly summarized Faust's soliloquy in which bells and voices in the Eastern Dawn prevent him from taking his life. Geoffrey and Faust are ironically juxtaposed; the former poisons his soul with each drink, while the latter is persuaded by a choir of angels, all Good, against self-destruction by poison. As a boy, Faust strayed in fields and forests but was always entranced by the sabbath bells. Their sounds now help prevent him from committing suicide. Geoffrey, however, is hardened against such precautions: "Goethe's church bell was looking him straight between the eyes; fortunately, he was prepared for it". Before conquering his despair Faust had cried, "I hear, but lack the faith, am

dispossessed.” Similarly, Geoffrey has been referred to as a “poor, lonely dispossessed trembling soul”. Both men recognize the soul’s life-giving source, but only Faust aspires to seek it. Both men thirst after knowledge, but Geoffrey’s unquenchable alcoholic thirst takes precedence in his case. At one time he had hoped to write a book on Atlantis, the main part of which was to be “the chapters on the alchemists”. On this topic he refers to “the old alchemists of Prague . . . living among the cohabitations of Faust himself”.

In chapter four, Bernal Diaz, William Blackstone, Geoffrey and Faustus are all employed to illustrate precisely a viewpoint noted by Spengler in *The Decline of the West*: “Dramas like that of the emigration to America — man by man, each on his own account, driven by deep promptings to loneliness, — or the Spanish Conquest, or the Californian gold-rush, dramas of uncontrollable longings for freedom, solitude, immense independence . . . these dramas are Faustian and only Faustian.” Limitless space is the prime symbol of the Faustian soul. Thus, Geoffrey’s paraphrase of Diaz, the author of *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico 1517-1521*, and his wish to escape like Blackstone are understandable. To quote Spengler again: “To fly, to free one’s self from earth, to lose one’s self in the expanse of the universe — is not this ambition Faustian in the highest degree?” Unfortunately, Mexico has been plagued by exploiters ever since Cortez and Diaz. Hugh remembers once hearing the potential solution: “For man, every man, Juan seemed to be telling him, even as Mexico, must ceaselessly struggle upward”, a paraphrase of the novel’s epigraph from *Faust*. This quotation is part of the song of the angels who bear the immortal remains of Faust to heaven. Man and the world must follow Juan’s advice to achieve a final salvation similar to Faust’s. Geoffrey, however, sleeps throughout the chapter, but retains his Faustian identity in the minds of Hugh and Yvonne. Hugh asks, “How much does he really know about all this alchemy and cabbala business? How much does it mean to him?”, and even jokes, “Maybe he’s a black magician!”

The Faustian familiars reappear in Chapter Five as Geoffrey awakens from his Indic dream with “demons gnattering in his ears”. The evil one advises him to “. . . just take one drink, just the necessary, the therapeutic drink: perhaps two drinks”, but before he does so another voice retorts, “Put that bottle down, Geoffrey Firmin, what are you doing to yourself?” “The emptiness in the air after filled with whispers: alas, alas. Wings it really meant.” Geoffrey’s last hours are literally flying away as, at the chapter’s end the good familiar cries out in desperation, “Stop it, for God’s sake, you fool. Watch your step. We can’t help you any more.”

The role of Geoffrey as a Faustian magician is strengthened by a quotation from Shelley's *Alastor*: "Twelve o'clock, and the Consul said to the doctor: 'Ah, that the dream of the dark magician in his visioned cave, even while his hand — that's the bit I like — shakes in its last decay, were the true end of this so lovely world.'" Lines 681-6 of *Alastor* read as follows:

O, that the dream
Of dark magician in his visioned cave,
Raking the cinders of a crucible
For life and power, even when his feeble hand
Shakes in its last decay, were the true law
Of this so lovely world!

The misquotation of "end" for "law" is a noteworthy Freudian slip since Geoffrey is inadvertently comparing the magician's last stages with his own and the world's, whereas Shelley does not imply that the death of the magician causes the world's end. He puns on the word "Katabasis" but the application of the term underlines the present predicament. This *is* a descent into the nether world, into an inferno. Indeed, the attempt to insert a katabasis into the second part of *Faust*, first as a descent to the Mothers, and then as the Classical Walpurgis Night, was evidently one of the most baffling structural problems of that work, as well as being one of the most crucial sections of the play.

The familiars are mentioned by Geoffrey next in Chapter Seven: "As for the demons, they were inside him as well as outside; quiet at the moment — taking their siesta perhaps — he was none the less surrounded by them and occupied; they were in possession." In *Doctor Faustus* the evil demons appear as the Seven Deadly Sins. Faustus' line, "O, I'll leap up to my God! — Who pulls me down?" seems to be applicable to a momentarily penitent Geoffrey when "the weight of a great hand seemed to be pressing his head down." Jacques disparagingly compares Marlowe's sense of perspective to Geoffrey's: "Christopher Marlowe, your Faust man, saw the Carthaginians fighting on his big toe-nail. That's the kind of clear seeing you indulge in. Everything seems perfectly clear, in terms of the toe-nail." Ironically, the analogy gives great compliment to Geoffrey's powers of vision. He remarks, "It was already the longest day in his entire experience, a lifetime" when a few lines earlier the pun *Dies Faustus* had appeared. Marlowe's Faustus loved knowledge and power more than he did Christ, while Goethe's Faust would have reached the same tragic end were it not for the love of Margareta who brings him salvation. Geoffrey's fate fluctuates between these two poles. His potential saviour,

Yvonne, first dreamed of making a new start with Geoffrey in British Columbia on Lake Pineaus where he owned an island. Coincidental or not, in *Faust: Part Two* the lower Peneus is a similar lotusland Eden.

In Chapter Ten the personal and the political are two main frames of reference. Spengler's observation on this point is helpful: "There are two sorts of Destiny, two sorts of war, two sorts of tragedy — public and private. Nothing can eliminate this duality from the world." As a private individual and as a public representative, the Consul symbolically portrays an ambivalent character; a Faust figure and an Everyman figure simultaneously. He uses one of Marlowe's most famous lines as a point of departure. Looking at Cervantes' prize-fighting cock he asks, "Was this the face that launched five hundred ships, and betrayed Christ into being in the Western Hemisphere?" In Conrad Aiken's *Blue Voyage*, an important literary source for parts of *Under the Volcano*, the main character, Demarest, had used this same line for his own comic points of departure: "Is this the face that scuttled a thousand ships?" Chapter Ten concludes with Geoffrey voicing a Faustus-like frustration. Into the oncoming storm he cries out, "I love hell. I can't wait to get back there. In fact I'm *running*. I'm almost back there already." Faustus' soul was divided between a desire for mastery and a sense of guilt. Geoffrey despairingly envisions a comparable dichotomy: "What is man but a little soul holding up a corpse?" Like Faustus, he is tragic because he recognizes this dilemma as real. As Faustus boasts that his soul is his own to dispose of as he will, he hears the fearful echoes thundering in his ears. Similarly, as Geoffrey proclaims his love of hell there is also a contradictory emendation, for, "the queer thing was, he wasn't quite serious." Nature forewarns Geoffrey, just as it did Faustus: "Before him the volcanoes, precipitous, seemed to have drawn nearer. They towered up over the jungle, into the lowering sky — massive interests moving up in the background."

A letter from Lowry to his American editor, Albert Erskine, July 15, 1946 shows Lowry's concern with *Faust* in Chapter Eleven. Remembering Julian Green's note in his *Diary* to end a book with the image of the heroine rising to heaven, Lowry added to this idea one contained in the opera *Faust* when Margareta rises to heaven while Faust descends to hell. Thus, the simultaneous actions of Yvonne and Geoffrey in Chapters Eleven and Twelve parallel the splitting of the path as two roads diverge into the Mexican wood to two opposing destinies.

Geoffrey's last hour commences when he sees "a clock pointing to six". The Faustian parallel of the last hour permits an ironic contrast. After the clock strikes eleven, Faustus, aware of impending damnation, exclaims, "Now hast thou but

one bare hour to live./ And then thou must be damn'd perpetually!" Through an almost fatalistic determinism, Geoffrey's approaching death is similarly inevitable. He, however, apathetically accepts the end, totally lacking Faustus' frantic longing for life. Yet Geoffrey's death is fully in accord with Spengler's theory of the determinism of inevitable decline for the Faustian spirit of Western man in the twentieth century, the death of modern man, as Jung put it, in search of his soul. Asking "What is a lost soul?" Geoffrey, in answering himself, describes himself: "It is one that has turned from its true path and is groping in the darkness of remembered ways."

Time ticks on: "the ticking of his watch, his heart, his conscience, a clock somewhere." In vain Faustus ordered, "Stand still, you ever-moving spheres of heaven,/ That time may cease, and midnight never come." Geoffrey makes no such plea, but only notes and recalls while his familiars make their last supplications. He hears them argue, and then "the voices ceased". They return as "daemonic orchestras" and "insolent archfiends", and lastly come to him as he lies with Maria, the prostitute, "hissing and shrieking and yammering at him: 'Now you've done it, Geoffrey Firmin!' Even we can help you no longer . . . Just the same you might as well make the most of it now, the night's still young." Young it is, but for Geoffrey it is almost over. Even Maria is part of the Faustian tradition, for in ancient Coptic manuscripts the magician and the prostitute played an equal role to that of the magician and the virgin, Yvonne in this case. Now, at six-thirty, "A bell clanged frantically in the distance" just as for Faustus the clock strikes the half-hour. Spengler wrote that, "Besides the clock, the bell itself is a Western 'symbol'." As such it is a Faustian symbol as well.

The crag of the Malebolge reminds Geoffrey of Shelley's *The Cenci*, Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, and Calderon. The last reference is probably to Calderon de la Barca's play *The Wonder-Working Magician*, to whose Faust theme Goethe was indebted. The play opens in a wood where Cyprian and a Demon argue about the unity of God. Cyprian later sells his soul for Justina, his beloved. The two die on the scaffold and ascend to heaven. The following lines from Calderon's play depict imagery visible also in the Malebolge: "Though from that proud height you fall/ Headlong down a dark abyss"; "Abyss of hell, prepare,/ Yourself the region of your own despair!" and especially the following lines:

This mountain's brow is bound
With curling mist, like streaming hair
Spread out below, and all the horizon round
Is one volcanic pyre!

Geoffrey describes the sunset as "A mercurochrome agony down the west". The suggestion of a blood-red crucifixion is comparable to the description by Faustus: "See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!/ One drop would save my soul, half a drop," a parallel that occurs elsewhere as I have already indicated, one year later, as a "gigantic red evening, whose reflection bled away in the deserted swimming pools". Faustus' futile plea for even half a drop is paralleled in Geoffrey's thirst: "the thirst that was not thirst, but itself heart-break, and lust, was death, death, and death again". He remembers once carrying a carafe of water in the hotel *El Infierno* but unable to put it to his lips he hears a voice saying "you cannot drink of it", and believes "it must have been Jesus who sent me this". The comparable line in *Doctor Faustus* is "Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!" Meanwhile we hear "the clock ticking forward" with Geoffrey abandoning "The hope of any new life together, even were it miraculously offered again".

Reflecting on "that extraordinary picture on Laruelle's wall, *Los Borrachones*," Geoffrey applies the book's epigraph from *Faust* to himself:

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 farther 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, or of his struggle, if struggle there were still?

In his descent, his katabasis, Geoffrey becomes a corporate and composite character, incorporating all damned souls, just as with successive masks he has been all of the literary models alluded to, a timeless Everyman. He joins the "downward flight" of souls beyond salvation, just as Yvonne has already joined the ascending flight, à la Margareta, although her death follows Geoffrey's.

Time moves on, "One, two, three, four, five, twelve, six, seven". Geoffrey's last twelve hours conclude in this twelfth chapter at seven o'clock. "The clock outside quickly chimed seven times." As the clock for Faustus strikes twelve, thunder and lightning ensue. Similarly, "Thunderclaps crashed on the mountains and then at hand," and "Lightning flashed like an inch-worm going down the sky". "A bell spoke out: *dolente . . . dolore!*" Faust and Dante are again echoed in this tolling, just as they are combined one year later for Jacques. It is Geoffrey's passing bell, his funeral bell, but it also tolls for everyman.

Even the horse who, escaping from the clutching hands of Geoffrey, gallops uncontrollably through the forest to kill Yvonne, is ironically anticipated by Faustus' line, itself a quotation from Ovid's *Amores*, "*O lente, lente currite, noctis equi*," but time and the horse wait for no man. Just as Faustus cries "O, I'll leap up to my God! — Who pulls me down?" Geoffrey experiences a similar prevention of his attempt upward: "He raised his head again; no, he was where he was, there was nowhere to *fly* to. And it was as if a black dog had settled on his back, pressing him to his seat." Similarly, Faustus has nowhere to fly to. He pleads, "Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,/ And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!" Likewise, Geoffrey deliriously deludes himself that in the Himalayas, imaged by Popocatepetl, is a final resting place. Carrying "the Hotel Fausto's information" in his pocket, he mentally attempts to climb the volcano, as his father had climbed the Himalayas. Faustus had also hoped to be borne aloft to heaven in the volcano's breath:

Now draw up Faustus, like a foggy mist,
 Into the entrails of yon labouring clouds,
 That, when you vomit forth into the air,
 My limbs may issue from your smoky mouths,
 So that my soul may but ascend to heaven!

Goethe presents a similar hell intended for Faust:

out from the arching jaw
 A raging swirl of fiery flood is spewed;
 See, in the seething fume of that dread maw,
 The town of flames eternally renewed.
 Up to the teeth, the molten red comes rushing,
 The damned swim wildly, hoping to be saved,
 Then, where the huge hyena's jaws are crushing,
 Renew their path with burning brimstone paved.

"Somebody threw a dead dog after him down the ravine." Bunyan and Faustus come instantaneously to mind. In the Bunyan epigraph to *Under the Volcano* the dog's soul is not doomed to perish in Hell as is man's, yet man must die like an animal. The pariah dog, a symbol of guilt, has followed Geoffrey throughout the book, and even earlier in this last chapter is still associated with his fate: "And it was as if a black dog had settled on his back, pressing him to his seat" as I have quoted above. As an outcast of society Geoffrey is a pariah.

Suggestions of a cyclical reincarnation are latent in Chapter One. Vigil talks of sunset when begin "all the dogs to shark". When Laruelle is in the cinema "Dark

shapes of pariah dogs prowled in and out of the stalls". Lastly, talking to Laruelle, Sr. Bustamente, the cinema manager, refers to Geoffrey as "the *bicho*, the one with the blue eyes". Certainly, Laruelle is haunted by the spiritual ghosts of Yvonne and Geoffrey, if not also by a physical embodiment of each. Faustus wished to be reincarnated to escape damnation. Finally, in lines that Bunyan might well have known and paraphrased, Faustus cries:

Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
 Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
 Ah, Pythagoras' metempsychosis, were that true,
 This soul should *fly* from me and I be chang'd
 Unto some brutish beast! all beasts are happy,
 For, when they die,
 Their souls are soon dissolv'd in elements;
 But mine must live still to be plag'd in hell.

Employing the Faust archetype, Lowry has achieved the sense of ironic dissimilarity and yet of profound human continuity between the modern protagonist and his long dead exemplars; he has also locked past and present together spatially in a timeless unity by transmuting the time-world of history into the timeless world of myth, the common content of modern literature.

