

Carnivalized Underworlds: M. Lowry and M. Krleža

Višnja Sepčić
Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb

The article brings into correlation Malcom Lowry's novel *Under the Volcano* and Miroslav Krleža's *The Return of Philip Latinovicz*. Both of these novels belong to late Modernism and share a number of characteristics, thematically and structurally. The central part of the article demonstrates how Mikhail Bakhtin's category of the "carnivalization" of literature applies to both novels.

Malcolm Lowry's novel *Under the Volcano*, an outstanding work of late Modernism (1947), and a remarkable novel by the greatest Croatian writer of the twentieth century, Miroslav Krleža *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* (1932) have, surprisingly perhaps, many features in common. They both belong to the genre of the subjectivist, lyric novel, and present the inner theatre of consciousness of the main protagonist who undergoes a spiritual crisis of utmost intensity. In Krleža's *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* the central consciousness that filters the events is the consciousness of the gifted painter Philip Latinovicz. In Lowry's novel there are four mediatory consciousnesses but centrally important is the consciousness of the Consul Geoffrey Firmin, the Bohemian, wanderer and loser, who by his fatal allegiance to mescal ruins his great natural gifts. The subjectivist novel, as Ralph Freedman explains, puts into the centre of the novelist's attention a cognitive self instead of the acting self, as the nineteenth century European novel was prone to do. Freedman states: "Not only is time experienced spatially, to borrow a phrase from Joseph Frank, but also the distance between self and world is telescoped; the engagements of men in the universe of action are reexperienced as instances of awareness. The lyrical novel, then, emerges as an 'anti-novel' in the true sense of the term because by portraying the act of knowledge, it subverts the conventionally accepted qualities of the novel which are focussed on the intercourse between men and worlds. But in this form it also expresses a peculiarly modern approach to experience that has ripened into our current obsession with the conditions of

knowledge. In this strangely alienated, yet somehow essential genre, the direct portrayal of awareness becomes the outer frontier where novel and poem meet.”¹

Owing to this internalization of approach as an essential premise of the subjectivist, lyric novel both novels are dominated by what the Croatian writer calls the “subjectivist illuminations”. The common characteristics of both Lowry’s *Consul* and Krleža’s *Philip Latinovicz* is a quite exceptional intensity of their sensory reactions to the outer world, to its colours, forms, sounds and scents.² This intensity of sensory experiences often slide over into the hallucinatory. The neurotic component gives a strong subjective slant to everything they experience, so that the events in their interpretation are subjectivized to the extreme. The hallucinatory and visionary component is an essential characteristic of Philip’s painting, too. Deeply sunk in their respective spiritual crises they share a sharp awareness of the need to answer the ultimate questions of the human condition. In their necessarily eschatological way of reasoning life is constantly weighed against death.

In the projection of their inner states through the interior monologue, which constitutes the groundwork of both novels, spaces and localities are given the same semantic value as events. They are deeply steeped in subjective sensibility. In *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* the localities of Philip’s childhood: his mother’s tobacconist’s shop, the lock on the doorway of the house where they live, shaped like Medusa’s head with the flying hair as a symbol of some dark Oedipal secrets which are concealed behind these doors, the courtyard with Katarina’s carpet-beater etc., – these are all rendered in a heightened emotional key as they are refracted through Philip’s febrile consciousness. The same holds good for the numerous experiences of the Consul in Lowry’s novel, his nostalgic recollections of Spanish Granada where he met his wife Yvonne, his reactions to the dusky, demonized landscapes of Oaxaca, Quauhnahuac, Farolito and others, which have become silent witnesses of his disintegration.

In these highly subjectivized landscapes and spaces the soul of the protagonist “is looking for its shadow”, as Krleža puts it, and the relation of the character towards the landscape becomes an important means of self-reflection, of his sounding the depths of his being.

The time schemes of both novels have many things in common. Both in *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* and in Lowry’s *Under the Volcano* time present and time past are closely interwoven and the demarcation line between them is blurred or, better to say, they co-exist in the fluid inner space of the subjective experience of characters. Memory plays a significant and even, we can justly say, central role. The protagonist’s consciousness constantly expands and pushes beyond the given borders of space and time. Krleža’s *Philip Latinovicz* meditates on Pannonia as his natural historical habitat in the vertiginous perspectives of time (he recalls the Roman Pannonia, the Scythians, the hyperborean barbarians etc.). At the same time the dense incrustations of painfully

1. Ralph Freedman, *The Lyrical Novel* (Studies in Herman Hesse, André Gide and Virginia Woolf), Princeton University Press, 1963, viii.

2. Cf. Ivo Frangeš, “U potrazi za izgubljenim djetinjstvom (Nekoliko paralela uz “Povratak Filipa Latinovicza”)", *Krležin zbornik*, Zagreb, 1964, and Viktor Zmegač, *Krležini evropski obzori*, Zagreb, 1986, passim.

personal associations and reminiscences cluster round every moment of his intense inner life. The subjective time of Lowry's Consul, on which the major part of *Under the Volcano* is concentrated, at every moment includes a dense palimpsest of different time segments in which certain crucial events, traumas and obsessions can be discerned and they play the role of leitmotives in the structure of the novel. Among these experiences the feelings of guilt and betrayal (the betrayal of others and self-betrayal) play a central role.

Yet the similarities are accompanied by differences. In Krleža's projection of Philip's inner states of mind the structure of Philip's inner monologues is logically articulated and individual segments are clearly individualized and divided one from the other. On the other hand, in the Consul's inner monologues the segments of memory have grown one into the other and are almost inseparable.

Both novels explore the self-destructive impulse raging in the innermost being of the protagonist and in the civilization of which they are a part. Both Krleža's Philip and Lowry's Consul reveal a deep, inexplicable yearning for self-destruction. The Consul gives way to this dark impulse while Philip transcends it through extrapolating his self-destructive impulse in his *Doppelgängers*, Bobočka and Kyriales, the demons haunting his innermost being, from which he has to wrench himself free in order not to be dragged along with them into the abyss of Nothingness.

In both novels a battle is waged between Eros and Thanatos, which by a paradoxical logic constantly turn into one another. The most characteristic states of both Krleža's and Lowry's protagonist are the states *in extremis*, on the brink of madness, breakdown and death. The extremes touch and the antinomies merge into one another. Ambivalence characterizes the inner life of both Krleža's and Lowry's protagonist. The Consul is destroyed by his crisis but until the last moment before his consciousness is extinguished he yearns for the reintegration of being, for some tremendous celestial light which would flood his life but which he "sees" only in his imagination, in his dreams. Krleža's Philip, who survives his crisis, on deep subconscious levels identifies himself with Bobočka and Kyriales, the demons of his own being who do their utmost to disintegrate him.

Both novels are preoccupied with irrational forces. Already in his early youth Krleža's Philip has an epiphanic revelation of life as a turmoil of blind, irrational forces. This is the innermost meaning of Philip's overwhelming sensory experience of the night procession of horses transported to the Transvaal battlefield.

"It was by that window that he had fallen seriously ill that night in autumn when the English horses passed in long processions through the town on their way to the Transvaal battle-front – one misty night in October. One could hear the thundering on hoofs across the wooden bridge at the corner of Friars' Street, in a steam of warm reeking horses. The horses were going to distant, unknown, southern seas, on their way to the equator, where the strange stars of the southern hemisphere glitter. Black tar-tainted vessels creaking in far-away harbours were waiting for the horses to crowd on to them, that they might transport them somewhere inconceivably far away where boa-constrictors creep and poisonous mosquitos bite. Countless English horses had passed by that night, a host of black, fragile horses' legs thundered by trembling with excitement, reminding him more of the legs of strange, horse-shoed birds than those of hooved animals. That night his mother did not sleep at home the whole night. Midnight had long since struck from the Friars' church tower, but the procession of English horses was endless: they went by interminably, one after another, tails, heads, hoofs, an endless dark crowd of tails, necks and hoofs. A mass of dark-maned neighing flesh, which made the

windows rattle as in a thunderstorm. Alarmed by the strange thunder, frightened by his loneliness and wakefulness, Philip had crept to the window and lifted the greasy, torn blind just enough to enable him to see the horses' bellies: peeping thus from under the blind *he was lost in fascination at this incomprehensible chaos of dark rumps, fetlocks, joints, hoofs, trembling partly with fear and partly with a strange, vague, splendid emotion.*" (20–21)³

Alongside with the first intimations of Eros ("lost in fascination at this incomprehensible chaos of dark rumps, fetlocks, joints, hoofs...") Philip gets here his first dim, inarticulate but emotionally powerful insight into the forces underlying life processes, which are wild, chaotic and indomitable. He is gripped by a sense of danger at his confrontation with these incomprehensible forces which stand outside man and which will never be fully controlled by him. From the reinterpretation of this event, buried in his remote past but which has remained indelibly impressed on his memory, through his significant paintings or painting schemes, runs the same preoccupation with the irrational forces as a substratum of all life. His grandiose imagined mural painting of the village *fête* of St. Rock represents a culmination of his sense of life as an uncontrollable whirling round of primary energies.

"The stench of those drunken herdsmen and the hairy rumps of their fat mares, those streams of brandy and beer, those mounds of meat and that hysterical noise of voices, that whirlpool of hairy buttocks and calves and thighs, fat women's legs, ankles, joints, skirts, neighing horses, the lascivious movement of breasts and hips, flesh on flesh – this should be the furious orchestration of that maddened Pannonian wedding-feast which howled on the hill in drunken transports around a wounded Roman miracle-worker. A mass of trumpets, a mass of lights, a mass of colours, as on the walls of the Sistine Chapel the crucified Christ rises above the multitude of naked bellies, muddy chins, trodden breasts, and drunken hags! A symphony of something diabolical, licentious, Flemish kermis-like, both around and within us, it should be brown like a Brueghel, a vast, troglodyte flood, flowing below the central figure like a stormy accompaniment under the melody of the main theme; all this mass, devilish, monstrous, dragon-like, primeval and diluvian, issuing from the mud and slime under our own feet, was to be merely the ground of the painting, which was to be spread like an enormous, monumental Gobelin tapestry! What a sorrowful, miserable Christ stood there on the altar, risen with his magenta banner above those drunken hunchbacked old hags, cabmen and cattle herders! A Christ who would really step into Pannonian uproar, that stinking turmoil of a country fair, should be felt above all thing as a metaphysical shock to all that is physical, lascivious, carnal, pagan within us! That Christ should be a rock rolled down from the starry heights, and not a provincial, poorly coloured drawing, painted in a dilettantish tempera technique!... Above those drunken hags, above the muddy roads where even today the Evil One bleats among the auctineers, meet-roasters and red umbrellas, someone should put on canvas all the corpses raised from their graves, raised from that dunghill, from that foul, muddy pit of our times! Above the waves of poison, among the agitated throng of excited flesh, where all the faces are stiff and silly as wooden figures, among the drunken, devilish confusion, dissipation and darkness, like that which surrounded the little church on the hill tonight, a stroke of the artist's brush should give the wind rushing triumphantly over men's heads in the angelic heights: a dance above the clouds, above the opened graves! The howling of drunken wedding-guests, the fluttering of ribbons, the stampede of frightened horses, the breaking of glasses, the dancing on the edge of a bloody, atrocious crime, all this should roll across the picture like a moving, swollen ocean, and above it all a mass of naked female bellies, clammy white female bellies, huge as mill stones, a mass of such enormous female bellies that they would look like swollen devil's carcasses, dead men's bellies, clouds of drunken Saturnalians who devour their own flesh, and have turned their stinking backs on all that is star-like above us, and everything reeks and smokes and flings itself into the abyss!" (154–157)

3. Page references are to Miroslav Krleža, *The Return of Philip Latinovicz*, translated by Zora G. Depolo, London, Lincolns-Prager Publishers, 1959.

In Philip's magnificently imagined mural painting of the Pannonian kermis, of this whirlwind of people, objects and things eddying round in a stormy rhythm, there appear the earlier characteristic motives which testify to the same basic sense of life as a maelstrom of blind, irrational energies. Its first embodiment was his projected painting of a female belly which by its materiality associates both the leavened dough and an overripe camembert but also a drowned man's swollen body, thus suggesting in a single image the eternal cycles of birth, maturation, decay and death. His Goya-like hallucination of life as a phantasmagoric gigantic boa constrictor, which devours himself, buries himself and is reborn perpetually, also has an echo here ("clouds of drunken Saturnalians who devour their own flesh"). As the accumulation of adjectives which belong to the same semantic area shows clearly ("diabolic", "devilish", "dragon-like", "primeval" and "diluvian") Philip's imagined mural painting of the church festival of St. Rock is a culmination of the theme of Pannonia as an incarnation of the primeval chaos, of the primary life energies which blindly and meaninglessly whirl round from the beginning to the end of time.

In Lowry's *Under the Volcano* the irrational chaos is the main determinant of the Consul Geoffrey Firmin (the author speaks of him in one place as the quintessence of the self-destructive impulse).⁴ It also underlies the public *fiesta* which madly turns round him on the Day of the Dead in Mexico in 1938, and also a year after on the Day of the Dead in 1939, the span of time which makes up the temporal framework of the novel. It is worth remarking that Lowry uses the image of a drunken rider on an uncontrollable horse as a symbol of the self-destructive and irrational forces which are directly associated with the Consul.

"M. Laruelle straightened, instantly becoming aware of activity, to step just in time from the path of a horseman who had reined up sideways across the bridge. Darkness had fallen like the House of Usher. The horse stood blinking in the leaping headlights of a car, a rare phenomenon so far down the Calle Nicaragua, that was approaching from the town, rolling like a ship on the dreadful road. The rider of the horse was so drunk he was sprawling all over his mount, his stirrups lost, a feat in itself considering their size, and barely managing to hold on by the reins, though not once did he grasp the pommel to steady himself. The horse reared wildly, rebellious – half fearful, half contemptuous, perhaps, of its rider – then it catapulted in the direction of the car: the man, who seemed to be falling straight backwards at first, miraculously saved himself only to slip to one side like a trick rider, regained the saddle, slid, slipped, fell backwards – just saving himself each time, but always with the reins, never with the pommel, holding them in one hand now, the stirrups still unrecovered as he furiously beat the horse's flanks with the machette he had withdrawn from a long curved scabbard. And he imagined the rider as not pausing even at Laruelle's own house, where his trunks lay mountainous and still half packed, but galloping recklessly round the corner into the Calle Tierra del Fuego and on, his eyes wild as those soon to look on death, through the town – and this, too, he thought suddenly, this maniacal vision of senseless frenzy, but controlled, not quite controlled, somehow almost admirable, this too, obscurely, was the Consul..." (27–28)⁵

Irrational forces that are incarnated in the reckless rider dominate the total space of *Under the Volcano*. They are present in the ambiance of the public *fiesta* that surrounds the Consul on the last day of his life on the Day of the Dead in 1938, but also in the many evocations of Mexico, its turbulent history and violence-soaked contempo-

4. *Selected Letters of Malcolm Lowry*, ed. Harvey Breit and Margerie Bonner Lowry, New York, Capricorn, 1969, p. 200.

5. Page references are to Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1962.

raneity which is just about to witness a new historical cataclysm. Above everything else, the irrational forces are responsible for the Consul's inner disintegration as he has no inner force to resist the destructive forces within himself.

The basic structural scheme of both Lowry's and Krleža's novel follows the archetypal pattern of descent into the underground of the soul. The Mexican bars and *cantinas* in which Lowry's Consul spends most of his time and from whose vicious circle he has neither the inner force nor the will to tear himself represent the Dantesque Inferno. By some terrible logic of his wilful self-destruction the Consul descends the labyrinthine path of sin and evil until he touches the very bottom in the fateful *cantina* Farolito, the heart of darkness, where ruin and death await him. The *tempo furioso* of the ending of the novel fully establishes a correlation between the Consul's psyche and the diabolic *cantina*, whose motive ominously appears and reappears throughout the novel, testifying to the obscure attraction which this place exerts on the Consul.

"Parián – the Farolito! he said to himself. The Lighthouse, the lighthouse that invites the storm, and lights it! After all, some time during the day, when they are at the bullthrowing perhaps, he might break away from the others and go there, if only for five minutes, if only for one drink. That prospect filled him with an almost healing love and at this moment, for it was part of the calm, the greatest longing he had ever known. The Farolito! It was a strange place, a place really of the late night, and early dawn, which as a rule, like that one other terrible *cantina* in Oaxaca, did not open till four o'clock in the morning. But today being the holiday for the dead it would not close. *At first it had appeared to him tiny. Only after he had grown to know it well had he discovered how far back it ran, that it was really composed of numerous little rooms, each smaller and darker than the last, opening into one another, the last and darkest of all being no larger than a cell. These rooms struck him as spots where diabolical plots must be hatched, atrocious murders planned; here, as when Saturn was in Capricorn, life reached bottom. But here also great wheeling thoughts hovered in the brain:* while the potter and the field-labourer alike, early risen, paused a moment in the paling doorway, dreaming... He saw all this, feeling the atmosphere of the *cantina* enclosing him already with its certainty of sorrow and evil, and with its certainty of something else too, that escaped him. But he knew: it was peace. He saw the dawn again, watched with lonely anguish from that open door, in the violet-shaded light, a slow bomb bursting over the Sierra Madre – *Sonnenaufgang!* – the oxen harnessed to their carts with wooden disc wheels patiently waiting outside for their drivers, in the sharp cool pure air of heaven. *The Consul's longing was so great his soul was locked with the essence of the place* as he stood and he was gripped by thoughts like those of the mariner who, sighting the faint beacon of Start Point after a long voyage, knows that soon he will embrace his wife." (203–204)

In *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* the episode of the church festivity of St. Rock, which is attended by Philip and Bobočka and which stirs his imagination to imagine *Dies Irae*, evokes a milieu which is remarkably similar to the Mexican *fiesta* which surrounds Lowry's Consul. The patron-saint of the church *fête* at Kostanjevec "had been for more than a hundred years the patron saint of all lepers and epileptics, all injured, insane and crippled persons" (152); the description fits perfectly the world of Lowry's Mexico.

Krleža's public *fiesta*, a whirlwind of human and animal bodies, gingerbread stalls, bar tents and firemen's brass bands, in which the sound of the organ blends with the bleating of the pagan kermis and in which the pale Christ and the pagan centaur meet is a culmination of the theme of incomprehensible irrational forces that dominate life. In the Pannonian kermis Philip hears the thundering of the hooves of the same wild, primeval element, which for him represents the substratum of all life. "*The infernal furioso*" of his imagined painting sums up his sense of life as a meaningless whirling round of wild, indomitable energies. ("*And everything is really a senseless chaos.*") The confrontation with the primary wild energies by the inner logic of his descent into the

underground of the soul brings him to Bobočka's inn and Bobočka's room, to the innermost circle of his private Inferno. Here he meets "the dark man", Kyriales, the diabolic destroyer of his deepest convictions and beliefs and "the decayed woman", Bobočka, who will violently stir his passion and who will try to drag him into the psychical chaos which is her natural habitat. In "the ghostly nocturne of Kostanjevec", in which Kyriales commits suicide while the third member of this diabolical trio, Baločanski, the bankrupt bourgeois transformed into the "predatory beast" murders Bobočka, Philip will confront the ultimate questions.

In both novels death is the obsessive motive. The sense of death as a dark obverse of life enters as a vital constituent in the description of ambiances and it greatly determines the intimate moods of the protagonists. Lowry's Mexican novel takes place on the Day of the Dead in 1938, and a year after, on the Day of the Dead in 1939. The described milieu is densely saturated with death so that it can be said that death is an all-enveloping medium of the novel. Processions from the cemetery wind down the hillside, the plangent sounds of their chanting reach the protagonists talking; the masks of death and the devil wind through the public *fiesta*; the luminous skeletons enter into the death-ridden *cantina* Farolito in which the desperate Consul sits and drinks. Death is constantly present in Consul's thoughts as a concomitant of his war memories (the Consul took part in the First World War), as a threat which he feels in the Mexican landscape and, finally, as an obscure yearning.

In Krleža's *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* death is from the very first moment present in Philip's thoughts and moods. Philip's return to Kaptol implies a return to his past. The memories of his childhood and early youth are steeped in funerary imagery.

"Philip stood in front of the old crumbling wall, feeling it with his hand, as if he were touching a dear but forgotten grave... Philip felt the far-off, dead pictures melting away within him... This morning he had returned to an old picture he had never mastered, to old worries and cares, the source of the sorrow and depression which beset him, as if he had awoken in his own grave." (12, 45–46)

One of the first things Philip does after his return to Kaptol is the visit to the graveyard where he meditates on the enigma of his origin, wondering "whether the decaying livery underneath the oak cross was really his father, or whether it was just a fiction of his mother, the tobacconist's." (26) One of his crucial meditations on the fluidity and indefiniteness of being, in the function of his obsession with the question of identity, is full of funerary imagery. He phantasizes about our being inhabited by the numerous dead and how these dead travel through us so that we do not really possess ourselves but are a meeting place of the unknown and anonymous dead who greatly determine our being. As Lowry's Laruelle reconstructs in his imagination the last day of his *alter ego*, the Consul, and in his memory revives the bygone time and the dead people, so Krleža's Philip Latinovicz confronts his past, the bygone time, the remote events, the remote self. In Kostanjevec, where Philip finally goes, everything is steeped in funerary imagery. Kostanjevec is defined as a "rotten grave". (*"Life decays amongst these muddy ravines around Kostanjevec, it spreads out like a marsh and stagnates like muddy water, in which submerged objects decompose."*) (65) The real and the phantasmagoric merge in Philip's Kostanjevec as well as in the Consul's Mexico. Popular phantasy peoples the muddy ravines of Kostanjevec with the ghosts of the dead while in Lowry's Mexico on the Day of the Dead the ghosts appear not only in the memory of the living but also in the form of demonic masks. "Like the four horsemen of the

Apocalypse emerging from the dark clouds, would come the lean years: on cadaverous black horses with whetted scythes and funeral torches, with thunder, earthquake and pestilence; that is how hungry years come. And quite probably a new war was brewing and many other horrors.” (66) The riders of the Apocalypse are present not only in Lowry but also in Krleža. As in Lowry’s Mexico in Krleža’s novel the “graves were opening”; “the dead sexton George had been seen several times”; Jura Perekov had come back from Russia and the villagers regard him as resurrected from the dead; in the rumours which spread round the Kostanjevec area the ghosts and the risen dead appear.

“And lame Matthew of Blato met a black coach one night near the bridge at Bistrica. It was all shining, and it had four lights: two front and two rear. But there was no coachman, only at the back, seated on a golden spring-seat, was a general with gold braid and red trousers, wearing a shako. And who was it? Rudolf!

“Crown Prince Rudolf in person!” (66–67)

Lowry’s Consul is a victim of a hallucination in which he sees a coffin that “sails through the air”, or, on another occasion, “an object in the shape of a dead man.”

“It came sailing out of nowhere, the child’s funeral, the tiny lace-covered coffin followed by the band; two saxophones, bass guitar, a fiddle, playing of all things *‘La Cucaracha’*, the women behind, very solemn, while several paces back a few hangers-on were joking, straggling along in the dust almost at a run.” (61)

“The instant the Consul saw the think he knew it a hallucination and he sat, quite calmly now, waiting for the object shaped like a dead man and which seemed to be lying flat on its back by his swimming-pool, with a large sombrero over its face, to go away.” (96)

The circle of “ruined people” around Philip’s mother Regina and her senile lover Liepach of Kostanjevec, this ghostly “historical circus” seems to Philip a “dance on graves”.

“To him all that went on in that house at Kostanjevec began to seem almost blasphemous: *it was like a dance on graves, a Dance of Death, hollow and empty, altogether morbid and unhealthy.*” (90)

Philip’s love for Bobočka makes him descend to the innermost circle of his Inferno, in which destructive Eros and violent death reign. Bobočka’s slow “decaying of the body”, Kyriales’s suicide and Baločanski’s bestial murder of Bobočka belong to the final phase of Krleža’s exploration of the blind, irrational forces that govern human life and of the self-destructive impulse underlying so much of the total action of the novel.

Both Lowry’s and Krleža’s protagonists are characterized by a fervid search for the alternatives to European civilization. Consequently, the contrast between nature and culture is prominent in both novels. Philip escapes from the highly developed, highly urbanized Europe to her Pannonian border while Lowry’s Consul leaves Europe for Mexico searching for the “lost Paradise”. For both of them the escape from Europe implies a search for some primeval innocence. But after the initial positive emotions they both experience a negative, inverse pastoral. Driven by inner restlessness (Andrew Marvell’s verses from “Clorinda and Damon”: “*Might a soul bathe there and be clean and slake its drought*” is a constant refrain in the Consul’s inner monologues), the Consul yearns for the authenticity of existence but in reality changes one mask for another in the nightmarish search for his lost identity. In Lowry’s novel the romantic yearning for an escape from civilization is accompanied by an ironical shadow so that the Consul’s wishes and pretensions are constantly exposed to scathing self-mockery. Likewise,

Philip, who yearns for the authenticity of existence, in the surroundings of his native Pannonia succumbs without effective resistance to an overwhelming sense of primary chaos as a substratum of all existence. (“*And everything is a meaningless chaos.*”) Yearning for the world of primeval innocence the Consul in Mexico confronts the Kafkaesque macabre reality and in the “heart of darkness”, in the *cantina* Farolito becomes a victim of the contemporary variant of Cortez’s *conquistadores*, disguised in the form of pro-Franco fascists who shoot him and throw him, while still alive, into a *baranca*. On the other hand, Krleža’s Philip, instead of finding the authenticity of existence finds in Kostanjevec “a rotten cemetery”, “ruined people” round his mother and her aristocratic lover, still preoccupied with the “playing cards of some lost historical games”. This makes him meditate on historical processes as a tragically meaningless pageant of masks and disguises which follow one another in the succession of epochs. In his view, beneath the historical carnival the primeval wild, chaotic, primary energies whirl round uncontrollably as they do in the Pannonian kermis.

Both novels belong to late Modernism. They are structured on the principle of spatial form, on complex clusters of leitmotives, themes, images and symbols, which are densely interwoven. Lowry states that his novel is “designed, counter-designed and interwelded”, and the same holds good for Krleža. The complexity of Lowry’s novel is reinforced by the dense intertextual layers, associations and reminiscences from the European literary and cultural heritage and their ironical, inverse variants (Dante, the Elizabethan theatre, Donne, Marvell, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, the “poètes maudits” etc.). The American critic Jonathan Arrac states that in Lowry the principle of metaphoric, paradigmatic analogy substitutes the metonymic, syntactic sequentiality.⁶ The same might be said for Krleža’s novel. As in Lowry’s *Under the Volcano* in Krleža’s novel the temporal chronological succession is only a semblance. Krleža’s novel in its entire span works out the manifold nature of Philip’s crisis as man and artist. The chapters which follow in chronological order in fact project individual aspects of his overwhelming crisis so that the ideal reader should perceive the whole of the novel simultaneously, and not in chronological succession. As in Lowry’s *Under the Volcano* in Krleža’s *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* the dense interpenetration of images, metaphors and symbols creates a complex texture of this novel, all of whose parts should sound simultaneously in the ideal perception.

II

The theme of the crisis of the creative impulse and the “confrontation with the ultimate questions” is to be found at the core of both novels. Philip’s crisis is caused by his doubting the meaning of his own work. Lowry’s Consul suffers from a paralysis of inner powers, which makes creative thinking impossible. Both protagonists strive for *lucida intervalla* through the creative act. Philip’s painting accords him the mature wholeness of insight. For him the authentic act of painting makes the opacity of material things suddenly crystal-clear. The basic symbol of the creative impulse in Krleža’s novel

6. Jonathan Arrac, “The Form of Carnival in *Under the Volcano*”, *PMLA*, May 1977, p. 488.

is the gigantic wrathful Christ from Philip's imagined mural painting "*Dies Irae*", who shapes "new heaven and new earth" and whose energy transfigures the whole cosmos. For Philip painting is "the act of the mind" in Wallace Stevens's definition, the supreme testimony of the Faustian endeavour of the spirit to reach the ultimate truths. Philip reaches such supreme moments when he paints the deaf-mute child who howls inarticulately in front of the empty space, a profound symbol of existential *Angst*, and when he imagines the grandiose mural painting of "*Dies Irae*", inspired by the church festivity of St. Rock.

In *Under the Volcano* this Faustian tension of the spirit is expressed by the Consul. In his ideal search, which is constantly belied by the brutal facts of his life, the Consul endeavours to reach the ultimate realities, the ultimate transparencies. His overwhelming crisis is caused by a paralysis of inner being, which is accompanied by a freezing of emotions and imagination. Dependence on mescal, under whose influence he hopes to experience "great wheeling thoughts" in the wake of "poëts maudits" results in the destruction of his imagination. Instead of realizing itself in his projected works, his imagination throbs in hallucinatory visions and morbid apparitions, incapable of concentration. Like Coleridge's *Ode to Dejection*, *Under the Volcano* is a poignant dirge over lost creative potency.

The crisis of the creative impulse of Krleža's painter is very deep. In the frozen state of emotions which Krleža's Philip also knows very well the integration of experience as a premise of the creative act is gone. ("Images had ceased to form, all his ideas were rationally formulated.") (70) The question of Philip's identity as a painter reopens under the burden of the whole European artistic heritage but it assumes a particularly sharp form because his subversive *ratio* destroys a vitally important balance between the preconscious and the conscious in the artist's vision, which leads him into an ever deeper despair.

"The tragedy, proclaimed, as they made their way up the crescent of the drive, no less by the gaping potholes in it than by the tall exotic plants, livid and crepuscular through his dark glasses, perishing on every hand of unnecessary thirst, staggering, it almost appeared, against one another, yet struggling like dying voluptuaries in a vision to maintain some final attitude of potency, or of a collective desolate fecundity, the Consul thought distantly, seemed to be reviewed and interpreted by a person walking at his side suffering for him and saying: 'Regard: see how strange, how sad, familiar things may be. Touch this tree, once your friend: alas, that that which you have known in the blood should ever seem so strange! 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. Consider the agony of the roses. See, on the lawn Concepta's coffee beans, you used to say they were Maria's, drying in the sun. Do you know their sweet aroma any more? Regard: the plantains with their queer familiar blooms, once emblematic of life, now of an evil phallic death. You do not know how to love these things any longer. All your love is the *cantinas* now: the feeble survival of a love of life turned to poison, which only is not wholly poison, and poison has become your daily food, when in the tavern...'" (70)

The frozen state of Consul's sensibility results in the severing of ties between the self and the world. The alienated "I" feels a stranger in the world. The split consciousness is only a manifestation of the decomposition of being. The Consul is a victim of the split self: an invisible "person" goes by his side and lucidly explains to him his own ruin. Such a dissolution of being cannot lead to creativity, which implies integration of inner forces.

The descriptions of Philip Latinovicz's crisis are a counterpart of the Consul's:

“Colours, for instance, the living source of his warmest emotions, were beginning to fade in his eyes: before, colours had struck Philip as irresistibly as the torrents of a waterfall, or like the beats of individual musical instruments, but of late the vital force of individual colours was slowly waning and it seemed to him that colours could no longer revivify objects or things, as if colours were not veils in which the phenomena of life were wrapped, but mere shapes of various forms, painted in very pale tints, correctly, like the shapes filled in with water colours in children's drawing-books, without connection, without harmony, without enthusiasm. Empty. *Whereas formerly colours had appeared to him as symbols of states and revelations, now his whole experience of colour was reduced to a restless and incomprehensible movement of coloured surfaces in streets of grey and sooty cities:* the cobalt blue surface of tram cars moving horizontally, the khaki-coloured cotton patch of the traffic policeman's tunic, the light green short of a passer-by, and the very pale aquamarine of the Pacific Ocean on a huge map displaced in a bookshop window. Cobalt, khaki, light-green, pale aquamarine, as patches, as daubs, as tinted details, and nothing more. Cobalt-blue, khaki, light-green, against the mud-grey circle of the tyre on a car-wheel turning very quickly, against the bright *bois de rose* pink patch of a young girl's dress, or the dark-green draperies of a showwindow overcrowded with polished furniture, only such relationships of colours in incomprehensible movement, without effect, dead, dull, incredibly empty, without any feeling, without any emotive foundation: worthless, futile.” (32)

Philip's despair, like the Consul's, springs from his alienation from the world, which is accompanied by a frozen emotional state. The world exists only as a series of unrelated facts because the authentic emotional reaction to facts which would put meaning into them is absent. Like D. H. Lawrence's autobiographical hero Somers in his Australian novel *Kangaroo*, Krleža's Philip Latinovicz is in this state of crisis nearer to the hazy distances, fish, mountains and red apples than to anything human. Alienated from the outside world, traumatized through the absence of emotions and the sterility of imagination, Philip gives way to despair. As time passes Philip's crisis, into which the novel leads us ever deeper, reveals its true nature: it brings him into a state of metaphysical despair. This assumes the most dramatic form in his idea of the “infernalization of reality”.

“This idea, doubtless a diabolic and unhealthy conception, was that in life phenomena have in fact no internal logical or rational connection! That life's manifestations unfold and develop one beside another, simultaneously: *with the sort of infernal simultaneity of the visions of Hieronymus Bosch, or Bruegel: one within another, one beside another, one above another, in utter confusion, in delirium, in ceaseless unrest, which have been from the very beginning.* The tall grimy steeples with dragon's heads, whitened waterspouts and marble niches; and the fat Carolina; the English horses, bon jour, Monsieur, the voice of a caged jay – and everything melting like the chocolate wrapped in silver paper, everything dragging along like Joe Podravec's coach, everything foolish and swamplike as Pannonia itself! Nude bellies, hidden dramas, sickly childhoods, which drag on a whole lifetime and last forty years, everything lumps together like a cloudy steam in numberless variations, and then everything disappears one day like mist, and evaporates like the smell of a privy: *all an incomprehensible immense overflow of something that spread out in space and is entangled in itself like a satiated boa constrictor, it swallows itself and turns into stinking pitch. Movement in all directions, a confused circulation of particles without foundation and without any inner meaning; our humanity walks and buries itself, and is reborn and springs up, like water, like mud, like flood. It kills itself, devours itself, digests itself, secretes itself, swallows itself, moves and travels along the intestines, along roads, along ravines, in waters! At one place it begins to fade, and at another it flourishes like weeds on a dunghill, and all this, however hellish in its essentiality, is fleshy and strong, and ineradicable within us. There is no one-way direction or development, since everything is entangled, jungle-like, marshy, Pannonian, hopeless and dark...* Thus Philip joggled drowsily along, his thoughts bubbling like carbonic acid in a glass of soda water; a process which is rather noisy, and produces a lot of foam, but which is refreshing for the nerves: to think in pictures and intoxicate oneself with the endless variety of the changing images.” (60–61)

“Infernal simultaneity”, “an incomprehensible immense overflow of something that spreads out in space”, “a confused circulation of particles”: Schopenhauer's blind will reveals itself to Philip as blind matter in senseless circulation, a purposeless movement

under the dictate of forces which are themselves dark and senseless, completely incognizant of any principle of higher order that would give sense to the circulation of matter.

In Lowry's novel, which is also concerned with the protagonist's questioning of the ultimate realities, the Consul's despair is summed up in the hallucinatory vision of the demonic divergent trains as a symbol of incoherent cosmos.

"*Mescal*' the Consul said, almost absent-mindedly. What had he said? Never mind. Nothing less than mescal would do. But it mustn't be a serious mescal, he persuaded himself. *No, Señor Cervantes*', he whispered, *'mescal, poquito*'.

Nevertheless, the Consul thought, it was not merely that he shouldn't have, not merely that, no, it was more as if he had lost or missed something, or rather, not precisely lost, not necessarily missed. – It was as if, more, he were waiting for something, and then again, not waiting. – It was as if, almost, he stood (instead of upon the threshold of the Salón Ofélia, gazing at the calm pool where Yvonne and Hugh were about to swim) once more upon that black open station platform, with the cornflowers and meadowsweet growing on the far side, where after drinking all night he had gone to meet Lee Maitland returning from Virginia at 7.40 in the morning, gone, light-headed, light-footed, and in that state of being where Baudelaire's angel indeed wakes, desiring to meet trains perhaps, but to meet no trains that stop, for in the angel's mind are no trains that stop, and from such trains none descends, not even another angel, not even a fair-haired one, like Lee Maitland. – Was the train late? Why was he pacing the platform? Was it the second or third train from Suspension Bridge – *Suspension!* – the Station Master has said would be her train? What had the porter said? Could she be on this train? Who was she? It was impossible that Lee Maitland could be on any such train. And besides, all these trains were expresses. The railway lines went into the far distance uphill. A lone bird flapped across the lines far away. To the right of the level-crossing, at a little distance, stood a tree like a green exploding sea-mine, frozen. The dehydrated onion factory by the sidings awoke, then the coal companies. *It is a black business but we use you white: Daemon's Coal...* A delicious smell of onion soup in side-streets of Vavin impregnated the early morning. Grimed sweeps at hand trundled barrows, or were screening coal. Rows of dead lamps like erect snakes poised to strike along the platform. On the other side were cornflowers, dandelions, a garbage-can like a brazier blazing furiously all by itself among meadowsweet. The morning grew hot. And now, one after one, the terrible trains appeared on top of the raised horizon, shimmering now, in mirage: first the distant wail, then, the frightful spouting and spindling of black smoke, a sourceless towering pillar, motionless, then a round hull, as if not on the lines, as if going the other way, or as if stopping, as if not stopping, or as if slipping away over the fields, as if stopping; oh God, not stopping; downhill: *clipperty-one clipperty-one: clipperty-two clipperty-two: clipperty-three clipperty-three: clipperty-four clipperty-four: alas, thank God, not stopping, and the lines shaking, the station flying, the coal dust, black bituminous: lickety-cut lickety-cut lickety-cut:* and then another train, *clipperty-one clipperty-one,* coming in the other direction, swaying, whizzing, two feet above the lines, flying, *clipperty-two,* with one light burning against the morning, *clipperty-three clipperty-three,* a single useless strange eye, red-gold: trains, trains, trains, each driven by a banshee playing a shrieking nose-organ in D minor; *lickety-cut lickety-cut lickety-cut.* But not his train; and not her train. Still, the train would come doubtless – had the Station Master said the third or fourth train from which way? Which was north, west? And anyhow, whose north, whose west?... And he must pick flowers to greet the angel, the fair Virginian descending from the train. But the embankment flowers would not pick, spurting sap, sticky, the flowers were on the wrong end of the stalks (and he on the wrong side of the tracks), he nearly fell into the brazier, the cornflowers grew in the middle of their stalks, the stalks of meadowsweet – or was it queen's lace? – were too long, his bouquet was a failure. And how to get back across the tracks – here was a train coming in the wrong direction again, *clipperty-one clipperty-one,* the lines unreal, not there, walking on air; or rails that did lead somewhere, to unreal life, or, perhaps, Hamilton, Ohio. – Fool, he was trying to walk along a single line, like a boy on the kerb: *clipperty-two clipperty-two: clipperty-three clipperty-three: clipperty-four clipperty-four: clipperty-five clipperty-five: clipperty-six clipperty-six: clipperty-seven; clipperty-seven* – trains, trains, trains, trains, converging upon him from all sides of the horizon, each wailing for its demon lover. *Life has no time to waste. Why, then, should it waste so much of everything else?"* (283–285)

The Consul's hallucinatory vision of the demonic trains which move in different directions symbolizes dislocated time and disjointed space. In this hallucinatory landscape in which all things threaten him with destruction and death from the flowers by the railway tracks to the locomotive with the burning eye and the trains that converge towards him but which, simultaneously, by some nightmarish logic move in all directions, the terrified Consul perceives that any orientation is impossible. Where do these trains come from, where do they go, who descends from them? They have dislocated space, they have annihilated time. The Consul's hallucination in its deepest semantic layer is a grotesque transposition of the Biblical text, of the prophet Ezekiel's vision of God's wheels simultaneously moving towards all the four points of the compass in the harmonious cosmos, permeated with God's Providence. While Ezekiel in his prophetic ecstasy beholds in the centre of overwhelming light wheels which simultaneously go towards all the four points of the compass, the Consul's demonic trains are the symbol of disrupted, disharmonious cosmos. This is Lowry's counterpart of Philip's "infernal simultaneity", according to which life has no meaning, in which phenomena incongruently co-exist without any integrative principle. As in Philip's perspective, coherence has disappeared from the Consul's world as his diabolic hallucination proves. This disrupted, disjointed world cannot be logically articulated. It balks definition as blind matter is recalcitrant to it. Its visual representation are the mad disoriented trains, a symbol of the Consul's existential anguish. In his hallucinatory vision an individual roams through amorphous space. His consciousness, which disintegrates under the pressure of being, feels the threat of death, the threat of annihilation as the only certainty, as the demonic trains at a crucial point converge towards him.

III

Finally, Lowry's *Under the Volcano* and Krleža's *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* share a number of characteristics which could be subsumed under the general category of the "carnivalization of the novel", as Mikhail Bakhtin explicates it on the works of F. M. Dostoevski as a supreme example of this line of development of European fiction.⁷

The action of both novels includes a public *fiesta*, which is not accidental by any means. In Lowry's novel the public *fiesta*, the Day of the Dead, represents an all-enveloping milieu which surrounds the Consul. Krleža also introduces into his novel the public *fiesta*, the church festivity of St. Rock, which Philip interprets as a maelstrom of primary energies. Both *fiestas* are a form of carnival.

The circle of characters around the Consul on the one hand, and Philip Latinovicz on the other, could be legitimately called "the carnivalesque community" in Bakhtin's sense. They are all "once-have-beens", beyond the bourgeois code of behaviour and bourgeois moral norms. Round the Consul, a former diplomat and a learned man who is incapable of creative work owing to his spiritual disintegration, there are grouped the

7. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Ann Arbor, Ardis, 1973, and Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1968.

figures of his wife Yvonne, a former actress, his friend Laruelle, a failed film director, his half-brother Hugh, a roaming reporter searching for his identity, and in the wider Mexican ambience a great many minor characters, beggars, adventurers, morally bankrupt people, bums and, in Farolito, political gangsters. Philip is surrounded by Kyriales, the enigmatic Greek from the Caucasus, a former Professor of Constantinople University; Bobočka, the divorced wife of a Cabinet Minister; Baločanski, a former consultant to big firms; and, in the wider ambience of Kostanjevec, the whole “ghostly historical circus” of “once-have-beens” round his mother and Liepach of Kostanjevec. The intimate circle round the Consul as well as the diabolical trio round Philip Latinovicz can be characterized by Bakhtin’s category of the “world turned upside down”, for which the usual norms of social behaviour are not valid.

The Mexican bars and dens through which Lowry’s Consul moves and where he wrestles with his inner voices, and Bobočka’s Kostanjevec inn where the mysterious Greek Kyriales starts his debates concerning the last questions – these are the ambiences in which “the moral adventurers”, in Bakhtin’s terms, are searching for new sensations in the context of their spiritual and moral experimenting. As it happens in Dostoevski and in the whole carnivalesque line of development of European fiction, both novels centre on the “carnavalesque community”. Both novels are dominated by the profane, the familiar, the inappropriate, the scurrilous and the sacrilegious. Philip comes upon Bobočka at the inn where she works as a cashier and sees a small boy waiter sitting in her lap. While “holding the boy’s head in both her hands she was so absorbed in kissing him on the lips that she failed to notice that Philip had come in.” (201) One night she giggles licentiously on the balcony of the Viennese industrialist Korngold’s hotel room “while ‘Herr Generaldirektor’ rolled up the left leg of her trousers and stroked her naked calf.” (205) Once Philip comes upon a macabre scene for which he is not quite sure that it is not a hallucination.

“There was a light in the uncurtained window of her small room, and he went up to the window: a candle flame flickered on the table. He could see Baločanski sitting at the table reading a newspaper, and something was moving on the bed. A black shape, and the white gleam of a naked woman’s body: legs, thighs, and the red quilt, all lit by the flame of the candle, dimly, indistinguishably, but beyond any doubt: there, on the red quilt, an incredible scene was being enacted. A shape in black and a naked woman in a tangle of limbs, a scene which might have been taken from the gallery of a medieval bell-tower. One of the seven most deadly sins: a woman in the lustful embrace of the Evil One.” (188)

In his states of mind that border on the delirium the Consul behaves inappropriately all the time, and from time to time blasphemously. (“*I love hell. I can’t wait to get back there. In fact I’m running. I’m almost back there already.*”) (316) A good example of a passage full of blasphemous connotations is the presentation of the last supper he has with Yvonne and Hugh, whose menu is in fact a blasphemous inversion of the biblical text.

The scandals and catastrophes of which Bakhtin speaks, putting them in the centre of the structural rhythm of the carnivalesque fiction, characterize both novels. The vertiginous succession of events in the final part of *Under the Volcano*, which reaches its culmination with the Consul’s infection with syphilis and his dreadful death, is only the most outrageous series in the succession of catastrophic scandals in which this novel abounds. Kyriales’s suicide and Baločanski’s monstrous murder of Bobočka which occur in the final part of Krleža’s novel dramatize the latent catastrophic potential of the novel, which abounded in scandals.

In the inverse perspective of the carnival, as Bakhtin explicates it, the carnival masks constantly change places. This is what happens in both novels. In the Consul's deliric imagination Yvonne, Laruelle and Hugh change from rescuers to persecutors. In the crucial scene in *Farolito* the whore María, infected by syphilis, substitutes his beloved wife Yvonne. In the final part of *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* the diabolical trio around Philip constantly change their disguises. From being a "bodily inspiration" Bobočka turns into a succubus, a biblical Lilith, a vampire; Baločanski, a bankrupted bourgeois turns into a "predatory beast"; Kyriales, a learned Greek from the Caucasus, the Professor in the University of Constantinople, turns into Satan incarnate. The grotesque and the phantasmagorical predominate in the final part of both novels. Both in the Consul's *Farolito* and in Philip's *Kostanjevec*, in Bobočka's inn and Bobočka's room, infernalization of reality is complete.

"The abnormal moral and psychic states" and "passions bordering on insanity", for which Bakhtin says that they belong to the natural development of events in the carnivalized novel, make up the fitting framework in both novels for the characters confrontation with the ultimate questions. The febrile states of mind, emotional tensions, sexual traumas, destroyed will, moral despair are some of the determinants of the inner theatre of the mind both of the Consul and of Philip. "The extreme situations" are the novelistic correlations of the extreme states of mind which characterize the protagonists of both novels. Both novels question the ultimate reasons of the human condition. The Consul's "great wheeling thoughts" and Philip's "febrile" states of mind are to be seen in this function.

"The tri-levelled construction", of which Bakhtin speaks, which includes heaven, earth and hell, characterizes both novels. The utopian element in *Under the Volcano* is present in the Consul's obstinate dreaming about rescuing himself from the private hell which he himself creates by his perverse will, and his possible departure to the North, to Canada, to some imagined pure, unviolated space. His Inferno are the numerous Mexican bars which he visits and the final circle of this Inferno is the *cantina* *Farolito*. Krleža's Philip indulges in utopian dreams about the Niagara Falls which might illuminate the Pannonian darkness and "phalanxes of new imaginary people" which might transcend the Pannonian chaos, while his basic symbol of transcendence is the wrathful Christ from his imagined painting "*Dies Irae*". His Inferno is inhabited by the diabolical trio Bobočka, Kyriales, Baločanski, and the final circle of this Inferno is Bobočka's room where Kyriales meditates on suicide and where Baločanski murders Bobočka.

Fantasy which, as Bakhtin maintains, accompanies the "carnivalization" of the novel and is markedly present in Dostoevski, penetrates both Lowry's and Krleža's novel. The inverted, distorted perspectives from which things and events are looked at, abound in both novels. Such is, for instance, Kyriales's fantasy about human life observed from the perspective of the grave.

"Kyriales spoke of death and of what the dead in their graves think about returning to this world.

It must be a favourite and engrossing occupation for those who lie among the rotten boards and ribbons and paper cushions to think what it would be like to go back and begin all over again. Such ideas come into the decaying heads of the dead like the bubbles of drunken dreams rolling over the graves like transparent glass balls; and in each ball's greenish glow, is a puff of something mysterious, warm, intense, something that can be sipped with delight like warm punch, that can be felt like a warm

bed and is pleasant like a newly bathed body, like the only true leisure in life: a drop of that elixir of life that circulates so warmly in our veins. And under the ground everything is so strange. About the graves a mass of glassy smoke freezes round the dead in strange lines, and thoughts swirl up like blazing tongues of punch-flames in the glass: how to realize again the feel of wounds, movements, and breath in the situations in which we lived, but from which we were removed like wax dolls, like birthday cakes decorated with lace paper, in polished boxes, and everything around us left open like an open wound, and to feel again those wounds on which the blood has hardened would be so sweet! Only our fingers have grown incomprehensibly icy, as if from camphor, our fingers are cold and everything is as cold as ice and transparent as calcite and empty as the place left by an aching tooth, which we lick with our tongues, and it feels cold after the cocaine, and the hole bleeds and the wound festers, but now there is nothing, and all that remains is a decayed tooth no longer there, and a cold, marble, alien tongue... mornings are misty, steamships arrive, death must come, and when everything is quiet as a foul, trampled rag on the rails, dreams reappear in the graves and the minds of the dead, who surely dream of lighted windows and warm rooms and how pleasant it is to have an umbrella and goloshes when it rains and not to be in debt!" (193–194)

The scene in which Lowry's Consul is whirled round on the Ferris wheel, the terrible *Máquina Infernal*, by its inverted perspective sums up his basic sense of existential *Angst*.

"The Consul's own cage hurled up again with a powerful thrusting, hung for a moment upside down at the top, while the other cage, which significantly was empty, was at the bottom, then, before this situation had been grasped, crashed down, paused a moment at the other extremity, only to be lifted upwards again cruelly to the highest point where for an interminable, intolerable period of suspension, it remained motionless. -- The Consul, like that poor fool who was bringing light to the world, was hung upside down over it, with only a scrap of woven wire between himself and death. *There, above him, poised the world, with its people stretching out down to him, about to fall off the road on to his head, or into the sky.* 999 The people hadn't been there before. Doubtless, following the children, they had assembled to watch him. Obliquely he was aware that he was without physical fear of death, as he would have been without fear at this moment of anything else that might sober him up; perhaps this had been his main idea. But he did not like it. This was not amusing. It was doubtless another example of Jacques's – Jacques's! – unnecessary suffering. And it was scarcely a dignified position for an ex-representative of his Majesty's government to find himself in, though it was symbolic, of what he could not conceive, but it was undoubtedly symbolic. *Jesus. All at once, terribly, the confession boxes had begun to go in reverse: Oh, the Consul said, oh; for the sensation of falling was now as if terribly behind him, unlike anything, beyond experience;* certainly this recessive unwinding was not like looping-the-loop in a plane, where the movement was quickly over, the only strange feeling one of increased weight; as a sailor he disapproved of that feeling too, but this – ah, my God! Everything was falling out of his pockets, was being wrested from him, torn away, a fresh article at each whirling, sickening, plunging, retreating, unspeakable circuit, his notecase, pipe, keys, his dark glasses he had taken off, his small change he did not have time to imagine being pounced on by the children after all, he was being emptied out, returned empty, his stick, his passport – had that been his passport? He didn't know if he'd brought it with him. Then he remembered he had brought it. Or hadn't brought it. It could be difficult even for a Consul to be without a passport in Mexico. Ex-consul. What did it matter? Let everything go! Everything particularly that provided means of ingress or egress, went bond for, gave meaning or character, or purpose or identity to that frightful bloody nightmare he was forced to carry around with him everywhere upon his back, that went by the name of Geoffrey Firmin, late of His Majesty's Navy, later still of His Majesty's Consular Service, later still of – Suddenly it struck him that the Chinaman was asleep, that the children, the people had gone, that this would go on for ever; no one could stop the machine... It was over." (225–226)

The milieu of Farolito in the final part of Lowry's novel and Bobočka's small room in the final part of Krleža's novel are dominated by the frenzied Eros, which by a deeper logic turns into Thanatos. In a series of weird, psychopathological scenes a sinister *dance macabre* takes place there as on a medieval Gothic mural painting wherein Death leads the Seven Deadly Sins. In Lowry as well as in Krleža this demonic *dance macabre* is in the function of the "ultimate questions". Bobočka and Kyriales are the demonic

phantoms haunting Philip's mind, they represent the chaotic body and the nihilistic, destructive *ratio*. In the context of the "carnavalesque community" Philip and Kyriales, both dislocated from "normal" life, are described in the "time of crisis", which can absorb in itself an enormous number of events, scandals and catastrophes, as Bakhtin explicates on the example of Dostoevski. In the smoke-filled inn in which red and black predominate (the colour of blood and the colour of death) they passionately discuss "the ultimate questions". Lowry's Consul debates the same questions with his good and bad angel in Farolito, the last circle of his Hell. The characters dissolve into one another. Bobočka and Kyriales share many psychological traits with Philip. In one place Bobočka phantasizes how the dead people travel through us so that we are a meeting place of mysterious and long-dead strangers, and this correlates intimately with Philip's monologue on the theme of indeterminacy of personality. Kyriales, "whose nerves are unstrung" just like Philip's own, in his dark meditations compresses the whole of life into his dominant feeling of senseless circling round of matter, which perfectly corresponds to Philip's convictions and is the cause of his overwhelming crisis. Lowry's novel is also characterized by the interpenetration of characters. Yvonne, Hugh, Laruelle and many subsidiary characters refract the Consul's psyche while the theme of the "ghostly *Doppelgänger*" reaches its culmination in the scenes in Farolito where everything that surrounds him, live beings and inert material objects, assume some characteristics of his own self, participating in the delirious effusions of his imagination.

"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. And on it as he lay he was surrounded in delirium by these phantoms of himself, the policemen, Fructuoso Sanabria, that other man who looked like a poet, the luminous skeletons, even the rabbit in the corner and the ash and sputum on the filthy floor – did not each correspond, in a way he could not understand yet obscurely recognized, to some fraction of his being?" (362)

Thus in both novels "the extremes meet", fully respecting one of the basic principles of the "carnivalization" of literature, which makes possible the fact that "everybody knows everything about everybody else and enters with him into a great dialogue."

The contrasts stressed by Bakhtin permeate all aspects of the structure of both Lowry's and Krleža's novel. In *Under the Volcano* the sharpest contrast is between "heaven" and "hell" as the states of mind which characterize the Consul. His yearning for some great light which would overwhelm his life and his being is contrasted with Farolito, the diabolical *cantina* in which evil proliferates in all directions (from the intimate, sexual sphere to the public, social and political one).

Krleža's Philip Latinovicz is torn by contrasts and unresolved contradictions (his hunger for life is counterbalanced by a profound self-destructive impulse). But, above everything else, great irreconcilable contrasts imbue his paintings, which reflect his deepest psychic core. In the painting of the deaf-mute child the child's cry of suffering is contrasted with indifferent space. In the imagined mural painting of St. Rock's *fête* the primal energies are contrasted with the gigantic Christ, the symbol of the deepest spiritual forces in man, the symbol of invincible creative impulse which transcends the state of chaos.

The carnivalesque incongruities abundantly appear in the style of both authors. The parodic and the grotesque, which Bakhtin considers essential for the "carnivalization" of literature is abundantly strewn over both novels. Philip's lyrical exaltations in Krleža's

novel are counterbalanced by the grotesque portraits of the “ghostly historical circus” round Regina and Liepach of Kostanjevec. Lowry’s novel is full of parodies and travesties of the motives from the European literary heritage. The protagonist is constantly seen in the double perspective of the “poët maudit” and the modern Faust and at the same time as the distraught paranoid and narcissistic *poszur*.

The “carnivalization” of literature, according to Bakhtin, is founded on the archetype of death and resurrection, which has its source in the ancient carnivalic sense of life. Both Lowry’s and Krleža’s novel focus on that. The forces of life and the forces of death wrestle for dominance in both novels. Lowry’s Consul succumbs to his crisis. Krleža’s Philip shakes it off and at the end of the novel finds himself again “on the threshold”, in Bakhtin’s terms.

In conclusion we can say that both novels are in the direct line of development of the “carnivalization” of fiction. Both Lowry and Krleža have with *Under the Volcano* and *The Return of Philip Latinovicz* given a remarkable contribution to this tradition.

KARNEVALIZIRANI PODZEMNI SVIJET MALCOLMA LOWRYJA I MIROSLAVA KRLEŽE

Članak propitkuje suodnos romana Malcolma Lowryja *Pod vulkanom* i *Povratka Filipa Latinovicza* Miroslava Krleže. Oba romana predstavljaju izdanke kasnog modernizma i dijele niz značajki, tematskih i strukturalnih. U središnjem dijelu članka autor primjenjuje Bahtinov koncept “karnevalizacije” književnosti na oba romana.