

as a narrative convention. A final chapter deals with *Oppiano Licario* (1977), a reprise of some of the motifs of *Paradiso* and a work that Lezama Lima left unfinished at his death in 1976.

*The Poetic Fiction of José Lezama Lima* is an excellent example of a critical approach to a complex work of fiction that falls into neither the sort of reductionist interpretation—plot summaries and thematic paraphrasings—that are often the lot of contemporary narratives nor into the deconstructionist “paratextualizing” that are often intriguing intellectual constructs but leave one with a (sinful) nostalgia for the text under scrutiny. As a consequence, Souza has made a valuable contribution to the criticism on *Paradiso* that will satisfy the demands of both major critics of Lezama Lima’s work and the nonspecialist reader.

Sherrill E. Grace

*THE VOYAGE THAT NEVER ENDS: MALCOLM LOWRY’S FICTION*

University of British Columbia Press, 1982. Pp. 152. \$24.

\$9.95

Reviewed by Keith Harrison

Although *Under the Volcano* is repeatedly compared to such huge achievements of literary modernism as *Ulysses* and *Nostromo*, and by loose critical consensus it is the *only* post-World War II British novel that is of artistic stature comparable to these earlier works, Malcolm Lowry’s reputation as an author seems dwarfed next to that of James Joyce or Joseph Conrad. There are two main reasons for this paradox. The first centers on what Stephen Spender in his “Introduction” to *Under the Volcano* sees as Lowry’s pervasive autobiographical mode: “The author is creating a character who is his own predicament: and this is scarcely distinguishable from projecting an image of himself.” The second cause for the relatively low evaluation of Lowry as an author is that he wrote merely a single masterpiece. Implicitly, both of these critical reservations are challenged by *The Voyage That Never Ends* because Sherrill Grace envisions all of Lowry’s fiction as one carefully designed whole: if she were able to demonstrate effectively that a rich, continuous, and overarching pattern unified his writing, then would follow necessarily a greatly revised, much higher evaluation of Lowry as an artist.

Lowry’s early idea of writing a trilogy entitled *The Voyage That Never Ends* “with the *Volcano* as the first infernal part” (*Sel. Letters*) ultimately expanded to a projected sequence of eight novels, an ambitious plan specified in 1951 through “Work in Progress” (an extended letter to his literary agent). Quoting extensively from this interesting document, Grace offers evidence of Lowry’s artistic intentions to make each of these novels “a stage in Sigbjørn Wilderness’ journey through life—the initiation, repeated ordeals with failure and retreat, followed by success and development, that in turn give way to fresh defeat” (p. 19). However, since most of these eight novels were unfinished at Lowry’s death (some left in “very raw draft”), any discussion of a grand interrelated design can only sound wistful. When Grace turns to the completed (and edited) works to pursue her thesis, she adapts patterns previously detailed in Lowry criticism, such as the circle imagery in *Under the Volcano*, as evidence of a recurring voyage motif. At times her argument seems persuasive: “. . . in *Dark as the Grave*, as in *Under the Volcano* and *October Ferry*, the reader finds himself on another Lowry bus ride with ‘weary circling’ to signify Sigbjørn’s passivity” (p. 71). But the persuasiveness is limited, in part, because nowhere in the book does Grace make a needed distinction between the recurrence of image, voice, and theme that normally typify a body of fiction (say, the novels of D. H. Lawrence) and the repetition through which Lowry intended to unify his unrealized *Voyage*.

Another difficulty with the study is its uneven prose style, with lapses into writing that is imprecise (“a devoted, if tempestuous marriage” [p. xiii]), trite (“inextricably bound up with” [p. xv]), and awkward (“The other aspect of the Lowry legend, his alcoholism, began well before his death, just before his forty-eighth birthday, in 1957, and it is rather more

difficult to qualify" [p. xiii]). Nevertheless, her study is useful in two respects. She knowledgeably draws attention to the strengths of Lowry's minor fiction, and, in digressing from her thesis, sketches the influence of specific films on *Under the Volcano* and *October Ferry*.

Even though the hypothesis of Grace's *The Voyage That Never Ends* is unproven—and is probably unprovable—the author succeeds in opening out to fuller consideration the nature of Lowry's achievement as an artist.

Joseph Mileck

*HERMANN HESSE: LIFE, WORK, AND CRITICISM*  
(Authoritative Studies in World Literature)

Fredericton, N.B.: York Press, 1984. Pp. 49. \$6.95

Reviewed by Adrian Hsia

The first reaction of a Hesse-scholar upon seeing another introductory booklet on Hermann Hesse may be the involuntary question: Is this necessary? However, this mixed feeling would soon disappear after reading a few pages. One has to admit that Joseph Mileck is a master of his craft. It is not only that his booklet left no important details untold which is, given the limited space, by itself a remarkable feat. It is the way he unfolds the biography and, especially, the works of Hermann Hesse that is truly impressive. In spite of its introductory character, even a seasoned Hesse-scholar would feel having learned something after reading Mileck's book. It is indeed a piece of scholarship which also commands the attention of the reader. One may not agree with Mileck, one may feel the urge to argue with him on certain points of interpretation, however, one would not regret having read this book.

It has five sections and opens with the biography of Hesse which is then followed by a chronological list of Hesse's major works. The biography gives a good background to the most interesting section of the booklet: the matter and manner of Hesse's fiction. Mileck shows the development of Hesse's central theme—which is closely related to the inner and outer events in Hesse's life—through his major works: the story of a "sensitive misfit." In *Hermann Lauscher* (1901) Mileck already discerns the protagonist as an embryonic Steppenwolf who made Hesse famous in the sixties and seventies. However, still in *Peter Camenzind* (1904) Hesse's characters and settings "continue to be felt rather than seen" (p. 22). Nevertheless he was moving towards realism, as *Unterm Rad* (1906) clearly shows. In this novel, Mileck points out, Hesse began to use the "double self-projection" which "was to become a literary device in all of Hesse's major works" (p. 23). Traces of this device can actually be found even in *Peter Camenzind* which Hesse began in November 1901. While Hesse was definitely moving towards realistic prose, his writings remained autobiographic and his protagonists, to a varying degree, strived to end being mere bystanders. In *Roßhalde* (1913) the protagonist finds the means of being himself as "self-acceptance" and "self-realization." However, Hesse's characters never actually reach this goal. The novels usually end after this has been rationally identified.

With *Demian* (1919) Hesse entered a new stage of consciousness, as he realized "that to live the self would of necessity involve prior emancipation from traditional religion and morality and the cultivation of a personal ethos" (p. 25), as Mileck points out. Hesse became more concerned with concepts and more abstract. Consequently, *Demian* and his mother are "actualized concepts" and "the remaining personae are actuality clearly become concepts. Hence the protagonist's breakthrough is more cerebral than real" (p. 27). However, Hesse became more conscious of the polarization of the "innermost self" and the "socialized self" in each individual. This he dramatized in *Klein und Wagner* (1919) and "fantasized" in *Klingsors letzter Sommer* (1919) which Mileck aptly considers to be an "example of Hesse's intuitively controlled artistry at its best" (p. 29). In contrast, the following novel *Siddhartha* (1922) is of conscious craftsmanship. Hesse kept the structure and even the style to a three-beat pulsation, he "even extended his customary double self-projection . . . to the actual self and three possibilities" (p. 31). The hero is the only one of Hesse's protagonists who actually reach the state of grace. After *Siddhartha*, Hesse retained his conscious craftsmanship. He used four complementary pairs of portraits to depict Haller and his age in *Der Steppenwolf* (1927). Although