

MALCOLM LOWRY: A CRITIQUE OF HIS WRITINGS

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled Malcolm Lowry :
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STATEMENT BY THE CANDIDATE

I hereby state that this thesis for the Ph.D. degree on Malcolm Lowry: A Critique of his Writings is my original work and that it has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other similar title to the best of my knowledge and information.



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THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

CHAPTER - 1

THE MAKING OF AN ARTIST

I

Malcolm Lowry is one of the most prominent continental writers who has contributed greatly to the development of Canadian writing. He along with Brian Moore and Kildare was responsible not only for bringing about a stimulus of new viewpoints, innovative and creative ideas but also for introducing more rigorous and critical attitudes in literature¹.

As perceptively observed by George Woodcock it goes without saying that Canadian literature evolved because of the immigrants, the most prominent among them are Frederick Philip Grove, Malcolm Lowry and Roderick Haig-Brown. These writers have given a splendid voice to the regions of Canada. However, Malcolm Lowry was unrecognised by the literary critics until his death in 1957. He was given recognition only when the academics managed to string together his manuscripts and the CBC took over the responsibility of broadcasting programmes about him².

II

In this section I have dealt with Lowry's Canadianness. Canadian literature actually got its recognition in the twentieth century. Today it has acquired a variety, a sophistication and the ironic view of the world it presents, and a critical view of its own productions. This has helped

it to cross all the barriers and to mark Canadian literature as a mature literature which has grown to begin interpreting its own environment in an original way. Malcolm Lowry a Canadian writer was a literary genius and an artist with a grand design.

Malcolm Lowry literally circumnavigated the globe since he wandered over a great portion of the earth - the Far East, the United States, much of Europe, and, ofcourse, Mexico. Lowry spent almost a third of his life in Canada. That third was the most productive third so far as Lowry's writing is concerned. Lowry was writing in the early and middle thirties, the period in which he was learning his craft and acquiring the experience that prepared him to compose his master work. It was Dollarton which formed the base and foundation of his writings, because it was at Dollarton, and at Niagara-on-the-Lake, that Lowry finished the last³, published version of Under the Volcano⁴. Besides this, it was also at Dollarton that he wrote the stories which are published in the volume entitled Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place⁵. He worked at the same time on at least one novel about Mexico which is Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend is Laid⁶. October Ferry to Gabriel-la⁷ is also set in British Columbia. Apart from the novels and the short stories some of his poems 'Kingfishers in British Columbia', 'In a Mexican Church'⁸ have their settings in British Columbia and Mexico respectively.

There is no doubt that Lowry had one foot in the realm of Canadian literature. He was like a tree, with its roots nurtured in the Canadian soil and its branches opening out to breathe the winds that blew from the Canadian sky. Among the poems "Dodder" which he wrote on Burrard Inlet, the three Canadian stories in Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place. "The Bravest Boat", "Gin and Golden Rod", particularly "The Forest Path to the Spring" provide evidence to the reader that he is not in fact writing about Canada as an alien and a transient outsider. Malcolm Lowry was in fact writing about it as a man who over fifteen years had lived into the environment.

One could feel the heart beat of Canada pulsating in his works. He inhabited a fragile home where the Pacific tides lapped and sucked under the floorboards. He identified himself with that environment - despite trials of flesh and spirit.

In "The Forest Path to Spring", George Woodcock finds a universal calm, the calm of a world of nature as sympathetic as even Wordsworth wrote of, with which it identifies and from which it returns with joy enriched. It is in this almost rhapsodic identification with place that the reader finds the best reason to claim much of what Lowry wrote for the literature of Canada. It is not the sense of place that derives from mere observation, like that which is conveyed by a sensitive and competent travel writer. It is rather the sense of place that derives from a mental naturaliza-

tion, which adds to a natives sense of identity, the wonder of newness a native can never experience fully after childhood⁹.

Sherrill Grace in The Voyage that Never Ends: Malcolm Lowry's Fiction asserts that "Lowry shares with Canadian writers an obsessive interest in the past. Such an interest cannot, be indeed evaded and must not be escaped. He also shares a longing for what Northrop Frye describes as the "peaceable kingdom". Margaret Lawrence is convinced and claims that the Canadians must hold on to their roots, to their past if they are to know themselves and be able to develop in the future. Simultaneously probing into the past can become a trap for the weak or self-indulgent because successful movement within memory depends upon the awareness that time should not be reified and hypostazized, that time is a continuous process. Thus Lowry's characters like those of Lawrence, Davies or Alice Munro succeed in the search for the self to the intensity that they try to be at home with the past in the present and future. The dream of a "peaceable kingdom" which Frye identifies in much of Canadian writing bears a close association with the longing to balance the opposites and to overcome the separation between nature and culture. Moreover the "peaceable kingdom" is synonymous with a northern paradise, or first "home" which the Canadian Adam and Eve must return together. It is this very kingdom which Malcolm Lowry celebrates in "The Forest Path to Spring"¹⁰.

Malcolm Lowry's best novel to come out of Canada at any time has been Under the Volcano and much more truly Canadian were the short stories in the volume entitled Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place which Lowry wrote on the basis of his experience in British Columbia. These stories clearly explicate that Lowry had lived his way into the Canadian environment and he could render its spirit as admirably and with as much fantastic originality as he rendered that of the Mexican plateau in Under the Volcano. Malcolm Lowry, in his own, fits just as elusively into the pattern of Canadian writing¹¹.

Critics have emphasized the Canadian aspect in the works of Malcolm Lowry. Barry Wood asserts that his spirit of greatest creativity (1940-44) occurred on Canadian soil making possible the completion of Under the Volcano. After nearly disastrous trips to Mexico (1945-46) and Europe (1947-49) another period of creativity occurred in Canada (1949-54) during which he worked on the major works published since his death.

In his writings Dollarton has acquired importance under the symbolic name Eridanus. The symbolic weight of Eridanus is enormous forming an important dimension of Lowry's universality. Apart from these two aspects of his Canadian writings the third aspect is his recognition by the people in Canada of his genius. The poet Earle Birney was largely responsible for salvaging Lowry's manuscripts and depositing them in the University of British Columbia Library¹².

III

To gain an insight into Lowry's works, it is very necessary to understand a few events which have played a major role in his life and which are reflected in this study "**Malcolm Lowry; A Critique of his writings**".

Malcolm Boden Lowry was born on July 28, 1909¹³. He was born in a moderately wealthy family and his father Arthur Osborne Lowry was a cotton broker. His mother's name was Evelyn Boden Lowry. He was the youngest of the four sons¹⁴. His father owned cotton fields in Egypt, Peru and Texas and was a director of Sugar and Oil Corporations. His mother was the daughter of Captain Lyon Boden, a well known mariner and a ship owner. Malcolm Lowry suffered from a sense of rejection and emotional abandonment since his childhood. Douglas Day unfolds an incident when Malcolm Lowry tells his wife Margerie that his mother had "neglected him terribly"¹⁵. John Davenport, a friend of Malcolm Lowry at Cambridge also asserts that Lowry spoke of his mother "only with hatred"¹⁶. Malcolm Lowry had a feeling that he was "the last and least wanted of four children"¹⁷ of Arthur O. Lowry.

This sense of alienation which hovered in the mind of Malcolm Lowry found a manifestation in characters such as Dana Hilliot in¹⁸ Ultramarine and Geoffrey Firmin in Under the Volcano. Malcolm Lowry experienced rejection right from his childhood. He was left for long periods in the care of nannies, while his mother accompanied her husband on voyages

abroad. They were mostly business trips. Lowry recalled to his wife Margerie that on one occasion a governess had taken his brother Russell and himself into a lonely heath near Inglewood. At that time Russell was only seven years old. She pulled down Lowry's short trousers, and whipped his genitals, while Russell watched on. This same woman he said tried her evil machinations to drown him by pushing him into a rain barrel. But he was fortunate for being saved by the gardener. Just two months before his death, Lowry told Ralph Case, who was visiting him in Ripe that "he had a nurse in Wirral who used to take him into a remote part of the garden and twist his arm and beat him"¹⁹

The above biographical details of Malcolm Lowry do contain a grain of salt. Malcolm Lowry recounted them with such intensity that his account itself is self-revealing because the step-motherly treatment which he had encountered with at the hands of the sadistic series of nannies had done an irreparable damage to his being. The psychological wounds in Malcolm Lowry which had been inflicted by the nannies get exacerbated, when at the age of seven he is sent to the boarding-school at Caldicote. The gulf of separation from his parents gets widened as Malcolm Lowry was forced to spend seven long years at Caldicote. M.C. Bradbrook pro- pounds that his stay at Caldicote played a significant role in his life. At Caldicote he passed through an ordeal which he tried to recapture in the poem 'Autopsy'²⁰.

"An Autopsy on this childhood then/
reveals : That he was, flayed at seven ,

crucified / at eleven And he was blind
as well and jeered / at for his
blindness"²¹.

When Lowry was playing with the ball at Caldicote, he was struck in the eye which later on caught infection. Nobody paid any attention to him and the infection remained undiagnosed and for the next four years he remained more than half-blind. Malcolm felt dejected, isolated to be left all alone in that state of semi-blindness. His wounded heart became all the more sore when he found that his own mother was disgusted to find her son's eyes covered with bandage. He could not comprehend the hard heartedness of a mother who gave him birth and he was seized with consternation when she refused to let him come home. That episode of blindness became a reality for Malcolm Lowry because there is scarcely a Lowry protagonist from Dana Hilliot of Ultramarine to Ethan of October Ferry to Gabriola²² who has not been portrayed as having been infected with eye infection during his youth.

Such loveless treatment which Malcolm Lowry suffered from made him feel forlorn and castaway. He was always found to be excessively self-engrossed and self-absorbed. Such infantile trauma prevented Lowry from being an extrovert. He could not come to terms with the reality and found it extremely difficult to establish a relationship between his own self and the outside world.

Malcolm Lowry finished his schooling at the age of

fourteen. He left Caldicote and joined The Leys, Cambridge in September 1923. He experienced solitariness even at Cambridge. One of the Lowry's contemporaries at the Leys, W. F. Proudfoot tried to recreate the lonely self of Malcolm Lowry with fidelity.

"I think of Lowry as thick-set in appearance not very tall, tough physically and mentally... casual in manner, some lone wolf and with a questing mind mature beyond his years..... I should imagine that much of school life bored him"²³.

Malcolm Lowry found it difficult to concentrate on his studies. He knew that it was not his cup of tea. He discovered his vocation. He knew that he was called to be a writer. His father wanted him to continue his studies at Cambridge. He could not see eye to eye with the plans which his father had for him. He had an adventurous bent of mind. He wanted to have a taste of sea life. He agreed to go to Cambridge on the condition that he was allowed to spend a year at sea first. Malcolm Lowry's imagination was nurtured by Conrad and Eugene O'Neill. In 1927 he became a deckboy on Pyrrhus bound for far East. Conrad Knickerbocker wrote that the sea voyage before Lowry went to Cambridge -

"took him to Singapore, Shanghai, Kowloon, Penang where there was a gun battle in which he was wounded in the leg, glorious young drinking

in Yokohama bars, a storm with a dock cargo of snakes a wild boar, panthers and a elephant"²⁴.

Malcolm Lowry undertook sea-voyages to some places. He wanted to explore and taste the real essence of life with all its ordeals. He did not want to lead a life of comfort and ease. Lowry experienced a sense of fulfillment when he was separated from his family. The sense of alienation which he has dealt with in his novels e.g. Ultramarine was a part and parcel of Lowry right from his childhood.

Malcolm Lowry was born to a strict abstemious and a puritanical father. He dreaded the authority of his father. He wanted to escape and be freed from his clutches. According to Douglas Day O Lowry -

"represented for young Lowry a harsh threatening super - ego"²⁵.

Malcolm Lowry's perception of God and his father was somewhat similar. It was not only the super ego which was embodied in the father that kept haunting him but also the Calvinistic faith of a vengeful God. His conception of God was that he tried to wreak out vengeance on man. This unnerved Malcolm Lowry and he wanted to run away from such a reality.

A biographer of Malcolm Lowry Conrad Knickerbocker calls Arthur O Lowry-

"the incarnation of the imperial middle class"²⁶.

It is for the same reason that Malcolm Lowry embarked on a voyage on the Pyrrhus (May 1927- October 27) to extricate himself from the relationship of his domineering father. In 1929, in his letter to Conrad Aiken, Malcolm Lowry complained that -

"no body reads at home; the only paper we take is 'The British Weekly'"²⁷.

Malcolm Lowry literally starved from food for thought. This lack of intellectual void created in him a quest and desire for something to which he could cling on other than material comfort. Malcolm Lowry went to Cambridge and embodied his experience which he underwent as a deckboy in S.S. Pyrrhus in his first novel Ultramarine. To Lowry Cambridge University -

"proved only a return to the cage, much resented"²⁸.

Malcolm Lowry neglected his studies in his classroom but there is enough evidence to the effect that he had a good collection of books and he perhaps believed in self-education. Even though Malcolm Lowry had an aversion towards Cambridge it was undoubtedly Cambridge which shaped, nourished and moulded his mind. When he was at Cambridge he went to Norway on a freighter in July 1930 to have a meeting with Nordahl Grieg. Malcolm Lowry felt that it was at Cambridge that he discovered himself and his identity. It was at Cambridge that he pursued his literary career in accordance with the promptings which he received from his inner being.

After his stay at Cambridge, Malcolm Lowry had a London phase. It was during this period that he got his novel Ultramarine published. John Sommerfield affirms how Lowry in the fall of 1932, just drawn from Cambridge -

"would reel drunkenly about the streets of London, muttering about terrible sexual insults at the hands of nannies which had ruined him for good"²⁹.

When Malcolm Lowry went to Spain in 1933 he met Jan Gabriel a 'stunt girl' from Hollywood films in Granada. He married her in 1933. His marriage with Jan Gabriel broke down in 1937 and this breakdown of marriage became one of the themes in Under the Volcano. The Mexican visit stands out in Malcolm Lowry's life, because it was one of his most shattering experiences of life. He started drinking more after his break up in marriage. After the departure from his wife he returned to Los Angeles and he was rescued there from a colossal drinking bout by the American writer Marger-
ie Bonner.

MALCOLM LOWRY : THE MAN.

Malcolm Lowry and his wife Margerie stayed for two weeks in Professor David Markson's New York apartment. They stayed on because they were awaiting the departure of a freighter to Italy. The period which he spent with Markson was indeed amusing. It reflects Lowry as an object of mockery and this was mainly due to his alcoholism. Malcolm

Lowry while he was conversing with Markson remarked about Dylan Thomas -

"You know, I never saw him when he was not drunk"³⁰.

Similarly David Markson remarked about Lowry in a similar fashion-

The man could not save himself. In lieu of a belt, he knotted a rope or discarded necktie around his waist. Mornings he needed two or three ounces of gin in his orange juice, if he was to steady his hand to eat the breakfast that would, very likely prove his only meal of the day. Thereafter, a diminishing yellow tint in the glass might belie for a time the fact that now he was drinking the gin, neat, which he did for as many hours as it took to collapse sometimes sensible enough of his condition to lurch toward a bed, though more often he would crash down into a chair. Then he would hack and sputter through the night like some great defective machine breaking apart"³¹.

This unpredictable genius could accomplish a great deal during his short span on this earth, because he had a very good relationship with his wife. They were partners and shared their life in everything they did. They shared the

successes as well as the periods of want with equal respect. She had an attractive gaiety and was known for her theatrical manner. Malcolm Lowry was proud of Margerie and her qualities too. When he was engaged in writing he constantly sought Margerie's opinions and consideration. Margerie's concern for Lowry gave him strength and stimulation which uplifted him during his dark non-productive periods which he encountered time and again. Margerie possessed the rare quality of intellectual honesty and forthrightness. They loved, admired and respected each other.

Malcolm Lowry made a constructive use of his leisure too. He spent his relaxed periods by strumming songs, chanties and tunes which he composed. He strummed these on his ukelele. He was thrilled for being basked and immersed in that music which was purely his own creation. Malcolm Lowry would pass hours delightfully only when he was lost in the musical trap.

Malcolm Lowry has displayed his talents as a poet, short-story writer, novelist, movie script writer, legendary alcoholic, jazz musician, sailor, golfer, student of the Cabbala, mythopoeist, and indefatigable jester. He was a man of many parts. He died at the age of forty eight in 1957 in Ripe, near Lewes, Sussex³².

Malcolm Lowry was his own greatest mystery and his own mysterious god, whom he spent a relatively short lifetime trying to understand and explain. These are the facts of a tortured and yet hilarious life of Malcolm Lowry. The turbulence, the lifelong addiction to alcohol and his grave

unpredictable behaviour should not blind us to the charm, vitality, slyness and capacity for discerning the ridiculous, particularly, when that vision, as it so often was, was the reflection in a mirror.

IV

LITERARY INFLUENCES ON MALCOLM LOWRY

No writer can live in an isolation. He is shaped, moulded and nourished by others. The task of tracing the literary influences that shape any writer is not an easy one, for apart from consciously following certain models, a writer learns much from other writers, both his own contemporaries and predecessors too. The influence of other writers on oneself cannot be measured in exact terms, but it may be possible to think of the impact which some books have on a writer. Thus the books which awaken one's total being into dynamic stirrings may be said to have influenced one.

W.H. New in his article "Lowry's Reading" gives a glimpse of Lowry's taste for reading. He was a voracious reader. According to W.H. New at the University of British Columbia in two large boxes are the remnants of Malcolm Lowry's library. These include a motley collection of works that ranges from Emily Bronte and Olive Schreiner to Djuna Barnes and Virginia Woolf, from the Kenyon, Partisan, and Sewanee Reviews to A Pocketful of Canada, from Latin Prose Composition to the Metropolitan Opera Guide and from Elizabethan plays to Kafka and Keats³³.

Certainly there was little which escaped his attention.

In other words, even such a partial list as this one indicates his eclectic and energetic insatiability for books. Malcolm Lowry absorbed and remembered everything that he experienced. He was an inveterate film-goer and a jazz enthusiast. An appreciation of the scope of his references or the source of a single allusion takes the reader close to Lowry's tone and method.

According to John Davenport Malcolm Lowry did not pay much attention to studies in the classroom but he had a good collection of books and he perhaps believed in self-schooling. John Davenport's account of Malcolm Lowry in his study at Cambridge is revealing -

"The books revealed the eclecticism of the literary workman. Like other undergraduates of that time, he had a taste for the Elizabethans, Joyce and Eliot, but few undergraduates then knew Knut Hamsun and Herman Bang, B Travern and Nordahl Grieg. Nor had they read the whole of Ibsen and Strindberg. E.E. Cummings, Hart Crane, Wallace Stevens and Conrad Aiken himself had merely been names to most of us. Henry James had not been rediscovered, but Malcolm had volume after heavily annotated volume of the Master's work.... Three novellas had a special affection for, were Mann's Tonio Kroger, Melville's Ba-

rtleby and Bunins The Gentlemen from San Francisco. Many young men of twenty are well read, but Malcolm's reading was integrated in an unusual way. Dante and Faulkner were made to seem part of a whole³⁴.

Malcolm Lowry made an indepth study of the works of Coleridge. He absorbed Coleridge's central theme from 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' that of the problem of harmonising the mind with the outside environment. Lowry assimilated and bound this theme integrally into the structure of "Through the Panana". Malcolm Lowry accepted and incorporated Coleridge's ideas about the fluidity of time in his work³⁵.

W. H. New in his article "Lowry's Reading" asserts that Lowry had also made a study of J.W.Dunne's An Experiment with Time (1927). This book examined the proposition that the future can be objectively experienced in the past. His novel Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend is Laid most clearly demonstrates Dunne's idea: Lowry perceived Dunne's applicability of the theory to the process by which an artist attaches himself to his work and then is separated from it. This is evident in his novel Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend is Laid which concerns his character Wilderness (another novelist) discovering the separation between himself and his own character Trumbaugh- in a linear sequence that open up Dunne's notion of "regress": events in

time past, relived in the memory, occur simultaneously in the time present. This epitomizes in its own way the process of "re-creation". But further: Wilderness, returning to his own and his novel's Mexican past, is still moving through time into the future. Out of his memory of the past he anticipates events in the future, which possess a vivid and objective reality for him. On the basis of this "dream" experience, however, the will may exert itself and thus alter the nature of the "actual" experience that subsequently occurs. This process was very important for Lowry. There existed a unity between life and death, body and soul, reality and unreality³⁶.

Malcolm Lowry's search in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason was for answers to one of the dilemmas he found himself in. Similarly his passion for fateful coincidences led him into the works of D.D. Ouspensky (A New Model of the Universe, 1931) and Charles Fort (particularly Lo!, 1931, Wild Talents, 1932 and The Book of the Damned, (1919)). He travelled to Haiti (in 1947) to discover something about Voodoo, and became interested in the work of a young Haitian writer named Philippe Thoby - Marcelin. He found occult signs in the natural world about him, and in order to interpret them, he absorbed many of the ideas of Neo Platonism. His interest in the Greek classics evolves from this discovery for omens and explanations. Throughout Ultramarine the Eumenides echo their voices, till Hilliot hears. In Malcolm Lowry's later works particularly in the manuscript pages of October Ferry to Gabriola fragments from Ouspensky,

Tourneur, Plato, Fort and I Ching are pieced and stringed together to explain the influence and fate of Ethan and Jacqueline Llewelyn³⁷.

Malcolm Lowry found much of the occult system in the works of a Vancouver Cabbalist who was named Charles Robert Stansfeld -Jones. His later writing hangs on Jones work - particularly G.B.L, or the Bride's Reception and The Anatomy of the Body of God. Malcolm Lowry read these books with great interest because they explored the theory that the universe is constantly expanding yet constantly ordered. In his terms, the expansion can be seen in the psychic progress of adepts within it, the order being described by the principles and symbols of Cabbala, which will allow to an adept the knowledge that can lead to hell or to heaven, to the barranca or the garden to torment or to peace. Thus numbers, colours, animals and all the symbols acquire a meaning that is significant not only within the framework of an individual story but also within the constructs of occult philosophy³⁸.

Jung's concept of "man in search of a soul" played a very important role in Lowry's work in 1950. Again in 1953 Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author was related to Existentialism and to Ortega's philosophy of history³⁹. Lowry also admits to have derived from the Divine Comedy, in order to try to render all human experience and all its paradoxes of time, place and perception in something more emotionally overwhelming than abstract terms. Lowry acknowledged the comparative approach when he

found in the work of Herman Hesse the closest spirit to his own. Again the topics are pursued till they become his own; they cease to be objects and become part of the subjectivity with which he renders experience⁴⁰.

Malcolm Lowry's mind was nourished by the rich intellectual fare at that literary circle in Cambridge. The literary circle at Cambridge composed of I. A. Richards, Empson, Jacob Bronowski, Kathleen Raine and Humphrey Jennings, the brilliant film producer. This literary group was interested in Surrealism, Eliot, Joyce and Lawrence. Bronowski's writing on Symbolism and Empson's emphasis on alternative meanings, deep-laid contradictions and paradoxical statement of opposites encouraged Lowry's taste for multiple levels of meaning and for mythopoeic suspension in his novels later. Baudelaire's Fleurs de Mai tutored his sensibility and Geoffrey's love of damnation in his novel Under the Volcano owes much to Baudelaire.

The main shapers of Lowry's writings were Nordahl Grieg and the American, Conrad Aiken in Ultramarine (1933) The influences of Pirandello and Ortega Y. Gasset are obvious in Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place (1961) and Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend is Laid (1968) David Markson in his article "Myth in Under the Volcano" offers a selective list of writers and influences he finds functioning "operatively" in Under the Volcano: Jung, Spengler, Freud, Frazer, Spinoza, Jessie L. Weston, Oriental Metaphysics, and the occult⁴¹. Even the influence of James Joyce has been established in the writings of Malcolm Lowry.

Lowry from the outset of his career demonstrated a fascination with the elements of the Nordic world. The relationship between the two writers Nordahl Grieg and Malcolm Lowry was in many respects as much psychological as literary, even though there is no doubt about the formal impact of the The Ship Sails On on Lowry's early work. In many respects the two men were remarkably similar : both manifested a romantic vision about the world, about their roles as writers, about the necessity of gaining experience in the larger world. Nordahl Grieg like Lowry had no lasting love for the sea but he saw it as a symbol of gaining experience⁴².

Malcolm Lowry has said that he learnt to write while listening to Bix Beiderbecke, and he once spoke of trying to write a new kind of novel -

"something that is bald and winnowed,
like Sibelius, and that makes an odd
but splendid din, like Bix Beiderbecke"⁴³.

Lowry's favourite jazz musicians were undoubtedly Beiderbecke, a white trumpeter of German extraction whose lyrical style was highly influential, Joe Venuti, one of the few violinists in jazz, Venuti's partner, guitarist Eddie Lang and Saxophonist Frankie Trumbauer. Lowry refers to jazz in both his fiction as well as his letters too. There are three characters in Lowry's writing for whom jazz is of a great interest. Hugh, the Consul's half-brother in Under the Volcano, is given Lowry's own musical background, he

talks about Venuti and Lang often, and speaks of -

"a day like a good Joe Venuti record"⁴⁴.

The life-long relationship between Lowry and the cinema reveals itself everywhere in his work. Lowry himself was not unaware of the pervasive influence of the cinema; particularly that of Germany. Lowry's thorough knowledge and appreciation of cinematic technique came from his sustained, intense interest in the world of film, a world in which he participated as a viewer, critic and writer.

W. H. New enumerates that besides music, cinema and jazz, not all of the influences that impinged on Lowry's consciousness can be precisely dated as that of Charles Jones, who arrived in Lowry's life as a census enumerator in 1941. Malcolm Lowry was frequently provided with cogent subplots and evocative images, for example - as can be seen vividly in Under the Volcano or the published Chapter from October Ferry to Gabriola or the manuscript pages of a story like "Ghostkeeper" by reading such ephemeral material as neighbourhood newspapers. His knowledge of the Greek and Roman Classics, Shakespeare and Dante, however, presumably dates from his English public school education. Aiken and Grieg were undergraduate enthusiasts. John Davenport was a school acquaintance and James Stern a friend from his Paris days in the early 1930's. Lowry's casual references to Donne, Dostoevsky, Chatterton, Crabbe, Roethke, Chekhov, Faulkner, Dylan Thomas, Ellison, Yeats and a host of others are clearly evident in his letters⁴⁵.

Lowry's acquaintance with scholars was overwhelming. Lowry knew the work of Ralph Gustafson and Al Purdy and a proletarian poet of the early 1950's named Curt Lang-but not well, and not to the point of its affecting his own work in any observable way. It was really landscape more than culture that influenced him in Canada. One particularly pointed passage in October Ferry to Gabriola makes this above explanation clear: if Canada has any originality at all it lies in its uncontrolled wilderness. To be taming it is one thing; to have it tamed is another a dead situation that demands undoing in order to begin afresh. So the physical environment furnished him once again with a metaphor for the artists predicament. To be taming the wilderness of language and ideas is more exhilarating than to have accomplished the task. To know that and yet still to be spurred into writing created an ironic dilemma that was Lowry's own⁴⁶.

W. H. New in his article "Lowry's Reading" explicitly depicts how he knew some writers in Canada like Dorothy Livesay and Earle Birney, better than Gustafson and Lang. Lowry's process of "taming" his own landscape led to his constant revision of his work, his constant search for knowledge, his continual urge to read more and to begin writing again.

Lowry's reading, influences and references show not only the importance which he attached to things he encountered, but also the metamorphosis they underwent in his

mind. At the same time, it offers us a glimpse of his ideas in the process of being born.

MALCOLM LOWRY'S VIEWS ON ART

Malcolm Lowry has not written any specific article expressing his views on art. However, through the letters written by him to intimate friends and his conversation with them reveal his views on art. Lowry spoke of his work, a friend recounts, "as though it were a part of his body"⁴⁷, and in a sense it was, for he lived to write and what he wrote was his life. Malcolm Lowry was akin to Joyce, who also "wrote over every square inch of his own body"⁴⁸. In Malcolm Lowry, experience and art was so intimately joined, for that matter Joyce and Malcolm Lowry had the same vocation. Conrad Aiken recalls having met no writer "more visibly or happily alight with genius the more moving and convincing and alive, for its very uncontrolledness, its spontaneity and gay recklessness, not to mention its infectiously gleeful itself"⁴⁹. Besides Aiken, many people sensed Lowry's promise prior to the appearance of Under the Volcano in 1947, when the author was already thirty seven years old.

Malcolm Lowry personally knew a number of great writers. These writers admired his work and communicated their admiration to him. It was Conrad Aiken his great and special friend who recognised his genius long before the others could. In 1932 when his first novel Ultramarine received a set back and a rather indifferent public response, it was during this period that Conrad Aiken encouraged and stimulated him.

Malcolm Lowry never envied other budding writers and artists. He was generous with material possessions. It did not matter if someone was popular, famous or unknown. He knew well how difficult it was to piece together common words rich in meaning. Malcolm Lowry never failed to give consideration, advice, time, encouragement subjectively and never didactically to all those who asked for it. He not only had a great love for language but he respected and revered it. He, a master, considered himself a tyro and anyone who tackled the same task with love was treated as a potential genius⁵⁰.

Malcolm Lowry had a unique way of writing. To Malcolm Lowry a writer never died. He accepted their absence on the surface and was fond of writing long verbal letters. He was also known for his spidery written additions and changes in the typescript. He would finish a page and in utter silence would walk into the bedroom to pick up a scrap of wastepaper on which he would insert a paragraph. Malcolm Lowry is remembered for his fondness of rewriting both in verse and prose⁵¹.

Lowry's posthumous novels existed at the time of his death in a total mess. His wife Margerie Bonner neatly packaged the material into a pattern to what she believed was Lowry's intention. Terence Bareham in his article "After the Volcano: An Assessment of Malcolm Lowry's Posthumous Fiction" expounds a detailed account of Lowry's method of composition. He asserts that a brief resume of

Lowry's method of composition, a look at his themes and images express his view of man and the modern world. Terence Bareham further unfolds that Lowry's method of composition was discursive and highly allusive. Each part of the fabric stood upon and supported each other⁵².

This accuracy he was gifted with was one of the powerful and strengthening qualities of his writing. His great novel Under the Volcano is a befitting and fine example of physical depiction, razor-edged characterisation, and evocation of mood. He made each line true in detail with layers of meaning which could be peeled off by the reader. In his description he really never added anything, yet he was able to cast a different spell over the event on each telling.

Malcolm Lowry added layers of circumstance to his plots. In every case he indeed began with events which actually happened to him. His life experiences included in the novels were breakdown and harassment in Mexico, the building and destruction of the cabin at Dollarton. To these experiences to every layer he added significant detail, correspondence and analogy. This flow of life into his art always brought into play his wit, indomitable humour and dogged courage⁵³.

He had used similar techniques in order to present plots in almost all his novels. His plots were described as interwoven "interior" and tangential. They were personalised through the particular idiosyncratic consciousness of the hero. The plots have gained their importance as a result of its linkage with minute details⁵⁴.

"A world in suspense, a world in delirium, a drunken world in fear. With him there were too many fears, so that the world too, like himself was liable to lose all meaning - it was high time he categorised them all of them were chased about, herded, ordered, and finally set to dance together by a master choreographer"⁵⁵.

To this can be added an equally personal observation in

Through the Panama that -

"nothing indeed can be more unlike the actual experience of life than the average novelist's realistic portrait of a character"⁵⁶.

It is an accepted fact that in all his books, men in action scarcely exist. Men thinking rather than men acting are Lowry's speciality. According to Lowry thought is action of a kind but this action is more of an inward type. Neither Sigbjorn Wilderness nor Ethan Llewelyn act themselves towards the edge of the maelstrom. The reader is able to understand their problem and their potential salvation only by realising the quality and nature of what they experience.

Beyond walking, drinking, or taking a journey, nothing seems to happen on the plot surface of a Lowry novel. Both the novels - October Ferry to Gabriola and Under the Volcano

occupy only one day in their ostensible span, but both plunge and engulf us long years backward into the hero's "interior" life. Lowry the most static of modern novelists, is also the most dramatic.

Malcolm Lowry was a committed novelist. He believed that the novel is a form which had its own integral pattern. Malcolm Lowry got himself totally immersed in Expressionism, a movement in the first quarter of the twentieth century against realism and naturalism. In a letter to Jonathan Cape, Malcolm Lowry spoke of his "rebellion" against the realist school with its photographic fidelity in adhering to the externals of life⁵⁷. He was after "a new form, a new approach to reality itself"⁵⁸. He unfolds in a letter to Albert Erskine that the perspective on reality he developed is that of an Expressionist who undermined the foundations of realistic art and rendered visible -

"soul-states and the violent emotions
welling up from the inner most recesses
of the subconscious"⁵⁹.

This approach of Malcolm Lowry typical of an Expressionist is seen at its best in Lunar Caustic where he strove to break down the frontiers between subjective and objective reality and to superimpose the subjective reality of Bill Plantagenet upon his external world.

Margerie Lowry has observed depth in Under the Volcano but it was even more strong in Malcolm Lowry's formal organisation in his later works, especially October Ferry to Gabriela.

"His astonishing awareness of the thickness of life, of the layers, the depths, of the abysses, interlocking and interrelated, causes him to write a symphony where anyone else would have written a sonata or at most a concerto, and this makes his work sometimes appear dispersed, whereas actually the form and context have arisen so inextricably one from the other that they cannot be disassociated"⁶⁰.

This rich formal organisation has been effected by a couple of devices such as stream-of-consciousness, the flashback and the musicalization of the structure of the novel.

Malcolm Lowry added imaginative richness to his novel Under the Volcano by using myth. The use of myth gives modern fiction a poetic character. To a modern poet like T. S. Eliot myth was a favourite device which he made use of in his poetry. Malcolm Lowry's use of myth in Under the Volcano is quite different from that of Joyce and Eliot. In Lowry's novel the myth becomes an illustration of the fragmentary character of the phase of history of the thirties and the forties. In the First Chapter the writer says that Quauhnahuac splits at several places when Christ is crucified. The crucifixion of Christ is not used as a symbol of abounding love for the sinning humanity and a device for mastering the tormented psyche of Geoffrey. The myth of

Christ is simply a picture of the disturbed period of the thirties and the forties through the character of Geoffrey and Geoffrey is a mask for the writer himself.

The symbolism which Lowry makes use of in his writing was not confined to his work itself but was a part of his daily life. Two processes go on simultaneously in Lowry's fiction. A supersensitive awareness of coincidence and supranatural recurrence leads to the proliferation of symbols but he condenses and controls the far-flung conceits. A reader encounters the same mind, method and attitudes at work while dealing with Malcolm Lowry's nature and function of symbols. The symbolism in Lowry's work is not confined to the work itself. It was a part of his daily life. His world was peopled with black and white forces. His daily swim was not merely a swim but a metaphysical experience.

Malcolm Lowry was doubtless a critic of philosophy because in one of his letters he tells about reading Jose Ortega Y Gasset - especially his wonderful lecture on Goethe - and his Towards a Philosophy of History⁶¹. In Towards a Philosophy of History the Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega Y. Gasset suggests that human life in its most human dimension is like a work of fiction. Man is a kind of novelist of himself who conceives the figure of a person for the sake of converting it into reality, doing all the things he does⁶². Lowry was taken up by this idea because he too was convinced that there was something valuable from the philosophic point of view in trying to put down what actually took place in a novelist's mind when he conceived what he conceived to be

the fanciful figure of a personage.

Malcolm Lowry was interested in that thought because he believed that it was a philosophy that begins with one's existence. Malcolm Lowry was a writer with a mission. He explored that the novel had become the weapon of humanism. After making an indepth study of his works I believe that for Lowry a novel stated the problems of man's destiny. It did not solve them, but focussed attention on the real drama of the body-soul, the truth of life, with all its suffering and its mightiness which may resurrect genuine humanity.

Malcolm Lowry was one of the great interpreters of the modern world. Sherrill Grace in her Introduction to Swinging the Maelstrom: New Perspectives on Malcolm Lowry elucidates that forty years after the publication of his masterpiece, Under the Volcano (1947) his vision of that world seemed if anything more urgent, more compelling, more frightening - and more beautiful - than before. He produced only a few finished texts. Even the "unfinished" texts - those corrupt editions put together by other hands and published posthumously - however, constitute encyclopaedic explorations of the modern world. Lowry's aim throughout his works was to interpret the world for us and by doing so, to render it a home for the human imagination⁶³.

The foregoing account of Malcolm Lowry's literary personality leads to certain obvious conclusions. Sue Vice in her article "The Volcano of a post modern Lowry" asserts that to consider Malcolm Lowry's oeuvre from a post modern perspective is to discover a new and refreshing model for

his work⁶⁴. Critics from Fredric Jameson to Craig Owen and from Edward Said to Jean Francois Lyotard have identified elements in postmodern writing of pastiche, self-reference, a schizophrenic attitude to history, the death of the author and of the subject, collage and allegory⁶⁵.

Moreover, the postmodern artefact resists instant consumability. (Under the Volcano does, after all, literally demand a second reading) in a way that goes beyond the modernist strategy of simply making itself opaquely verbal and removed from the real. The postmodern work, lacking the story teller's claim to respect and attention, advertises the fact that it is a commodity, not an art object but an artefact. The postmodern work is thus an extension of the word rather than an image of it, making clear that there is, as Terry Eagleton says,

"no reality which is not itself already image, spectacle, simulacrum, gratuitous fiction..... for art to reflect reality is then for it, to do no more than minor itself"⁶⁶.

The central features of postmodernism are represented in Lowry's writing, and the approach indicated by postmodernists is particularly useful in discussing his work as a radically new practice, as becomes clear from the categories under which it is frequently examined : autobiography, plagiarism and alcoholism.

Sue Vice further explores that Lowry's work belongs neither to the modernist school of reified, autonomous art

work nor to the glossily packaged hightech part of postmodern literature, often taken to be synonymous with the movement as a whole. It preserves all the features postmodernism is credited with: it celebrates not the autonomous modernist work but the provisional contingent text, it shows in action, the death of the subject and of the author, it relies on pastiche and collage, it has a particular relation to the past, using traditional forms in a displaced manner, Under the Volcano for example, includes elements of romantic and existentialist novels, novels of local colour, all edged with irony and exploited principally for their accompanying terminologies and cliches. Any mythology adopted is selected anew. Lowry substitutes Aztec deities, Mexican history, and a whole lore and language of the cantina for the usual high modernist interest in Christian myths and European history⁶⁷.

What distinguishes Lowry from such practitioners of the genre as those architects whose postmodern practice is described as environmentally amoral⁶⁸ or writers such as William Burroughs, is that his art is not heartless. Lowry's art enacts the politics of the carnivalesque and thereby achieves the liberating effect the latter can have upon subjugated languages.

LOWRY'S WORKS

Lowry left his works uncollected and largely unpublished. However, his novel Ultramarine was published in 1933. It is a novel that every sensitive young man who goes to sea dreams of writing. It was born out of Lowry's per-

sonal experiences, which assume universal significance in his works, when it becomes the tale of Everyman hursting with the desire to find a destiny for himself.

The publication of Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano on February 19, 1947 was almost unanimously acclaimed as a masterpiece in the United States but received very little notice in England. Translations into German, French, Italian, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and other European languages followed⁶⁹. Under the Volcano is a modernistic experimental novel. In this novel Geoffrey Firmin becomes the story of modern man cut off from sanctions, moral and metaphysical. The predicament of the protagonist becomes the predicament of humanity.

In 1961, Lowry's posthumous collection of the seven stories titled Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place won a Governor General's Award. The collection displays that the work is of uneven quality and effectiveness. What is striking is, these stories are different from traditional categories of short fiction. They range from themes on travel to marital love.

Based on the experiences of his sojourn in New York's Bellevue Hospital in 1934 he wrote a story which he wrote as a novella, called The Last Address and in 1940 he produced yet another version, titled Swinging the Maelstrom. At his death he was working on a melding of these two versions called Lunar Caustic (1963)⁷⁰. It is an account of a brief period of self commitment in Bellevue Hospital in New York City following a prolonged alcoholic nightmare. It evolved

out of the personality of the novelist. Bill Plantagenet voiced the perennial urge in man to smash the tentacles of guilt by expiation and to establish ties of affection with others, though it is tenacious and fragile. This book shows a marked development over Ultramarine.

Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend is Laid (1968) is a work of embryonic greatness. Sigbjorn Wilderness, the main character of Dark as the Grave Wherein My Friend is Laid was Lowry- a writer unable to write, a middle-aged Lord Jim, inept and fearfulbound on a pilgrimage to rediscover the past- a past of downfall and failure that eventually turned him into a drunkard. Towards the end this voyage of self-destruction manages to give him hope for the future - A possible happy ending.

His next novel October Ferry to Gabriola (1970) displays his literary strength and achievement. This novel transcends this world of ours where a character such as Ethan Llewelyn, the hero of the novel, moves out of the maze of self-involvement and reaches after grace luminous in character.

As it is seen that excepting his one novel Ultramarine, all his work was published after his death. It is said that there remains a massive accumulation of incomplete manuscripts, notes and drafts of Malcolm Lowry in the University of British Columbia Library⁷¹.

Harvey Breit and Margerie Bonner Lowry edited Malcolm Lowry's Selected Letters (1965). The Letters allow us at least to measure Lowry's posthumously published work against

the author's intention. They also allow us to measure the man himself against the characters he invented. Lowry's Letters provide an insight into the challenge Lowry set himself as an artist and the agonies he endured as he wrestled with the problem of integration in his work and in his life.

Malcolm Lowry wrote poetry too. His poems are available today because of the efforts of Earle Birney who edited his poems under the title Selected Poems (1962)⁷². Though Malcolm Lowry has held a place if a minor one in contemporary Canadian poetry yet understanding of his poetry is a must for one who wants to study the overall artistic development of Malcolm Lowry because the thematic strain in his poetry and in his fiction is the same.

The complexity of Lowry's texts, with their multi-layered, densely woven texture, has made the scholars interpretation of his material a challenging process⁷³.

In interpreting Lowry to ourselves and others, we must listen to the political discussions, recognise the literary allusions and myriad references to films, music and painting. We must also be alert to the wide scope of his historical references and be prepared to pursue a host of details and hints, or echoes drawn from familiar or areas of philosophical and religious knowledge. Above all we must listen to his language, for here is a writer obsessed with the musicating word. Deeply immersed, more often enmeshed, in this modern world, Malcolm Lowry interpreted, elucidated, construed, performed and translated in the words that gener-

ate our own interpretation.

Literary scholars, however, are not the only Lowry interpreters. From early on Lowry and his Volcano began to attract a cult following of general readers and aficionados. More recently, especially during the last ten to fifteen years, Lowry has been interpreted, rewritten and reinvented by a large number of fellow artists, poets, fiction writers, playwrights, film makers, painters, graphic artists and musicians. The scope of this artistic interpretation bears testimony, of course, to Lowry's tremendous impact on younger generation.

Even today scholars and researchers are fascinated by his work. In the twentieth century literature there have been two kinds of writers. There are writers who have no artistic pretensions and engage in a direct prosaic way with the social and political realities of life. They protest and oppose the social and political ethos with a sense of revolutionary optimism. They are of the belief that through their ideas they can bring about a radical moral and social change. To them literature becomes an instrument of bringing about a desired change. Writers who adhere to the above assumptions are called contemporaries. Shaw, Wells, Bennett and Orwell belong to such a group.

On the other hand there are those who are sceptical about the contemporary writers. They do have faith and confidence in the pragmatic approach to life like the contemporaries. They seek a radical transformation of the conventional forms of communication. The new idiom they

seek to devise will articulate poetically the inner crisis of sensibility. Such a crisis often manifests itself in the search for a tradition which has been lost or broken. Such writers are called as the moderns. James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and T. S. Eliot belong to this fold of writers. They are precursors and pioneers of modern aesthetics.

However, instead of being insular Malcolm Lowry exposed himself to new movements and fashions in literary thought. His entire work provides the readers with sufficient evidence of his continuity with the great modernists of the first two decades of the twentieth century which is observable in the texture of deep literary allusiveness, the commitment to formal experiment, the quality of strain and anguish which was typical of the modern age.

Malcolm Lowry knew that the origins of his novels lie deep in the realm of the irrational. The promptings of the irrational are shapeless and a novelist; who makes a descent into the irrational, cannot make what he discovers in the abyss, orderly and meaningful unless he is possessed by a sense of form. In the terminology of Jung, Malcolm Lowry belonged to the category of writers called 'Visionary' and not to the category of writers called 'Psychological'. In Jungian aesthetics the psychological writers are not writers of the stream-of consciousness. They are writers who derive their "material and method from the sphere of conscious human experience - from the psychic foreground of life"⁷⁴.

They are conscious and reason oriented writers but Malcolm Lowry was a writer who showed concern for a -

"primordial experience which surpasses man's understanding and to which in his weakness he may easily succumb"⁷⁵.

Malcolm Lowry was concerned with "experiences which arose from timeless depths; glamorous, daemonic, grotesque, it bursts as under our human standards of value and aesthetic form, a terrifying tangle of eternal chaos"⁷⁶.

In this study I want to depict that Malcolm Lowry's novels are works of art in their own rights because Malcolm Lowry all the time exhibits great intelligence and critical instinct in placing and shaping an abundance of material which constantly challenges his organising power.

In the subsequent Chapters I have dealt with Lowry's poetry, thematic concerns in his fiction, his art of delineation of characters and his literary technique. This study is an attempt to probe into the matrix of Lowry's overall artistic development. Though his writing is generally categorised as regional writing yet his writing embraces the universal truth.

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NAKED & DOOMED FACE
OF THE MAN HIMSELF

CHAPTER - 2

NAKED AND DOOMED FACE OF THE MAN HIMSELF

Poetry is primarily an art, and it is most revealing when it is most itself. Any subject no matter how unpromising, can be made the source of poetry when it is shaped and moulded by the poetic organisation. It is the accuracy of perception and concentrated clarity of expression - what might, in its finest manifestation, be called "nakedness of vision" - can make the humblest and even the vilest material a source of poetry, so that a poem is not only a recreation of experience but also a transfiguration of experience, or in the Joycean terms, an epiphany¹.

Poetry, surely and certainly, most often affirms ideas, emotions and feelings which are generally experienced by all mankind. It also includes the common experiences of humanity. This sort of poetry is undoubtedly simply affirmative, conservative, acceptable and above all it is genuinely in vogue and popular. Poetry makes its appeal by its rightness by the felt reality and truth with which it confirms and touches the hearts of people.

Among the cardinal factors that enhance the effectiveness of a poem are the images. Poetry which is exemplary and commendable derives its strength from the fact that it comforts, soothes and reassures rather than challenges and surprises us. The attitude towards experience and the evaluation of it are in harmony with the most commonly

accepted and generally valid views of mankind.

The first anthology of English-Canadian verse was published in Montreal in 1864. Its complete title was Selections from Canadian Poets, With Occasional Critical and Biographical Notes and an Inventory Essay on Canadian Poetry, by Edward Hartley Deward, D.D.². Most of the poems in this book seem elegant and old fashioned. Sentimental piety, melodramatic emotion, and conventional feeling about nature, expressed in dull verse, make up the greater part of the book.

Canadian poetry is known for its rich new trends and new poets since the last war. It has inherited regional traditions and ways of speech together with the local influence of certain key figures. Montreal had been a strong centre of Canadian poetry since the 1930's. F. R. Scott, A.M. Klein, Irving Layton and Louis Dudek were the main figures in the Montreal movement during the 1930's. These poets leaned towards a social realism that was linked with a politically radical tendency while in the other direction they did incline towards metaphysical goals³.

Generally speaking, the poets who were centered on Toronto were less socially inclined more metaphysical and more concerned with poetic craftsmanship than the Montreal group. The mythopoeic poets not only create mythological structures to illuminate the personal message they wish to convey; but they also adept at a kind of wit which depends on the astonishing marriage of the ridiculous and the sublime. The best of them, Jay Macpherson, Eli Mandel and

James Reaney, are among the most sophisticated and the finest poets writing in Canada today⁴.

Among the other poets who were most active in the post-war period in Canada it is hard to find such clearly marked groups as have existed in Montreal and Toronto. Some of the best of the Canadian verse has been concerned with the homelier aspects of life. Its value often rested in a spirit of unpretentious sweetness that lasts well sometimes long after much more imposing material has gone sour.

Canadian poetry, indeed is the record of life in Canada as it takes on significance when all the resources of sensibility, intelligence, and spirit are employed in experiencing or in understanding it. Some of the poets had concentrated on what was individual and unique in Canadian life and others upon what it had in common with life everywhere. The one group had attempted to describe and interpret whatever was essentially and distinctively Canadian and thus come to terms with an environment that was only then ceasing to be colonial. The other, from the very beginning, had made a heroic effort to transcend colonialism by entering into the universal, civilizing culture of ideas⁵.

Malcolm Lowry's relationship with his adopted home in Canada was quite different. After going through the poems he wrote on Burrard Inlet, we realise that he was not in fact writing about Canada as a transient outsider. Malcolm Lowry was writing about it as a man who, for over fifteen years, had himself lived into the environment that centered upon his fragile house where the Pacific tides lapped and

sucked under the floor-boards, and who identified himself with that environment - despite trials of flesh and spirit - as passionately as those other strangers who have rendered so well the essence of their particular corners of Canada, Frederick Philip Grove and Roderick Haig-Brown. If Mexico stirred him through that combination of antagonism and attraction which so many Europeans feel there, Canada or at least that fragment of it which stretches out from Burrard Inlet to embrace the Gulf of Georgia - stirred him through a sympathy that led towards total involvement⁶.

The literary reputation of Malcolm Lowry has rested, so far as the world of European and American letters is concerned, on his prose. The fact is that Lowry has held a place, if a minor one, in contemporary Canadian poetry ever since 1947, the year of the original publication of Under the Volcano. Lowry himself made no efforts to publish his verse outside Canada. The poems which had been printed had been wheeled out of him, with the help of his wife, by Earle Birney and by A.J. Smith, with much effort.

A score of short poems, which were uneven in quality, though none of them were mediocre, were not enough to justify Malcolm Lowry as a poet. However, when a considerable body of other verse had been discovered it was evident that Lowry worked continually, in between the writing of his prose fiction, from the mid-thirties at least, until his death in 1957, on an ambitious sequence of poems. He had planned to bring them out as a book under the title "The Lighthouse Invited the Storm"⁷. A good number of these

This Chapter deals with a study of the poems edited by Earle Birney and published in Selected Poems of Malcolm Lowry⁹ with a special reference to thematic pattern and stylistic devices. The first group entitled 'The Roar of the Sea' and the Darkness¹⁰ is reminiscent in theme and sometimes in phrasing of that first novel, Ultramarine. The next two sections 'Thunder Beyond Popocatepetl'¹¹ and 'The Continents'¹² reflect the Mexican years, in the mid-thirties.

face of the man himself⁸.
 ry; Malcolm Lowry is confronted with the naked and doomed Birney was able to collect and sort the bulk. In his post-waters. They remained scattered and unstudied, until Earle picked up as they blew over to beach stones into the harbour good number of Lowry's manuscripts. Some sheets were even various moments in the last week of the shack's existence; a friends and neighbours got sufficient warning to rescue at zed dwellings on Dollarton beach. Fortunately a few to oblivion in a general municipal "clean-up" of unauthor-last visit to England; their home was bulldozed and burned were probably lost forever, while the Lowry's were on their five years of Lowry's literary life. Some of these later-beach which was the Lowry home for the fourteen most produc-other manuscripts; in the squatter's shack on Dollarton she returned to live there. Some were left behind with Margerie Lowry; his widow and brought to Los Angeles when came to its sudden tragic close; they were preserved by found in the little cottage in Sussex where Lowry's life verses, in every stage of composition and revision, were

But all were re-worked', some many times, in the Dollarton beach shack, where most of the remainder were begun¹³.

Lowry's poetry presents the Lowryan with some very special problems. On the one hand it is not earth shattering; on the other, it has much to tell us about one of the greatest stylists of the century. The poems are often impossible to date, embarrassing to read and apparently plagiarised. Certainly Margerie Lowry and Earle Birney came to a parting of the ways over what was, properly speaking, Lowry's and could be safely published under his name¹⁴.

Since the publication of Selected Poems by Earle Birney some critics have come out with the criticism of certain aspects of his poetry. Suzanne Kim in her article "The Emergence of an Authorial Figure"¹⁵ and Mark Thomas in his article "Under the Shadow of Volcano : Malcolm Lowry's Poetry"¹⁶ begin from an entirely different point. Using the technique of genetic criticism, Kim analyses Lowry's creative processes and the significant "figures" within the poems. Not surprisingly these "figures" are familiar from Lowry's other work, and one constellation of these - the self - proved virtually fatal for him. Kim analysed Lowry as striving for the integration of his multiplicity of reeling selves¹⁷. Mark Thomas returns us to the question of precursors, and his analysis of inter and intratextuality demonstrates how Lowry remade his sources and carefully constructed an allusive complexity that deliberately opens. Like Kim, Thomas does not claim the poetry as high art but as serious literary production.

The thematic concern in his early prose writings could be seen as running through the anthology of his poetry. When Lowry's self-involvement gets beyond the level of strict biography, then his persona achieves universality. As Lissa Paul Bubber writes, even though "the alcoholic (Cantina) poems appear to be highly solipsistic since they deal with the particular experience of one man nevertheless they are extremely compelling because of the way the poet transforms the internal vision into a universal one, the despair of the drunk becomes the despair of mankind"¹⁸. Primal scenes appear typically in Lowry's poems. In the first Section "The roar of the Sea and the Darkness"¹⁹ the group of poems share the theme of drowning, in which both swimmers and ship founder. These poems individually and even more so as in group, convince their reader that sinking" is but a Watery Fall of Man. It is not the unique individual who drowns, it is everyone of us, collectively and alone.

The section "Venus"²⁰ is concerned with the various aspects of love,-

"lost love [that] leaves lightnings in its wake"²¹

Some of the rare moments in which he reveals moods of happiness are recorded in this section. These poems are written as tributes to his wife Margerie and to their intense interdependent relationship in that isolated beach home on the Dollarton tidal shore.

Lowry was also preoccupied with death and its omnipresence. He feared death and tried to seek illusory escape from that unsupportable duality into the substitute death of drunkenness which in turn hastens real death. The "Cantinas"²² is a revelation of Lowry's long and bitter struggle against alcoholism and the fleeting consolation of the taverns. The following lines highlight his intense love for alcohol and how it occupied a very important place in his life.

"The only hope is the next drink.
If you like, you talk a walk. No
time to stop and think, The only hope
is the next drink"²³.

Malcolm Lowry suffered from a sense of loneliness and alienation. He sought refuge in alcohol which tried to soothe his lacerated heart which bore the pangs of separation and rejection. He tried to project all this in his poetry.

It should be added that occasionally the alcoholic gloom and cycles of repentance were broken through for comedy's sake, as in the poem 'Epitaph'²⁴

Malcolm Lowry
Late of the Bowery
His prose was flowery
And often glowery

He lived, nightly, and drank, daily
And died playing the ukulele²⁵

In the section "Cantinas"²⁶ Lowry employs alcohol

(mescal) as one of the most important motif in his poetry. In the poem "Thirty-five mescals"²⁷ alcohol plays an important role for the symbolic resonances, functional contribution and development of the poem.

Many of Lowry's self-expressive poems depict the fears that impelled him to drink self-destructively, for example 'No Company But Fear',²⁸ "Without the Nighted Wyvern",²⁹ its companion "The Drunkards"³⁰ and others. But none of them expresses the increasingly difficult achievement of joyful drunkenness better than "Without the Nighted Wyvern"³¹. Lowry's ironic first line -

"Notion of freedom are tied up with the drink"³² associates freedom with alcohol while freedom is paradoxically "tied up". "Wyvern" presents a hierarchical series of taverns, each more ideal than the last one from one with "unlimited beers" to another with -

"a finer, an an undistilled wine
That subtly intoxicates without pain"³³.

The drinker in the "Wyvern" is a writer, a creator not only of the Platonic ladder of taverns but of "Tracts of a really better land --

"The ultimate, "idyllic" inn
Where we may drink forever without owing
With the door open, and the wind blowing"³⁴

is an impossibly idealised vision that invites, by its plurality and openness, all people to join them.

Malcolm Lowry was a realist and this realism is woven within the fabric of his poem - 'Eye Opener'³⁵

"How like a man, is Man, who rises late
And gazes on his unwashed dinner plate"³⁶

Lowry's aesthetic position, his style and technique owes much to Expressionism. Expressionism ignores the external reality and lays emphasis on the inner reality. Lowry had some interest in the expressionist painting, music, theatre and film. No wonder he believes that reality is dynamic and perpetually protean. A picture of reality that is eternally new finds a better medium in poetry than in prose.

The leitmotifs of imagery bind the separate elements of poetry together into a real organic structure. In "Be Patient for the Wolf"³⁷ Malcolm Lowry takes recourse to "the wolf" a recurrent motif that unifies diverse materials into a unity. Recurrent images such as birds, animals, reptiles etc play a major part in the field of symbolic references in the book.

Lowry's poem "Xochitepec"³⁸ does more than locate and describe a setting. Specific referential features sometimes coincide in a single image with more vague associations of autobiographical expressions as here -

"Just before we left Thalpan
Our cats lay quivering under the maguey
A meaning had slunk, and now did, with them.
The boy slung them half stiff
down the ravine, which now we entered,
and whose name is hell"³⁹

The town, the cats, the boy, and the ravine - all belong to the objective world; the dead "meaning" and hell are essentially subjective. The violent imagery signifies the turbulence of the marriages disruption and points to a biographical, expressive reading.

The whole issue of intertextuality and influence raises the issue of plagiarism, a vice which Lowry feared and one he addressed in The "Plagiarist"⁴⁰ which explores the barrier between experience and language. The poem opens with an image of plagiarism that captures both the interplay of presence and absence and the problem of loss--regarding the duplicate, not the original. Quickly, the poet makes a self-reflexive metatextual remark before developing a new image of a dying man. In the following poem he explains the inexplicable -

"See the wound the upturned stone has left.
In the earth! How doubly tragic is the
hollowed shape./ It is a miracle that I
may use such words./ As shape. But the
analogy has escaped. Crawling on hands
and sinews to the grave I found certain
pamphlets on the way. Said they were
mine. For they explained a pilgrimage
that otherwise was meaningless as day
but twice as difficult, to explain away."⁴¹

The poem begins by turning words into wounds, and ends by asserting their capacity to explain. Unlike Macbeth, whose words became him as his wounds, Lowry's words and

wounds do not smack of honour but of guilt. Indeed, the image and tone, of Lowry's poem is more reminiscent of Milton's description of the earth when Eve eats the forbidden fruit :-

"Earth felt the wound, and Nature from
her seat / Sighing through all her works
gave signs of woe, / That all was lost"⁴².

The sexual liaison of Under the Volcano is also created in "Thirty-five Mescals in Cuautla"⁴³

"The girl refills it, pours a glass of death,
And if that death in her its here in me.
On the pictured calendar, set to the future,
The two reindeer battle to death, while man,
The tick of real death, not the tick of time,
Hearing, thrusts his canoe into a moon
Risen to bring us madness none too soon"⁴⁴

The sexual imagery and the threat of madness and incipient death from syphilis make the poem interesting for its own sake. Still, through the connection to Under the Volcano (and because this poem is dated ten years before the novel published) we become better readers by comparing them. Furthermore, "since soma is not mentioned at all in the text of the poem (but is explained in an authorial footnote), it is the responsibility of the reader to recall that Lowry identifies soma with mescal and the moon in Under the Volcano"⁴⁵

In "Look Out! The Bloody Bosun"⁴⁵, Lowry makes use of the sea and the seamen and it is occasionally epigrammatic

or wry and laconic-

"The sea! The watches pass, the hours
take wing / Like seagulls stuffed with
bread. Tin-tin, pang-pang./ And this
monotony is our Sturm Drang./ Of which
few poets have the heart to sing"⁴⁶.

But as often, the images of the sea expand into cloudy
symbols of the whole human condition in "The Ship is Turning
Homeward"--⁴⁷

-----"Is that star wormwood out Among love's stars?

This freighter eternity?

Where are we going? Life save us all!"⁴⁸

Malcolm Lowry was well versed with the Bible and this
acquaintance is well depicted in his use of Biblical imagery
in the poem "A poem of God's Mercy"⁴⁹

-----"Cain shall not slay Abel today on our good ground
Nor Adam reel under our shrouded moon"⁵⁰.

The influence of the Bible is noticeable in many of his
poems. Furthermore in "The Plagiarist"⁵¹ the implication of
the rolled away stone of the Resurrection show how this
event is "doubly tragic" since the poem in that case is not
about Adam's original sin but about the second Adam and the
failure of the word, that is, mans failure to grasp a cred-
ible salvation as well as the failure of language to redeem
our mundane experience.

Lowry changed according to the changing times. His
poems abound with references to electronic gadgets.

In 'Fragment'⁵²

'A Wounded voice over the telephone'⁵³.

In The Drunkards⁵⁴--

"Where no electric music breaks the beat"⁵⁵

In Thirty-Five Mescals in Cuautla⁵⁶

"In the cantina, throbs the refrigerator"⁵⁷

In his use of imagery he has made use of variations. In the poem 'Midtown Pyromaniac'⁵⁸ the first line is an example of concrete imagery--

'The Midtown Pyromaniac, sunset'⁵⁹

and the last line of the same poem is an example of abstract imagery --

'It prove sweet marjoram not turn caraway'⁶⁰.

His poems bear the stamp of an exhaustive use of figures of speech. The poem 'Injured Stones'⁶¹ is a fine example of Personification --

"A child may find no words for its sorrow

But may hear

at Nightfall strange presage of release

That injured stones know the pressing to the earth

Or he may learn that stones

themselves may speak"⁶².

In this poem the stones are personified as being injured and they are also able to speak. From the outset to the bitter end of his poetic writings, a repetitive pattern of figures of the self appears. They can be listed as follows :- The sailor and the drunk; the son and the lover; the child and the wrestler; the poet and the comedian; the

ailing man and the mirthful buffon, the derelict and the deserter; man in prison and madman in a mad world; sinning man and man sinned against; the wrecker and the rescuer; the victim and the victimiser; he who consumes himself and yet is threatened by others, at times the corpse, but also the ghost.

Some figures bear names : Vigil Forest⁶³, Tashtego,⁶⁴ Tom and Bill⁶⁵, The Sweeney Tod and improvisors⁶⁶, Saint Malcolm and Saint Francis⁶⁷, Legion⁶⁸, and Malcolm Lowry's name. Some of the names intervene only as terms of comparison, such as Friday, Crusoe, and the Columbus⁶⁹, Christian⁷⁰, Redburn and Ahab⁷¹, or Antipholus⁷². Other figures are allegorical representations, now implied, now explicit, the rider⁷³, the wrecker⁷⁴, the pilgrim⁷⁵. In "Sestina in the Cantina"⁷⁶ 'Legion' denotes multiplicity and connected with evil in the Bible sums up all the other poetic identities ever worked out before or after its composition, while still referring to the "other" on the dramatic level of the poem.

The writers own name appears only on rare occasions, one being in the poem entitled Epitaph⁷⁷. The figure is not of a doomed man, in spite of the title, not that the relation of a Lowry figure to death can surprise, but the nature of the representation is uncommon in Lowry's work. For once it is the figure of a happy rascal enjoying life and showing it exercised, self-absorbed, Lowry can define himself as a happy clown.

In his poems metaphorical process is at work, ranging from comparison to identification with ship, tree, lighthouse, seagull, vulture, salmon and eagle, wolf and scorpion. The emerging figures do not proceed from metaphor to symbol/or allegory. The act of naming, that is of pinning down the very essence of being very often intervenes after a long groping for definition.

The reader is constantly aware that the patterns of imagery and action in the poetry are reenactments of patterns from the Bible, or Dante's Commedia, or Goethe's Faust, so that a mythic quality is woven through the mimetic or poetic strand of the poems. Lowry "In the Oaxaca Jail"⁷⁸ is stridently atheistic. Lowry employs a religious type to apotheosize himself as Christ--

"And I crucified between two continents"⁷⁹.

The same poem also inverts the typological effect to undermine the archetype, ironically describing a cathedral's cross as --

"Wires and tall pole moving in the wind"⁸⁰. *

This double-edged use of a type increases both the pathos of the immediate crisis (incarnation) and the ironic deflation of the cross. The imaginative richness of the poem comes from all embracing mythic evocation which is truly Joycean in character. The use of myth gives modern poetry a poetic character hence myth is favourite with the modern poets like T.S.Eliot.

In my opinion Lowry's poetry is an anthology of literary styles. It is the unique style that has bestowed upon him a significant position in the literary world. Many forms coalesce in his poetry to give his poems its richness. One type appearing in Lowry's poems is the familiar literary type, one in which Lowry's experience reinforces the legacy of such writers as Thomson, De Quincey, Poe and many others. Some poems explicitly connect with other writers: Nordahl Grieg, Conrad, Rilke and Yeats are mentioned in the poem titles and at least sixteen other authors are mentioned either by name or by the name of one of their characters. In "Tempest's Tavern"⁸¹ Lowry uses Ernest Dowson and Wordsworth to establish a polarity by which we can assess the protagonist. In general, though Lowry was less capable of answering his precursors in poetry than in his prose however, his characteristic prose style bespeaks an authentic voice the like of which breaks through only occasionally in the poems.

Besides the intertextual issue of other author's influence there also exists the intratextual phenomenon of the co-existence of Lowry's poems with his prose. His poems illuminate the prose because the fact remains that many of Lowry's poems take the prose as their subject or subtext. It is useful to know, as Lowry explains in his 23rd May, 1957, letter to Ralph Gustafson⁸², that "Xochitepec"⁸³ was composed in the margin of a manuscript page of Under the Volcano. Unsurprisingly, the poem "For Under the Volcano"⁸⁴ shares the images with the novel - such as that unforgettable

one of a huge turtles bleeding to death on the sidewalk outside a seafood restaurant but it also shares themes with Volcano as well.

Malcolm Lowry was an artist with a grand design. He wrote with superb vigor and dash and he created through the graphic, picturesque style no less than through his acute capacity for sensuous observation, a poetry of opulent texture and constantly resonant meaning. In the first section of Lowry's poems -- "No Kraken Shall be found Till Song by name"⁸⁵ opens with an example of Lowry's graphic and picturesque mode of writing.

"Here is the ship, with decks all holy white
Pure as the stone that scrubbed them to the bone.
Scuppers cleansed : and red lead shinning where it
Would be, the blood all carefully washed from
The poop a pure arc in the Indian sky,
Cabined and perfect, with flag flying"⁸⁶.

Lowry's style is also descriptive. The following poem is filled with details - "Be Patient for the Wolf"⁸⁷

"Be patient for the wolf is always with you
Listen, little idiot, for the sound of your desire
Do not be deceived it is not the sea,
The wolf is madness but the moon is light"⁸⁸.

The final, "The Language of Man's Woe"⁸⁹ contains poems very much concerned with the craft of poetry itself. It begins with a small prayer to Saints Rilke and Yeats to help him to write, but there are other pieces which reveal that he has put himself to school not with them, but with the

sonnets of Shakespeare, the lyrics of Shelley and even Ernest Dowson. There are references, respectful of admiring to Chatterton, Crabbe and Clare, assertion of kinship with Rimbaud and Poe and the evidence, partly acknowledged, partly implicit, of the considerable influence on him of Conrad Aiken, as well as of the prose of Melville and Conrad. Yet despite his prentice modesties, so often expressed, Lowry emerges here, as everywhere in the manuscript, with a voice of his own a voice which was steadily developing in range, though it was seldom fully in control.

There is much variety of form in the section 'Thunder Beyond Popocatepetl'⁹⁰ as in all the sections : sonnets both Petrarchan and free, quatrain, carefully executed villanelles and finely plangent free verse. The poem "Xochitepec"⁹¹ is an example of free verse --

"Those animals that follow us in dream
Are swallowed by the dawn, but what of those
Which hunt us, snuff, stalk us out in life, close
In upon it, belly down, haunt our scheme
Of building, with shapes of delirium,
Symbols of death, heraldic, and shadows"⁹²

Malcolm Lowry made use of French words. The use of French words can limit the wider readership. A good knowledge of French is a must for a better understanding of his poems. "In No Company But Fear"⁹³ he makes use of the following French words --

"papegaai, mezcal, cerveza".

The poem "Joseph Conrad"⁹⁴, is a fine example of

Lowry's use of alliteration --

"And song of ships that ride their easting down
Sustains him to subdue or be subdued"⁹⁵.

In the poem "After Publication of Under the Volcano"⁹⁶ his use of similes is apt. In the following lines he compares success to horrible disaster.

"Success is like some horrible disaster
Worse than your house burning the sounds of ruination"⁹⁷.

In this poem Lowry makes a reference to his shack which got burnt and was razed to the ground at Dollarton. He also made an elaborate use of repetition in order to produce good effect. In the poem "He Liked the Dead"⁹⁸ he made use of repetition which is well depicted in the following lines --

"The grass was not green not even grass to him
nor was sun, sun, rose, rose ; smoke, smoke,
limb, limb"⁹⁹.

Rhyme reduces monotony of effect. It gives shape and tonal variety to a poem. Lowry employed all the poetic devices in his attempt to write poems. In the poem "Christ Walks in this infernal District too"¹⁰⁰ he has made use of rhyme in an effective manner. The following lines bear testimony of his artistic creativity --

"Beneath th Malebolge lies Hasting Street
The province of the pump upon his beat
Where each is his little world of drugs"¹⁰¹.

Malcolm Lowry's talk and his writing was endless and artistic and they carried on eloquence such as no other artist has ever shaped. His poems are unique. In tone, texture and composition each is different from the other. This quality eradicates monotony which otherwise readers are often faced with while reading poetry. Malcolm Lowry's poems are simple, easy to understand and devoid of philosophical element. A reader can easily comprehend and enjoy his poems. Most of the poems are projections of the author's personality himself.

His was the intense vision of a poet. The greatest effects of his remarkable prose were achieved, above all, through rhythm, verbal shock and strangeness, and the intricate repetition and passionate development of very personal symbols of what he called the emblematic birds, whose great dark wings beat always over the purgatorial deserts and above the infernal volcanoes of his lonely and terrible inner world. Though the creatures of his poems never achieve the dreadful wingspread of his prose, they cry more openly and poignantly the personal agonies of the man behind the writings. They are the immediate voices of his despair, love, self-reproaches, nostalgia and wry resurgent hope.

His poems awaken in the mind of the alert and receptive reader new experiences analogous to the one in the mind of the poet who is ultimately responsible for the creation of a poem. Malcolm Lowry is certainly a great poet because he has dared to descend more deeply into the heart of reality, and he has been able to find a place there through the

emotions of hate, fear, anger and despair. The Selected Poems of Malcolm Lowry has its independent worth hence the poetry should be accepted as a part of the main body of Lowry's work.

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91. Ibid. p. 25.
92. Ibid. p. 25.
93. Ibid. p. 37.
94. Ibid. p. 74.
95. Ibid. p. 74.
96. Ibid. p. 78.
97. Ibid. p. 78.
98. Ibid. p. 77.
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101. Ibid. p. 64.

**THEMATIC COLLAGE:
VOICE OF A MODERN**

CHAPTER - 3

THEMATIC COLLAGE : VOICE OF A MODERN

The term "modern" is, of course, highly variable in its temporal reference, but it is frequently applied to the literature written since the beginning of World War I in 1914. This half - century has been one of the outstanding periods in English and American Literature. In Canadian Literature such experiments are rare. Malcolm Lowry was a post-war novelist and instead of being insular he exposed himself to new movements and fashions in literary thought. His novels are a proof which provide sufficient evidence to the readers regarding his association and continuity with the great modernists of the first two decades of the twentieth century. This is discernible, since the texture of his novels have deep literary allusiveness, the commitment to formal experiment, the quality of strain and anguish which was typical of the modern age.

Lowry's voice was a voice of a "Visionary". He showed concern for a "primordial experience which surpassed man's understanding and to which in his weakness he may easily succumb"¹. Malcolm Lowry was concerned with experiences "arising from timeless depths; glamorous, daemonic, grotesque, it bursts under our human standards of value and aesthetic form, a terrifying tangle of eternal chaos"².

The changes that came over the English novel in the first half of the twentieth century were remarkable. There were changes in technique, in point of view, in the whole

relation between the author and his subject. All this is not surprising, for the English novel was after all the characteristic product of modernity. Industrial Revolution had changed the face of the world. It was followed by new ideas in ethics, psychology, and many other matters related to social and economic factors. To be able to keep pace with the changing times a modern novelist had additional problems to solve. This heroic age of experiment and expansion in the English novel was thus the product of what might be called a crisis in civilisation, not the result of a wilful desire to "make it new".

A significant factor which was responsible for the birth of the English novel was the new concept of time as continuous flow rather than as series of separate points. Closely linked to this new view of time was the new view of consciousness deriving in a general way from the work of Freud and Jung but concentrating on the fact of the multiplicity of consciousness, the presence in the given consciousness of all it had ever experienced and perhaps also of all that the particular race had experienced. David Daiches in his book 'The novel and the Modern World' explores that the individual personality is the sum of the individual memories, and to regard the past as something to be recalled by a conscious effort of memory is on this view to do violence to the facts of experience³.

The past always exists in the present. It is the past which colours and determines the nature of the present response. In order to tell the truth about a character's

reaction to any situation the novelist must tell the whole truth about everything that has happened to him. Malcolm Lowry was influenced by this view of time and consciousness and he has sought ways by making use of thematic pattern to communicate to the readers the simultaneity and different levels of consciousness. His themes which speak volumes about restlessness, rejection, love etc. fit well into this framework.

This concern with the individual consciousness, its multiplicity and ability to store up the whole of the individual past history which is always relevant and always in operation in one way or another, leads to emphasis on the individual's loneliness. Malcolm Lowry has beautifully created a collage before the eyes of the readers with themes of alienation, isolation, love which are assembled together into a beautiful pattern. He was fully aware that every man is the prisoner of his own private consciousness, his unique train of association, which results in turn from his unique past. The public gestures which Lowry's characters make towards communication can never be more than approximate, and they could never rely on them being understood.

The signals and each individual flash of his characters to the public world were bound to be in some degree misunderstood by that world, because every other person would read them in the light of that person's own history. Malcolm Lowry understood that society was thus in a sense unreal, its institutions inevitably blunt and they coarsen the truth about the individual self. This results in a

means of communication that can only distort. Malcolm Lowry has expounded in his thematic pattern the theme of loneliness which is seen as the necessary condition of man. Yet the desire to communicate is also a deeply embedded human instinct, and the desire to escape from loneliness one of the chief human preoccupations. He has portrayed social conventions which are seen as empty and mechanical, bearing no relationship to the inner life of man.

Throughout Lowry's works the readers are faced with a question "How is love possible in a world of individuals imprisoned by their own private consciousness?" and it is probed in a great variety of ways. Loneliness is the great reality, love the great necessity.

Thus the above major factors have influenced Malcolm Lowry and in a sense with the help of his thematic collage in his works he spoke to his readers with the voice of a true modern - the breakdown of public agreement about what was significant in experience and what the novelist ought to select, the new view of time, and the new view of the nature of consciousness. In his works Malcolm Lowry concentrated on aspects of the human situation and with his new insights and technical experiments he enlarged the bounds of the art of fiction.

A common reader could easily comprehend his themes in the novel because Malcolm Lowry exhibited a sense of order and form when he dealt with the terrifying tangle of eternal chaos. Malcolm has dealt with this aspect deftly in Under the Volcano. In this novel Lowry moved into the terrifying

tangle of chaos in the mind of Geoffrey, the British Consul and then travelled back into consciousness where he came into grips with the organising ability that was necessary to give his vision a coherence.

Malcolm Lowry was truly a genius in a true sense of the word because he dared to expose himself to the full impact of the vision of an educated and urban British Consul Geoffrey Firmin who was clawed in infernal powers, and was still able to return to the world of consciousness to lend the most satisfying shape to that vision. He depicted Geoffrey moving through the landscape of destruction and waste, landscapes of hell in which symbolic ruination survived. It was a picture of a man who was equipped with the consequences of human action and still he was able to make a self-destructive choice.

Malcolm Lowry's themes are varied. They are akin to British and American writers too. Lowry's fiction depicts a thematic collage interwoven with themes of alienation, restlessness, lack of identity and search for identity too. Besides these a reader encounters several themes such as lack of order and harmony, search for order and harmony, tyranny of self, self destruction, sin and guilt, evil, sexual jealousy and despair. He also deals with the political theme, inhuman civilisation and above all the theme of love. This shows Malcolm Lowry's wide range and insight into human nature.

Malcolm Lowry was preoccupied with the theme of alienation and isolation and he has interwoven this major theme

into the texture of his thematic pattern. He has depicted his character as suffering from the malaise of alienation and isolation and they are projections of his own personality. This theme which resonates in the voice of Lowry depicts him as a "true modern".

In Ultramarine Malcolm Lowry through Hilliot's voyage on the deck of the Oedipus Tyrannus wants to present a broad perspective of life. At the beginning of Chapter III Hilliot says :

"I would have to find all that out for myself"⁴.

When Hilliot boarded the ship, he was treated as an alien, a toff and he suffered from a sense of rejection.

The ship is symbolic of a community, a cosmos, a world based on the principle of hierarchy and Hilliot is an intruder into that community of sailors. He experienced a sense of alienation from that community.

Even though Dana Hilliot felt kinship to the ship, the ship did not turn out to be hospitable to him. In the beginning Hilliot was of the opinion and had great expectations that Oedipus Tyrannus would offer him security -

"She was his harbour, he would lie in the arms of the ship, the derricks would fold about him like wings, sleep would bring with it a tender dream of home, of Suns and fields and barns"⁵

But his experience was just the opposite since his dream of a cosy hearth only remained a mirage.

Dana Hilliot had to face a tough opposition from the crew, especially from Andy a thirty-nine year old Norwegian cook who had spent twenty long years voyaging all over the world. On the other hand Dana Hilliot was on his maiden voyage. Andy was unsympathetic and morose towards Hilliot since he looked upon him as an outsider. Andy's constant refrain about Dana Hilliot was -

"We do not know what sort of bloody man you are at all"⁶.

Andy took great delight and derived a sort of sadistic pleasure in casting ignominy and calumny on Dana Hilliot, calling him an efferminate seaman. In a view of mockery he even called him Miss. Hilliot -

"Hurry up there, Miss Hilliot, seven bells gone, half an hour ago, your lady ship"⁷.

Hilliot was disgusted because he had become a butt of ridicule among his shipmates. He had great aspirations and dreams and with great fervour he had become a deckboy on the Oedipus Tyrannus. Andy's hatred congealed Hilliot's blood

"I suppose you think it's pretty good coming to sea. Well, you'll find out pretty soon what it's like, it's just a question of working as hell - one ports the same or another. Yes, you'll find out pretty soon"⁸

Andy's accusations and blunt comments overpowered Dana Hilliot and he wanted to liberate himself from that predicament of appalling isolation which he suffered in the midst of the community of the Oedipus Tyrannus.

Hilliot's isolation is reminiscent of the developments which took place in the novel in the 1920's where the isolation of the individual consciousness became the most psychological fact in a world from which public value seemed to have departed and where every individual was seen to be the prisoner of his unique stream - of - consciousness. Our response to every new event is conditioned by our private past. The same situation is dealt with by Virginia Woolf in Mrs. Dalloway(1925) with the heroine planning to give a party; parties bring people together - but do they really bring people together or is one lonelier still in a crowd?. The events in the life of Hilliot, are artfully organised so as to project a host of different ways the nature of this question of the possibilities of communication with the members of the crew.

Dana Hilliot tried to seize the opportunity where he could show to his ship mates that he was not an alien, but a part and parcel of the community. A carrier pigeon from Swansea who had perched on the tapering mast captured his attention. He wanted to display and exhibit his capacity to undertake heroic exploits and disclosed his determination and willingness to undertake the perilous climb of the mainmast in order to save the mickey. Everybody laughed at him and treated his gesture as the swagger of a swelled head

and not as an act of compassion. Dana Hilliot was forced to withdraw from his contemplated adventure of rescuing the dunghawk. It was Norman a twenty-nine year old Norwegian galley boy who ascended the mainmast and saved the mickey. Norman's determination acted as a foil to Hilliot who wavered and failed to crystallise his impulses into actions.

Dana Hilliot felt that the cause of his frustration and rejection was none other than Andy. It was because of this reason that he had become a butt of ridicule in the eyes of his shipmates. The basic root cause of this was his awful isolation from the shipping community.

The step motherly treatment which Hilliot received at the hands of Andy and other shipmates filled him with anguish right from the very beginning of his voyage. These feelings of anguish aggravated during the course of his voyage. Before he could reach Tsjang--Tsjang, he either remained on the deck of the ship lost in the world of drink, or if he returned to go ashore he feared that he would booze there too. The rest of the shipping community ran after girls in brothels and drank to their hearts content so as to beguile the tedium of the journey by sea. Dana Hilliot felt that it was a sacrilege to run after girls because he had vowed fidelity and faithfulness to Janet.

Hilliot was totally committed to Janet and that was one of the important reasons of his estrangement from shipmates. The sense of alienation hovered over him and his contact with Janet got snapped, when he did not receive a letter from Janet for weeks together. In his soliloquy he said -

"But let us have no nonsense about it.
The memory of your virginity fills me
with disgust. Disgust and contempt ! ...
Good God, I loathe you, abwhore you,
Janet"⁹

Dana Hilliot pined for his love Janet when he was on the deck of Oedipus Tyrannus. He stepped ashore and with Hans Popplereuter, a German wireless operator, stranded at Tsjang-Tsjang, went to pubs, brothels and danced with Olga Sologub, A Russian refugee prostitute, in disregard of his promise to Janet that he would not be ensnared by any women. Dana Hilliot roamed in the centres of fleshpots in the port town of Tsjang-Tsjang. Malcolm Lowry portrayed Dana Hilliot as a man who suffered from alienation in Satre's existential epistemology and who strove hard to discover a sort of harmony in life.

In Lunar Caustic Malcolm Lowry embodies his first hand experience as a mental patient at Bellevue in New York. He got himself admitted in the city hospital at Bellevue only when he was separated from his wife Jan Gabriel. Lowry was shattered after the broken marriage which was exacerbated by alcoholism. He experienced isolation, anguish and loneliness and tried to take refuge in the psychiatric department of Bellevue hospital. He was convinced that the anguish which was gnawing at his soul would be washed away by staying at the hospital. Lunar Caustic which was grounded in the novelist's direct experience underwent a transmutation

and became an organised work of art. The objectives that go into the making of Lunar Caustic have their roots and genesis in the private emotion of the novelist, but Lowry contemplated his private emotion and subjected it to such an artistic process, that the compulsive rhythm of the writer's private emotion attained the universality of the theme which is expected of a work of art.

The lunatics who inhabited the hospital suffered from loneliness. They were introverts and were caught up within their inner selves. These lunatics were known for their brooding and sulking spirit. It was only a sense of belongingness and a community life which could break open the skills of their wounded individuality. Hence, in the novel a puppet show was staged in order to control the emotional outbursts of the individuals.

Ethan Llewelyn in October Ferry to Gabriola is depicted as being born in Ontario. At the age of two he had left Canada and returned to his native place only when he was twenty-two. That long spell of absence from the place of his birth went against him. It engendered in him a galling sense of isolation from the main stream of Canadian life.

Ethan said -

"Everybody takes me for an Englishman
and they seem to hate the English like
the devil"¹⁰

This feeling of loneliness in Ethan was accentuated by the indifference of his parents to him during his childhood days.

The only moment when Ethan experienced love and concern on the part of either his parents was, when he was gifted with a beautiful toy-model of Moscow. Ethan went ecstatic over the toy-model but his happiness was short lived, because the gift was callously taken back from him. Ethan's experiences of being a castaway, a derelict from whom there was none to care left an indelible mark in his life. Ethan recounted his wretched childhood with despair when his father sent him away year after year to a prep school - a boarding school in Stroke-Newington. In this place he was not allowed to do any work or play any games. He wandered about the grounds in dark glasses because he suffered from corneal isolation.

Ethan was nearly starved to death. What hurt him most was that he had not received -

"any treatment for his eyes beyond zinc ointment castor oil, and a flogging, when he had a relapse from a junior master"¹¹

When Ethan was at home for holidays, his father preferred to beat his chilblains with a razor strap and insisted at the same time that his certain duty school boy habits which had already led to complete impoverishment of his blood would result in atrophy and complete idiocy which would culminate finally in death. Ethan recalls in the novel that his father had not bothered to take him to an eye specialist, until he was thirteen and when he finally took him to a

London Ophthalmologist, he put Cocaine in his eyes and -

"simply scraped the affliction away in half an hour like a sailor scrapping rust off a deck"¹².

The above description is sufficient enough to show that Ethan suffered from a sense of alienation right from his childhood. The rejection and a sense of unwantedness which Ethan suffered from caused a severe wound in the psyche of Ethan. His agony increased all the more, when he found Barkerville, the family mansion he had moved into after his fathers death, being reduced to ashes. He was convinced that he was the unworthy heir of his family and thought that the fire which destroyed the house in May 1946 was a sign of his damnation. Ethan had the awful feeling of being situated in chaotic limbo at the very outermost fringes of the world feeling lonely and homeless, feeling himself so cut off -

"he had always remained half-conscious of his isolation from his fellowmen, excluding him - See - that fellow sitting over there in the corner, I'm not sure I like the shifty look of him, he is not one of us"¹³.

That agonising predicament which was due to alienation was felt by Jacqueline too. Jacqueline, the daughter of Angus Mc Candless had a wretched childhood like Ethan.

In Under the Volcano Malcolm Lowry has depicted Geoffrey Firmin the "Anglo - Indian orphan"¹⁴as suffering

acutely from a sense of emotional abandonment, since his father had disappeared and his mother had died. The absence of parents had left a void in him making him secretive and pensive. Geoffrey was a castaway, cut off from filial love. His sense of loneliness was exacerbated by his gnawing guilt over the German crewmen who were roasted alive in the furnace of boat under his stewardship. He had not experienced love since his childhood and in his conversation with Hugh he found the universe bleak and awful -

"Your mother, my stepmother died, all those dreadful things seeming to happen at once as though the in-laws of catastrophe had suddenly arrived from nowhere, or, perhaps Damchock, and moved in on us"¹⁵.

The characters which Malcolm Lowry has depicted were not only suffering from a sense of alienation but they were tormented with restlessness too. In Lunar Caustic the protagonist Bill Plantagenet is portrayed as a seaman and a jazz musician who moved from one tavern to the other in the early hours of New York. His restless wanderings were a proof which indicated that he was looking for rather than trying to remember something. The disquiet that made his search frantic was accentuated by the heat wave that had already taken a toll of more than a hundred New Yorkers.

In the course of his brisk itinerary from saloon to saloon he appeared to be someone who was perhaps led astray but a little reflection revealed that he knew his destina-

tion. The saloons were only points in his circumference and his gaze was fixed on the hospital which towered above the place that he was roaming about. He was sent on a mission. He explicitly revealed his quest -

"I am sent to save my father, to find my son, to heal the eternal horror of three, to resolve the immedicable horror of opposites"¹⁶.

The search was indeed an existential one. It was related to the antinomies which had its roots in the very existence of man - the antinomies of love and hate. The theme of unresolvable opposites characterising human existence, mingled with the theme of the act of saving the father and finding the son. Malcolm Lowry's characters after a frantic search explore that the root cause of their restlessness was due to their lack of belongingness.

The theme of lack of identity is evident in Malcolm Lowry's first novel Ultramarine (1933) which revolved round Dana Hilliot. Hilliot had become a sailor to enjoy and have fun. To him the ship was a vehicle of enjoyment and he developed a close affinity with it. This was as a result of what they shared in common - both were without an identity of their own. In Chapter Two in his soliloquy he introduced the ship to his girl friend Janet. He said --

"Both of us born of Viking blood, both robbed off our countries and left to make out as best we can, both, finally, with the same wandering, harbourless,

dispossessed characteristics"¹⁷

In the novel Hilliot states that the history of the ship filled him with a sense of narcissistic compassion. He traced the history of Oedipus Tyrannus --

"First she was registered in Tvedestrand, then bought by an English firm, who re-registered her, altering her derrick plan, then she was bought back by Norway, after which she was rebought by England and, after her reconditioning was completed, received a charter"¹⁸.

These frequent changes of nationalities with regard to the ownership of the steamer robbed it off a separate identity and made it a cosmopolitan one. Malcolm Lowry at one place in the novel called it, "Whoreship" suggestive of a slippery woman who was devoid of fidelity in marital life.

Dana Hilliot like the Oedipus Tyrannus was a product of varied cultures and he wandered harbourless and dispossessed. At the age of five he was taken away on interminable voyages all over the world. He developed a sort of hatred towards life because he could not strike roots into the soil of a particular land. He led a nomadic life and that to and fro movement had adverse effects on his life. Both, his soul as well as his spirit was filled with anguish and he said -

"Every country from which I have been forced to emigrate has left a gaping hole in my heart, considering the

formenting hetero-geneity of the crew,
the minute Greek and Spanish and French
firmament as well as Norse, English and
American -- is it any wonder that I feel
humiliated by it all, and as homeless,
as exiled as the ship itself?"¹⁹

Dana Hilliot's wandering reminds the reader of the
wandering Jew in Eliot's Gerontion who did not belong to a
particular culture. He was --

"Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp
Blistered in Brussels, patched and
peeled in London"²⁰.

Hilliot received his brief education in Oslo, thereaft-
er he had an affair with Janet and when his father received
a tutorial assignment at Harvard, he found himself totally
uprooted from his native land.

An individual experiences a veritable hell when he
finds himself trapped in the shackles of his self, and de-
serted by the rest of the community of man. Geoffrey's
unsent letter to Yvonne in Under the Volcano bears testimony
to this truth in Chapter One of the novel which briefs the
reader of the intensity of Geoffrey's yearning for Yvonne.

"If I am to survive I need your help"²¹

but he faltered and fumbled when the question of seeking
succour from her arose by posting the letter. He sensitive-
ly recreates the way where he is stuck up in the labyrinth
of his individual self -

"And why did I not send a telegram or

some word immediately? Ah, why not, why not, why not? For I suppose. You would have come back in due course if I had asked you?. But this is what it is to live in hell. I could not, cannot ask you. I could not, cannot send a telegram"²².

This imprisonment of the individual in the dungeon of his own making was due to the desiccation of values that bound people in an organic community. In the writings of the nineties and the first two decades of the twentieth century the writers portrayed the absence of an organic community.

The key to significance of the novel Ultramarine lies in the search for identity.

"Could you still believe in...the notion that my voyage is something Columbian and magnificent?" asks Dana. "Very well, then, prepare to be disillusioned, for, like Melville, I shall strip my motive like an onion down to the innermost bulb of degradation"²³.

Malcolm Lowry sought to confront his own essential being. His aim was to make his way through the accumulated layers of self estrangement.

Dana Hilliot was temperamentally not fit for the bourgeois world in which he had been reared. It was but natural for him that he should begin the quest for his proper self

with a change of milieu. His discovery that shipboard life in every bit as stratified and nearly as repressive as the public school he had left came as a bitter disappointment. Dana Hilliot's efforts to gain acceptance by the crew met with repeated dejection and resistance. The crew was aware of the difference in class and education that separated a "toff" who had come to the sea to widen his experience from those who follow it out of harsh necessity.

Furthermore, according to the usual custom the boy during his initial experience should be subjected to strenuous trials until he proved himself to be a trustworthy shipmate. Dana could endure that sort of treatment. He felt awkward, baffled and believed that he was good for little besides clipping paint. He was not a very able mariner. Above all the most painful of all was his rejection by the tattooed cook Andy, whom he regarded as-

"the sort of man to be²⁴.

In these circumstances Dana lacked a secure mooring. On the other hand Dana rediscovered himself by turning to the sea. The mighty sea called him back to an awareness of what lay at the core of his being and reminded him that he had as much right as any other creature to fulfill himself. This assurance filled Dana with a sense of readiness to challenge his antagonists on the social sphere.

The theme of the father figure had become an obsession with Lowry because since his childhood he did not have a rapport with the father inspite of the fact that he received a lot of support from his father in terms of money. He

received the best of what a son could receive from the father in the traditional manner of paternal solicitude but Lowry's mental makeup was such that he became a rebel and found himself at logger-heads with the father. That search for the father expressed in the character of Bill Plantagenet, the protagonist of Lunar Caustic, is nothing, but a projection of Lowry's estrangement from his father and his attempt of assuring father surrogate in Conrad Aiken and Melville.

That search for father was a search for one's identity, an attempt at a conscious articulation of a cultural heritage one belongs to. Like Malcolm Lowry Bill Plantagenet too was incapable of love and that incapacity for love found an expression in Bill Plantagenet's abandonment of his wife Ruth and his excessive indulgence in alcoholism. In short the theme of ambivalent feelings such as love and hate, blended with the search for father and son, stood out as Lowry's basic obsession.

Dana Hilliot in Ultramarine is depicted as suffering from a basic flaw in his life. He lacked order and harmony since his school days. As a student of Euclid's geometry he cut a very poor figure in the class and received a reprimand from the mathematics teacher. He was laughed at by his classmates as they crowded around him to watch his pathetic attempt to create a regular hexagon. At school geometry puzzled and frightened Hilliot and eventually it became a sort of monster to him. Hilliot's inability to draw geometrical figures with exactness and precision was symptomatic

of a deeper chaos in his life. In Chapter I Malcolm Lowry explores this incapacity of Hilliot -

"For here as nowhere else he could understand precisely what was so all-poisoning in him, this incapacity to position things and see them in their places"²⁵.

This inability to see things as they are in themselves and to see them in the right perspectives was not a predicament of Hilliot only, but a dilemma gnawing at the heart of every modern, especially the people of the thirties. T. S. Eliot's Gerontion suffers from such a predicament when he says:

"I was neither at the hot gates
Nor fought in the warm rain
Nor knee deep in the salt marsh,
heaving a cutlass"²⁶

The civilisation had become a heap of broken images, and values were in a state of disarray. Hilliot voiced the anguish of the humanity of his time.

Hilliot went to Oxford on scholarship for one year. He could not get along with the people at Cambridge. In a mood of sheer disgust and weariness he gave an account of his one year stay at Cambridge --

"It was nothing, nothing at all
I failed my first-year examinations,
Verstehn Sie, what we call 'May's
And I was held up once for leaving

a pub after ten - what you call a Wienlust. And I was arrested on November fifth for knocking off a policeman's hat. Silly, Silly, Silly things. The Master of the College sent for me and said, "You neither ride, row nor read"²⁷.

Dana Hilliot was not accepted by authorities at Cambridge because he was not fit for the education that was being imparted there. The trouble that filled him with disquiet had its roots in his vacillation. He wavered because he could not come to grips with the root cause of his uneasiness. The incapacity to position things and to see them in their places gnawed at his heart.

Dana Hilliot in Ultramarine suffers from a deep turmoil in his psyche. This turmoil brewed all the more when since his childhood he moved from one country to another. He wanted to anchor and hold on to a stable point in his ever-wandering life. Hilliot wore masks and played psychological games. Actually behind the facade of fun and enjoyment lurked the smouldering fire of profound unrest. He did not join the ship just for mere fun. His lacerated inner being found a fascination for the ship which was partly due to the teeming chaos of the sea which was very much similar to his chaotic mental state.

Although Dana Hilliot, the alter ego of Lowry, was preoccupied with low passions which kept tormenting him, he

searched for some absolutes of life. He said -

"If we will ever find it, Absolute beauty, absolute truth, did they exist"²⁸.

His search for a stable point in life was marred by his scepticism. His voyage on Oedipus Tyrannus left a predominant impression upon the reader. The impression being utter ruin and chaos. Hilliot said -

"Chaos and disunion, then, he told himself, not law and order were the principles of life which sustained all things in the mind of men as well as on the ship"²⁹.

The furnace of the ship gave a vivid glimpse of a veritable hell where firemen are like demons. He watched Nikolai the fireman with great fascination. He was half-naked, gritty and black with coal. Hilliot's search for absolute truth and beauty got bogged down to the mire of vile passions in which he found himself susceptible.

The ship was a miniature universe and Hilliot found himself descending from the level of simplicity and purity into the realm of multiplicity and vileness. When he looked more deeply into the glass containing gin, he saw in it the reflection of sadness, misery, self-disgust and terror. Hilliot's objective was not to run away from the reality -

"No getting away from it, no getting away from the unfortunate Hilliot, this strong creature with a head of filthy, infected hair, and a maggoty

and rotting consciousness who dreams of
archetypal images"³⁰

The voyage was a 'self-inflicted penance' for Hilliot. He undertook the journey by sea in order to explore the depth of life and his mission of exploration entailed immense sufferings and hardships for him. He came to the realisation and was fully convinced that reality could be experienced only after passing through a phase of ordeal. Dana Hilliot was not only a voyager but he often asserted his intention of being a writer. As a writer he wanted to grapple with the essentials of life. Among the writers he was under the spell of Joseph Conrad who gave the harrowing tale of a civilised and sophisticated European Mistah Kurtz through the Congo. The mantle of learning and civilisation fell off Mistah Kurtz and he came before the reader as a brute in the midst of African savages. The darkness of Africa reclaimed his soul and Kurtz sank to the level of wild animals governed by inordinate lust for ivory, though his despairing utterance -

"The horror', the horror"³¹.

faintly redeemed him. Hilliot was not Mistah Kurtz but there was close affinity with Kurtz because both were educated and civilised and embarked on voyages to find themselves confronted with the stark realities of life that came to the fore ripping open the veneer of propriety and decorum.

Dana Hilliot yearned for peace and harmony instead of

peace and turmoil which found a positive expression in his attempt to save Norman's Mickey that was drowned into the sea. Andy prevented him from leaping into the sea because it was infested with sharks and crocodiles.

Hilliott yielded to the instructions of Andy and refrained from jumping into the sea. However, the idea to salvage the drowned Mickey was a movement towards something creative in the life of Hilliott's who was prone to despondency and cynicism. Hilliott's longing for peace and harmony was not forced upon him, but it grew out of his experience with the complex maelstroms of life. Harmony, which Hilliott spoke of, emerged from disharmony and chaos of life. His utterance was a proof of his testimony -

"Why was it his brain could not accept dissonance as simply as harmony, could not make order emerge from this chaos. Surely God had made men free from the first, tossing confusion of slime, the spewings of that chaos, from the region beast. Chaos and disunion, then he told himself, not law and order, were the principles of life which sustained all things, in the mind of men as well as on the ship"³².

Under the Volcano instead of becoming the case history of a drunk, became the story of a civilisation in which all are drunk.

"Good God, if our civilisation were to

sober up for a couple of days it would
die of remorse on the third"³³.

The tale of an individual assumed a universal character pointing to people seized with a frenzy reeling towards destruction. This frenzy was the result of the primacy of the ego in man. Geoffrey made a correct diagnosis of the malady that afflicted him and goaded himself inexorably to turn his back on his wife Yvonne who had come to repair his shattered self. It was the -

Tyranny of self....."³⁴

that was eating into his vitals and he wanted a deliverance and unless he sought deliverance from utter subjection to his solitary self, he remained in hell. One of the primary themes of Under the Volcano was, that captivity of the human mind into the dingy cell of pure subjectivity. The predicament of the individual who was enslaved by his ego found an expression in the poetry of the thirties especially in T. S. Eliot's The Wasteland.

In the writings of the nineties and the first two decades of the twentieth century the writers portrayed the absence of an organic community. As a result of the breakdown of values the writings of this period deal with characters who are locked up inside the caves of their minds. They are choked and feel suffocated and are sometimes impelled by an urge to discover some abiding values when Dana Hilliot in Lowry's Ultramarine felt puzzled at the sight of the world lacking in order and coherence. He felt the nee-

nessity of clutching at something that would save him from appalling isolation. Geoffrey in Under the Volcano is engaged in writing a book Secret Knowledge and the question of absolutes in life became his central concern -

"Is there any ultimate reality, external, conscious and every present etc. etc that can be realised by any such means that may be accepted to all creeds and religions and suitable to all climes and countries"?³⁵.

Geoffrey cannot experience the beauty of life because he was obsessed with his private self and he spoke of that preoccupation to Yvonne in his unsent epistle.

"Or do you find me between Mercy and Understanding, between Chesed and Binah my equilibrium, and equilibrium is all precarious - balancing, teetering over the awful unbridgeable void, the all-but unretraceable path of Gods lighting back to God? "³⁶.

The reference in that passage to Binah, Chesed and Oliphoth brought in the mystery of the Cabhala. The Cabbala added a new dimension to the theme of the tyranny of self that had made a wreck of the life of Geoffrey.

In Under the Volcano it was drink that gave Geoffrey a thrill, and made him to slide down into the pit of disaster Geoffrey had something Faustean about him and he became an exemplar of the theme of destruction which was brought about

by egoism and self-love. This theme was not peculiar to any age but was common to humanity irrespective of time and space.

Douglas Day's analysis of the theme of auto-destruction which is revealed through the character of Geoffrey is quite incisive "It is a frenzied and headlong leap into the abyss, a deliberate and successful attempt at self-damnation. This failed Consul, the erratic and faintly ludicrous drink, is nothing less than a modern-day type of the Faustean Promethean rebel, a man who turns his back on Grace, and also who seeks by doing so to acquire diabolical wisdom and power. He knows, like Rimbaud, Bandelaire, and the rest mandits, that the way down and the way up are one and the same, and he, like them, prefers the way down"³⁷.

This theme of self-damnation as stated in the First Chapter of the novel acts as a prologue to the book. M. Laruelle, a former French film Director and boyhood friend of Geoffrey, in the course of his sojourn with Geoffrey in the town of Quauhnahuac, tells us about Marlowe's Faustus who like Geoffrey Firmin tread the path of perdition by striking a bargain with infernal powers for the sake of the sweet sensations of body. As Marlowe's Faustus could not pray for Grace, Geoffrey cannot feel a love that might break his love for alcohol, or rather symbolising a saving, attitude. Thus Geoffrey was akin to Marlowe's Faustus who sinned against the Holy Ghost by mingling pride with despair.

Under the Volcano begins with an epigraph from Bunyan's

Grace Abounding for the Chief of Sinners, which in a nutshell gives the theme of the novel that consists in a sinner's inability to make prayer for the deliverance of his soul. The sinner knows that his soul has been battered by worldly temptations and in the anguish of spirit he found in him a craving for a respite for the nightmarish experience of being persecuted by conscience. But the difficulty with him was that despite all his yearning for the ineffable he found himself sliding in hell.

Geoffrey embodied that dichotomy of human spirit, when he felt the necessity of the abounding love taming infernal powers that tempted him to damnation but the irony of life was such that he felt himself utterly lost and beyond redemption. Geoffrey was so guilty of sin that he despairingly uttered -

"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"³⁸.

Like Bunyan, Lowry dealt with the theme of a sinner who felt that he had been cast off by God and there was no way out but to submit to despair. Geoffrey said -

"God has little patience with remorse"³⁹.

The theme of guilt had a Calvinistic ring about it. The Calvinistic doctrine of predestination accounted for fatalism in Geoffrey. He felt that he was a reprobate and there was something preordained about him. He found himself led by some diabolical powers which hovered over the novel.

Allied to this theme of Calvinistic guilt was another primal theme of man's original sin in the garden of Eden and consequent expulsion from the garden. When Geoffrey and Yvonne in 1930 after their marriage started living as a couple, they had a well tended garden. The well kept garden was symbolic of harmony and was concerned with life but after Geoffrey's estrangement from Yvonne the garden was full of scum and rank weeds.

But the garden of his neighbour M. Quincey was well kept and there was a sign that admonished a trespasser that he would face eviction, if he intended to despoil the beauty of the garden. But Geoffrey did not heed the warning and he made a wreck of the garden and for having despoiled the garden his death was presided over by the Chief of Gardens at the end of the novel.

In Ultramarine the chaotic state of civilisation is discernible, when Hilliot went into a big hall where he could see an old harridan with a saggy face. That harridan was evidently an European, shuffling in carpet slippers. Around the room which was meant for fleshpots and sensual enjoyment were Biblical mottoes and the prints of Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene. He also found a large bed with much haloed Jesus above it intruding on his consciousness and next to Jesus, was a meek kitten.

The harridan had invited Hilliot to immerse himself in the enjoyment of the delights of the flesh but Hilliot was

circumscribed by the promise that he had made to Janet before embarking on a voyage to Far East. Dana Hilliot was caught in a fix. On the one hand, his commitment to Janet that he would keep himself undefiled throughout the voyage kept tormenting him. On the other hand, the sensual delights dangled before him a world of delectable romance and enticed Hilliot by offering the prospect of dalliance. The voyage was a objective correlative, for the voyage was through the psyche of Hilliot from the state of purity into damnation.

The memory of Janet was a phase in Hilliot's consciousness which was characterised by purity and virginity and the moment he took leave of Janet and boarded the ship, he found himself face to face with evil and all through the voyage he found Hilliot wrestling with evil.

October Ferry to Gabriola is permeated with the theme of evil which engulfed the psyche of man. Malcolm Lowry depicted the working of evil in Ethan Llewelyn, the protagonist of the novel. Ethan Llewelyn was a criminal lawyer in the city of Toronto. Evil also worked through Ethan's relationship with his wife Jacqueline, Peter Cordwainer an undergraduate mate of Ethan, a host of his clients and a fifteen years old Canadian youth Richard Chapman who was charged with making a criminal assault on a sixteen year old girl of his neighbourhood. The evil which is depicted in the novel was existential in character which mirrored the very being of man. Ethan Llewelyn was forced to brood over evil when Richard Chapman was sentenced to death. Malcolm

Lowry offers his readers a glimpse into the abyss of man to see the murk and horror proliferating there.

Under the Volcano has also the theme of sexual jealousy. The greeneyed monster which fed on Geoffrey pushed him into the abyss of horror. It spoke of the generosity of Yvonne that she had returned back to Geoffrey with the noble mission of reconciling themselves and launching on a life of love and affection. It appeared that she had come to play the role of the Samaritan. But Lowry's treatment of Yvonne's homecoming was ironic. It was ridiculous that the Samaritan was in the guise of Judas. Hugh the half brother of Geoffrey, was not a sole Judas betraying the trust of father-like Geoffrey by cuckolding him with Yvonne. Yvonne too relished the company of Hugh and on the Day of the Dead, most of the time she was away from Geoffrey for whose sake she had come over to Mexico. She slaked her thirst for sensual appetite by swimming in the pool with Hugh. Geoffrey's apprehension was not unfounded that Yvonne's relations with Hugh were shady.

Sexual jealousy had unhinged Geoffrey and he found that the traumatic experience knocked the bottom out of the gesture of Yvonne. The analogy to Othello's mind ravaged by sexual jealousy was obvious. Hugh first cuckolded Geoffrey in Paris and he had come again to Mexico to seduce Yvonne. At Salon Ofelia where Geoffrey made up his mind to snap all connections with Yvonne in the garb of a saviour recalled to mind the canker of sexual jealousy eating bit by bit the vitals of Hamlet. It has the frightful insinuation of

Gertrude in adulterous relationship with Claudius. The theme of lust and sexual jealousy was a preoccupation of the poets of the thirties, the chief example of which is T. S. Eliot in Sweeney among the Nightingales.

The theme of despair presented through the character of Geoffrey is theological. This despair is begotten in man when he severs his relationship with the source of his religion. This estrangement from religion results in a man's refusal to love or to be loved. This impulse of refusal to love is fed by his pride. This theme finds a support in the inscription on the wall of the house of M. Laruelle. The inscription :

"No se puede vivir sin amar" 40

(We cannot live without loving).

brings home to the reader that Geoffrey feels like a ravaged and stricken town because he is incapable of loving any other thing than his own tyrannical self.

The condition of his agonised self is pathetic and deeply moving when Yvonne is away from him and the scene when Geoffrey is in the company of his friend Dr. Vigil is touching. They happen to meet each other in a church in Quauhnahuac:-

"he didn't know, with sombre tapestries,
and strange votive pictures, a comp-
assionate Virgin floating in the gloom,
to whom he prayed, with muddily beating
heart, he might have Yvonne again. Dark
figures, tragic and isolated, stood about

the Church, or were kneeling - only the bereaved and lonely went there. She is the Virgin for those who have nobody with and for mariners on the sea."⁴¹.

Geoffrey in utter loneliness prays in silence before the Virgin. This is when Yvonne is away, and when she comes back, he rejects her. He is now praying before another Virgin :

"Nothing is altered and inspite of God's mercy , I am still alone. Though my suffering seems sense less I am still in agony..... Let me sink lower still, that I may know the truth. Teach me to love again, to love life.. Give me back my purity, the knowledge of the Mysteries, that I have betrayed and lost....
Let me be truly lonely, that I may honestly pray "⁴².

Geoffrey's prayer who is one of the bereaved is not consistent. His prayer seeks rapproachment with Yvonne in one breath and in the other, he, like the Keats of Ode to a Nightingale, feels forlorn and is brought back to his sole self.

Apart from the dominant strain of the tyranny of self that set Geoffrey adrift in the sanctuary of despair, we find the political theme of the Spanish Civil War moving disturbingly through Under the Volcano like a

conscience⁴³. The Consul's murder at the Farolito in Parian was not a trick of fate, but was the outcome of a series of interrelated circumstances depending upon the Consul's past, his role in Quauhnahuac, and conditions in Mexico during the time of the novel's action. Careful scrutiny reveals that the Chapters II - XII form an intricate mosaic of doom for the Consul. This mosaic is formed upon a background of the political situation in Mexico in 1938-39.

It appeared that the Spanish Civil War and the tragic history of Mexico during the reign of Maximilian and Cardenas was likely to give the novel the air of a political tract but Heilman rightly felt that "the author does succeed in keeping the political phenomenon on the periphery of the spiritual substance keeping them symbolic, using them for dramatic amplification of his metaphysics"⁴⁴.

It was the "Pelado" episode in Under the Volcano that unified the political material and wrung the spiritual import out of it. Geoffrey and Yvonne found themselves in the company of a Pelado, in a bus on way to Tomalin. The Pelado got down from the bus and robbed an Indian dying beside the road of his money. It showed the cruelty and inhumanity not only of an individual but a civilisation at a particular historical moment spawning a race with a fiendish character.

The heartless character of civilisation consists not only of an individual robbing a man on the point of death of his money but the attitude of all the passengers who stood

passive and listless, when an Indian was struggling for life in the hedge. When Hugh attempted to do something for the dying Indian the Consul prevented him.

It was a pathetic sight that the chest of the Indian heaved like a spent swimmer's but all the bystanders frittered time in a hair-splitting analysis of the causes leading to the death of the Indian. It was nothing but dehumanisation robbing people of their essential character.

One of the central theme in Under the Volcano was what John Mc Cormick had called "the nature of love in a fragmented society"⁴⁵. Jacques loves Yvonne, in his way, but the image of his regard for her can never be divorced from the scene in his studio where, in the Consul's painful conception, he approaches his design. Love came too late for Jacques, and in the wrong circumstances and at the expense of his friend, the Consul.

Hugh's love clearly failed on a personal level. His machinations with Yvonne were more detrimental than beneficial to the Consul. In the light of the love and kindness, the Consul has shown for Hugh in the past, Hugh's adultery with Yvonne and his thoughtless usurpation of her of the day of the Consul's great need strike the reader as unforgivable.

When we reflect upon the relationship of the Consul and Yvonne, we discover the full import of Lowry's conception of love in our time. Lowry seemed to regard the failure of marriage as one of the most distinct and distinctively tragic failures of all : he sees the inability of man and

woman to live together in harmony and love as indicative of the whole modern malaise.

In more general terms, the theme of Under the Volcano was, in Walter Allen's phrase is "the necessity of love and the appalling difficulty of love"⁴⁶. In the letter which Jacques finds in the volume of Elizabethan plays in Chapter I, the Consul writes -

"Love is the only thing which gives meaning to our poor ways on earth, not precisely a discovery, I'am afraid"⁴⁷.

Lowry provides the reader with insight into the nature of the individual and collective tragedies of the characters of the novel, and makes a powerful statement concerning the plight of man and women in the twentieth Century.

In October Ferry to Gabriola it is love that subsists between Ethan and Jacqueline in the course of their stay at Eridanus. They experience a sense of felicity. They enjoyed the warmth of love which the novelist has portrayed in an intense ecstatic manner -

"they enjoyed almost complete freedom and privacy, peace and quiet, they swam and sun-bathed....."⁴⁸.

This conception of love does not take refuge in a cloistered shell but breaks open free to embrace the ups and downs of life. The theme of love thus developed in October Ferry to Gabriola -

"involves a dying away of the old self into a more authentic mode of being

where one discovers the myth he must
render in life"⁴⁹.

Ethan's main motive to be on the island was to get rid of shackles of past with all its guilt and sin. He longed to begin a new life. The island of Gabriola looked wild, lonely, primeval and forbidding but underneath that terrifying exterior was the overflowing impulse of life. This impulse to life and love are indestructible because it manifests itself in some burning tree stumps to clear his land and a voice calling out clear across the water to Ethan and Jacqueline to Gabriola. It was only love and love alone which came to the rescue of Ethan whose soul was sold to the devil and was sick to death.

The foregoing discussion of the themes in Malcolm Lowry's fiction point out to his world view and it clearly shows that his vision is a vision of reality. Most of the themes are based on his personal experiences and as perceptively observed by Daniel B. Dodson the element of strangeness, of isolation, of failure to adapt to the social, psychological, and metaphysical environment is the initial ingredient of Lowry's world. The resultant, hovering suggestion of evil, unspecified but ubiquitous, remains one of the characteristics of Lowry vision⁵⁰.

CHAPTER NOTES

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**A PLUNGE INTO
THE PSYCHE**

CHAPTER - 4

A PLUNGE INTO THE PSYCHE

While depicting characters novelists employ either of the two methods and some do employ both at once. In the first method the personalities of characters in fiction emerge from chronological account of a group of events and the characters reactions to those events. In the other method the novelist gives a rounded description of characters at the point when they are introduced in the story. If the first method is employed, we find that the character is a shadowy and indeterminate creature, but as a result of his reactions to a chronological series of events which are presented he emerges as a living personality. In the second method the portrait of the character is given first. As a result the readers know what to expect and the actions and reactions of the character provide an elaboration through which the readers can appreciate by comparison with the original portrait.

These two methods, separately or in combination, have been the stock methods of presenting character in fiction from the beginnings of the novel until the modern times. In recent times, partly as a result of increased speculation into the nature of states of consciousness, writers have become dissatisfied with these traditional methods. They have realised that the psychologically accurate account of what a man is at any given moment can be given neither in terms of a static description of his character nor in terms

of a group of chronologically arranged reactions to a series of circumstances. They have become interested in those aspects of consciousness which cannot be viewed as a progression of individual and self-existing moments, but which are essentially dynamic rather than static in nature and are independent of a given moment.

Malcolm Lowry's art of characterisation is unique. He has expressed his views on characterisation in a novel in his letter to Jonathan Cape¹. He does not believe in the traditional method of characterisation. The success of Under the Volcano on the immediate level derives principally from the skill and completeness with which Lowry has drawn his characters. Though Malcolm Lowry writes a long exegesis in defence of Under the Volcano he made a few concessions to Cape's reader. He agreed that the reader's criticism of the weakness of character drawing was valid. He admitted that character drawing was -

"not only weak but virtually non-existent, save with certain minor characters"².

Characterisation was non-existent in the traditional sense of the creation of the static characters. In recent times, as a result of increased speculation into nature of states of consciousness, writers had become dissatisfied with the traditional method of character-creation. The present moment was specious. It denoted the ever fluid passing of 'the already' into the 'not yet' and therefore retrospect and anticipation constituted the very essence of

consciousness at any specified time.

In the light of an epistemology conceiving of the psyche of man in a state of perpetual flux, a static character sketch becomes an arbitrary formalisation of real facts and this awareness in Lowry prompted him to devise a fluid technique which enabled him to utilise constantly those ever present contacts with the past which constitute the very stuff of consciousness. Thus, when Malcolm Lowry states that characterisation was virtually non-existent, he wished to demolish the notion of the old stable ego and aimed at recreating changes in the character through all allotropic states. Characterisation was there but it was in conformity with the new conception of character existing from moment to moment blending memory and desire. And hence Lowry said -

"There are thousand writers who can draw adequate characters till all is blue from one who can tell you anything new about hell fire. And I am telling you something new about hell fire³".

A novel about hell fire was embodied in terms of the interaction of a number of individual characters, despite Lowry's statement that the four main characters are not individuals in any way, but -

"aspects of the same man, or the human spirit"⁴.

If we go by what the novelist says about his characters, Under the Volcano, becomes a schematic allegorical

novel. The novel, no doubt had an allegorical import but characters retained their individuality and gave ample consideration to their individual lives which contributed to the development of the theme of perdition that consumed the life of its protagonist.

Malcolm Lowry assumed that the static character sketch was an arbitrary formalization of the real facts, and to make a presentation of states of mind dependent on the step-by-step relation of a sequence of events in time was to impose on the mental activity of men a servile dependence on chronology which was not in accordance with the psychological fact. It was a way out of that difficulty (arising from a new realisation of the complex and fluid nature of consciousness and the desire to utilise that realisation in the portrayal of character) that he made use of the "stream of consciousness" technique into his fiction to bring about delineation of character. He understood that the "stream of consciousness" was not simply a method of describing states of mind, because the method had implications for the whole technique of narrative and character drawing. He realised that with this method the personality was in a constant state of unstable equilibrium, that a mood was never anything static but a fluid pattern which mixed memory with desire and that marked an important new development in the tradition of psychological fiction.

Malcolm Lowry was also aware that this method was able to achieve by depth what the traditional achieved by extension. It gave Malcolm Lowry an opportunity of presenting

character outside time and place. It also enabled him to separate the presentation of consciousness from the chronological sequence of events and secondly it enabled the quality of a given state of mind to be investigated completely. Malcolm Lowry could achieve this in his works by pursuing to their end the remote mental associations and suggestions, that the readers need not wait for time to make the potential actual before they can see the whole.

Besides, "stream of consciousness" Malcolm Lowry also made use of expressionism a variant of the former to unravel a character. Expressionism was non-mimetic and therefore a revolt against Realism, Naturalism and Impressionism. In Herbert Read's words the Expressionist does not wish to reproduce -

"the objective reality of the world, but
the subjective reality of the feelings
which objects and events arouse"⁵,

For the Expressionist the truth resides not in the observable world but in the mind of the perceiver. As a result of this conception of the universe Malcolm Lowry had to take recourse of the expressionist method that worked in terms of "fantasy thinking"⁶

Fantasy thinking, as Jung felt, was different from -

"a thinking that is adapted to reality,
by means of which we imitate the successiveness of objectively real things"⁷

Malcolm Lowry in a letter to Jonathan Cape, spoke of his "rebellion"⁸ against the realist school with its photo-

graphic fidelity in adhering to the externals of life. He was after -

"a new form, a new approach to reality
itself"⁹

and vividly explained, in a letter to Albert Erskine that the perspective on reality which he developed was of an Expressionist who undermined the foundations of realistic art and rendered visible -

"soul-states and the violent emotions
welling up from the innermost recesses
of the subconscious"¹⁰

Malcolm Lowry was an artist who could paint the canvas with myriads of colours. His novels are a proof of his mastermind in which he laid his hands on varied methods- mythic evocation, recurrent motifs, interior monologues, flash back, montage, stream of consciousness and expressionism in order to throw ample light on "Character".

In Ultramarine Malcolm Lowry made use of the stream-of-consciousness and flashback in order to portray his personal predicament. This was a subtle way of recapturing memories, thoughts and feelings which exist outside the primary consciousness that laid its emphasis on exploration of the inchoate. In Ultramarine Malcolm Lowry makes the reader browse through the chamber of consciousness of his protagonist Dana Hilliot. Dana Hilliot is presented to the reader in a constant state of unstable equilibrium. In Chapter One, in one instance Dana Hilliot is depicted as gazing at the fireman when three bells rang. He became forgetful of

his presence in the midst of the crew and became a melancholic and descended into the labyrinth of his psyche -

"What sorrow was it, stirring in his mind behind the screen of time? A note of memory merely growing fainter, drowning in the yellow sea of his consciousness? Ah, but no, he had it, and following it, he suddenly saw a small boy, himself three years ago, inkstains on his fingers, sitting upon the steps of the swimming baths at school, his eyes burning.....Forlorn. The very word is like a bell. To toll me back from thee to my sad self. What could it have been that reminded him? The engine, possibly, of the steam heater that pounded there all day to warm the baths. Green Water. It had been like plunging into moss... Left out of the swimming team, the important match against Uppingham. He had stolen out of last period to have a look on the notice board. A smell of peat smoke from the fens. He had got up when he saw two prefects coming down past the Hall, early from the Doctor's Greek Testament Class...how did it go?"¹¹.

Dana Hilliot in this soliloquy exposes his real self,

when he becomes oblivious of the outside world. "Forlorn" is the word which illuminates his solitary state of mind. In the monologue he analysed himself and saw visions. The stream-of-consciousness method enabled the novelist to peel off the veil of external reality which concealed the personality of the protagonist Dana Hilliot and to give the visionary gleam which he seized.

For both, Lowry as well as to Conrad Aiken vision was the primary thing. Lowry was of the same mind as Conrad Aiken who said that without vision -

"no amount of observation, or cataloguing, or mere naming, or immersion is the thing - that insidiously destructive bequest of William Carlos Williams-can ever add up to any sort of totality of the response to the universe with which we are faced, outer and inner"¹².

This totality of response catered to both the inner and outer reality. The external reality of the carpenter on the deck of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* in Ultramarine engendered a rich association of image in Dana Hilliot. The carpenter on the deck took Dana Hilliot to the father of Christ, to Christ himself playing with nails in Nazareth and made him to imagine the crucifixion of Christ bringing redemption to the sinning humanity. And Dana Hilliot sought deliverance -

"Oh Lord God, look down on your unworthy and unwashed servant, Hilliot, the seaman, the Liverpool-Norwegian,

whose knees knock together at thunder,
whose filthy hands tremble always in
impotent prayer.....and he stands alone,
naked, weaponless, deliver him from his
bondage and bring him out of the darkness
and the grief and pain into sunlight"¹³.

Besides the human characters that played an important role in Ultramarine the ship that moved from one port to another with the character of a whore was of great significance. The ship played a crucial role for bringing about changes in the protagonist. Malcolm Lowry experienced a sense of oneness with the ship.

Dana Hilliot was highly indebted to Oedipus Tyrannus because it was only when he became a part of the shipping community he experienced rebirth. He turned into a new leaf and was able to shed away anything that came into his way of being a perfect being. He said that it was the -

"strong generous ship he knew, he must
thank for giving it to him"¹⁴.

It was on the ship that he experienced a sense of meaning in his life. Towards the end he chose to become a fireman on the Oedipus Tyrannus because he was of the conviction that a fireman is always nearer to God.

The important constituents of the stream of consciousness include intuition, vision and sometimes occult. Hence Dana Hilliot the protagonist in Ultramarine was prone to see visions.

Similarly, in October Ferry to Gabriola Malcolm Lowry's forte-stream-of-consciousness imparted a rich texture to the novel. He found this method befitting enough to accommodate the belief of Ethan, the protagonist of October Ferry to Gabriola, that -

"man is constantly in flux and constantly changing"¹⁵.

The separate selves of Ethan jostling with one another in his mind find an evocative portrayal, when Ethan broods over the toy model of Moscow which he receives from his father :

"lifting it whole out of a mysterious deep-Christmas smelling wooden box, a beautiful toy model of Moscow, a city of tiny magical gold domes, pumpkin-or Christmas-bell shaped, sparkle with Christmas tinsel-scented snow, bright as new silver half crowns, and of minuscule Byzantine chimes and at whose miniature frozen street corners waited minute sleighs, in which Ethan had imagined years later Lilliputian Ichitchikovs brooding, or corners where lurked snow bound Raskolnikovs, their hands stayed from murder evermore : much later still he was to become unsure whether the city, sprouting with snow freaked onions after all, was intended

to be Moscow or St. Petersburg, for part of it seemed in memory built on little piles in the "water", like Eridanus; the city coming out of the box he was certain was magic too.....¹⁶

This passage is interwoven with diverse motifs with remarkable psychological depth. The first motif is that of jollity and mirth of boyhood which Ethan experiences when he receives the Christmas gift from his father. The second motif is that of guilt which brews in the psyche of Raskolnikov, and the third one is of callousness of Ethan's father in taking the gift away from his young son, the fourth is the motif of fear with which Ethan experiences at the very idea of an indifferent father. The fifth motif of sadness arises from the death of his mother and the sixth motif of Eridanus; the cherished land of happiness and the seventh is the motif of spiritual elation engendered by the allusion to David's City in Christian hymns. The final motif of the sullen city of London enveloped in fog gave a foretaste of damnation that is round the corner.

The mingling of all these motifs forms a microcosm of the novel and reflects the principal themes of damnation and salvation in the novel. A reader who is not responsive to the intermingling of a variety of experiences into a unity may charge Malcolm Lowry's October Ferry to Gabriola with breaking up into a swarm of unrelated impressions. It is a fact that stream-of-consciousness exceeds every other in its

risk of terrible fluidity and its natural threat to balance, proportion and composure. As James Joyce tries to save himself from the danger of alarming diffusiveness and uncritical subjectivity by making an interrelation amongst varied experiences and by tethering them to a point which helps to create an illusion of order, Malcolm Lowry establishes correspondences and harmonies underlying the diversities of experiences.

The meditations of Ethan compare well to the meditations of To The Light House or Mrs. Dalloway whose heroines move towards infinity, when they are engaged in doing the domestic chores of mending the clothes and cooking the dinner or the rich flood of associations making the rich fabric of Joyce's Stephen or of Ana Livia's ebbing consciousness at the close of Finnegans Wake. Malcolm Lowry is not like Dorothy Richardson in whose novels the stream-of-consciousness method is vitiated by a lack of balance and proportion.

The world that we inhabit is not certain and stable. Science, Technology, Psychology, Politics, Religion and Philosophy all join hands to eradicate the comfortable social boundaries of the world. Reality becomes temporary, flickering and evanescent and when a modern novelist wants to picture these passing and fleeting nuances of life, he finds it difficult to delineate characters, as the realistic novelists like Tolstoy and George Eliot. The protagonist in Malcolm Lowry's October Ferry to Gabriola speaks of this ever changing reality -

"A novelist presents less of life the more closely he approaches what he thinks of as his realism. Not that there were no plots in life, nor that he could see a pattern, but that man was constantly in flux, and constantly changing. He woke up a Buddhist, was a Catholic at breakfast, a Hater of Life with the morning paper, and then a Protestant, and then by the time he got to the library was something else"¹⁷.

Malcolm Lowry belonged to the tradition inaugurated by Richardson and which culminated in Conrad and Henry James. He tried to explore beneath the surface appearances of things, which moved towards the inner depths of experience Malcolm Lowry was concerned with the highly volatile state of mind of his protagonist.

Malcolm Lowry in October Ferry to Grabriola goes deep into the psyche of Ethan, the protagonist of the novel and with great delicacy and discrimination he showed the restlessness that was brewing there. Each tremor in his heart was recorded with great fidelity, every struggle Ethan made to clamber out of the abyss of fear and hatred was graphically rendered in an evocative language.

Although Ethan's and Jacqueline's experiences were

similar they certainly differed in their perspectives on life. It was due to Malcolm Lowry's deftness that he was able to make subtle delineations of differences in characters of the two. Malcolm Lowry's conception of the two characters was ironic.

One sought to relish the best in life and the other slid slowly in the slough of despondency. Jacqueline did not intend to do anything that threatened to be tragic. She did not want a repetition of disgraceful circumstances of her own birth.

Jacqueline's father Mc Candless could foresee happiness in the life of Ethan and Jacqueline at Eridanus, and had a premonition of pitfalls, lurking in his relationship. Mc Candless looked upon himself as Prospero and considered Ethan and Jacqueline to be Ferdinand and Miranda respectively in Shakespeare's The Tempest.

With the help of the allusion of Ferdinand and Miranda Malcolm Lowry could develop a positive norm of a life of love and trust against the backdrop of a life of hardships. Ethan and Jacqueline did not possess that enduring love which overflowed in the hearts of Ferdinand and Miranda. Mc Candless and Flora Mc Clintock are a foil to Ethan and Jacqueline. They are characters who are flat in the sense of the term that they stood in sharp contrast to the round and developing characters of Ethan and Jacqueline. This way of delineation of characters shows that his art of character creation was unique. He worked in an unobtrusive manner by asking the reader to juxtapose characters with varying

perspectives on life.

Malcolm Lowry had the capacity for creating characters with their separate identities and had the power to make subtle discriminations between them. The spirituality of Angus Mc Candless was different from the pretension and false spirituality of the fortune tellers of Nanaimo.

The visionary gleam at moments, illumined the guilt ridden psyche of Ethan and Jacqueline. Malcolm Lowry was gifted with the indepth insight to probe into the recesses of the hearts of his two main characters, Ethan and Jacqueline during their good and bad times.

Lowry's method i.e. stream - of - consciousness unfolds and reveals the different facets of a character. Besides this method Expressionism in Ultramarine is not an imitation of the successiveness of objectively real things. This does not mean that he is a romancer weaving only fanciful tales. Gerald Noxon, one of Lowry's closest literary friends at Cambridge rightly said that Lowry discarded the -

"aridity of a purely realistic style"¹⁸

and his protagonist in Ultramarine speaks through images and dreams.

It is this language of dream and myth that made him to come to grips with the painful fact of his alienation. It was perhaps that -

"in the deeper layers of the unconscious there is a formative principle at work, moulding some primordial material of the psyche into icons"¹⁹.

It was this method of fashioning an icon out of the primordial-
ials of the unconscious that Lowry presented Dana Hilliot
ascending from the inferno of despair into the forecastle of
the Oedipus Tyrannus -

"Lost in an unfamiliar dream, when
spirit becomes filled with stars,
instead of wounds and good and
compassionate and tender"²⁰.

The anti-mimetic approach is typical of an Expression-
ist. This approach is vividly depicted by Malcolm Lowry
when he presents the soul of Bill Plantagenet, the protago-
nist of Lunar Caustic. The protagonist was writhing in
anguish. Malcolm Lowry strove to break down the frontier
between the subjective and objective reality and to super-
impose the subjective reality of Bill Plantagenet upon the
external world. This was not true of the realists. This is
evident in section X of Lunar Caustic where the boundaries
between the subjective and objective reality are torn apart
and blurred in its most menacing form.

Bill Plantagenet was completely shaken and overwhelmed
by despair which was as a result of the sense of guilt which
tore away his vitals and in that mood of dejection the
surrounding landscape became an extension of his languishing
self which was losing all its autonomy.

The colossal despair was all-pervasive which cast the
pall of sinister blackness over the East River.

"All at once, watching the strange

traffic upon it, he fancied that the East River was as delirious, as haunted as the mind that brooded over it, it was a mad river of grotesque mastless steamers, of flat barges slipping along silent as water snakes, a river of rail road boats the shape of army tanks with their askew funnels appearing to have been built on to outriggers, they were stranger half ships, preposterously high out of the water with naked propellers thrashing like tuna fish, with single masts out of alignment. This world of the river was one where everything was uncompleted while functioning in degeneration, from which as from Garry's barge, the image of their own shattered or unformed souls was cast back at them"²¹.

The deliberate disruption of spatial continuity that made Malcolm Lowry to change 'good honest ships'²² on the East River, is a typical Expressionist stylistic device. That grotesque distortion which Malcolm Lowry took recourse to was an Expressionist stylistic element which made clear the derangement wrought in Bill Plantagenet's psyche by guilt and remorse by fastening it on the outer landscape. In the effort to superimpose agony raging in the soul of the protagonist of Lunar Caustic upon the objective world of

things, inner and outer, real and fantastic, becomes confused and interchanged. In this attempt of grafting inner confusion upon objective reality, landscape appeared to have assumed a sinister and menacing form. They become highly revealing and make palpable and vivid emotional states.

In Lunar Caustic Bill Plantagenet's agony which was like a great lidless eye found its symbolic expression in the landscape -

"Darkness was falling; through the clearing haze the stars came out, Over the broken horizon the Scorpion was crawling. There was the red dying sun, Antares. To the South east, the Retreat of the Howling Dog appeared. The Stars taking their places were wounds opening in his being, multiple duplications of that agony, of that eye. The constellations might have been monstrosities in the delirium of God. Disaster seemed smeared over the whole universe. It was as if he were living in the pre-existence of some unimaginable catastrophe and he steadied himself against the sill, feeling the doomed earth itself stagger in its heaving spastic flight towards the Hercules Butterfly,²³.

The landscape not only reflects the inner confusion in Bill Plantagenet but also participates in his destruction.

The portrayal of individual soul-states is of great consideration to Malcolm Lowry and this is peculiarly vivid in the Soul-states of characters such as Bill Plantagenet in Lunar Caustic. But the universal soul states also occupies a very important place. Malcolm Lowry's novels are built out of the dialectics of intense subjectivism wrestling with values of a cosmic nature. Bill Plantagenet's predicament is peculiar to him, but like Geoffrey Firmin in Under the Volcano he embodies the soul of modern Western man on the edge of a precipice. As the reader is confronted with the conflict between good and evil within the dying soul of Geoffrey Firmin in Under the Volcano, similarly in Lunar Caustic too the reader encounters Bill Plantagenet who is a compounded mixture of harrowed longing and hatred, of fathomless compunction and of remorse.

Such characters are representatives of people of the world who are in the throes of a crisis in their souls. As a result Malcolm Lowry redeems the extreme subjectivism of his characters such as Bill Plantagenet by his contemplation of their predicament in a bigger perspective making them the dilemma of Everyman. Bill Plantagenet's stay at Bellevue is, no doubt, a voyage downward to -

"the foul core of his world"²⁴

but here too, in the person of Dr. Claggart is -

"the cure, wisdom and vision"²⁵.

Bill Plantagenet is highly responsible for the irreparable damage which is done to his own life by doing evil on the

holy impulses of life, which is a sacred bond. He is always tormented for the lack of graces of life in him.

This duality of vision is unfolded in Lunar Caustic and this factor has prevented it from becoming a tale of impressions loosely strung together. The narrator experiences contentment for giving subjective impressions of characters such as Bill Plantagenet, Garry and Kalowsky but simultaneously he evaluates them with detachment. This example of detachment and objectivity is seen when the narrator makes a judgement between Bill Plantagenet's comradeship with his two friends Garry and Kalowsky who have stripped themselves from illusions -

"Part of the truth was that, like new boys in a hostile school, like sailors on their first long voyage on a miserable ship, like soldiers in a prison camp, they were drawn together in a doleful world where their daydreams mingled, and finding expression, jostled irresponsibly, yet with an underlying irreducible logic, around the subject of homecoming. Yet with them "home" was never mentioned save very obliquely by Garry. Plantagenet sometimes suspected the true nature of that miraculous day they looked to when their troubles would all be ended, but he couldn't give it away. Meanwhile it masqueraded before

them in the hues of various dawns-never mind what was going to happen in its practical noontide"²⁶.

The sense of detachment which is reflected in the above passage serves as a repudiation to understand that Malcolm Lowry's protagonist Bill Plantagenet is nothing but precisely a literal transcript of his personal predicament.

This sense of detachment is not a preoccupation which engulfs Bill Plantagenet who faces dismissal for being a prey of delirium and for not having the capacity to take a detached view of things. Bill Plantagenet sees Dr. Claggart as someone working for the cure of patients at Bellevue and at the same time he does not lag behind to point out the futility of what the doctor was doing at Bellevue -

"And he wondered if the doctor ever asked himself what point there was in adjusting poor lunatics to a mischievous world over which merely more subtle lunatics exerted almost supreme hegemony, where neurotic behaviour was the rule and there was nothing but hypocrisy to answer the flames of evil, which might be the flames of Judgement, which was already scorching nearer and nearer"²⁷.

Bill Plantagenet in a detached tone claims that hypocrisy had become the rule of life in the world and that people, who are themselves sunk in vile passions and are mad in

their obsessions with sordid materialism are great dissembleders. They put on the masks of righteousness and these people with their facade acting as a cover for their frenzy are subtle lunatics, sitting in judgment on poor lunatics who do not disguise themselves. Thus the dry ironic tone offers a scathing criticism of the rot that festers in the psyche of a man on account of dissimulation.

Dr. Claggart was convinced that the puppet show reminiscent of Robinson's expressionist film "Warming Shadows" in Lunar Caustic represents a definitely socialising influence giving the patients an opportunity to get together and control their usual tendencies for emotional outbursts. But the detached tone of the narrator sums up its nullity -

"Faces that had been intent for a time, however negatively, upon the antics of Caspar, collapsed in grey misery. At first there was a little speculation about the show : then not a nod"²⁸.

The puppet show is managed by a sane man from outside world but its impact on inmates of Bellevue hospital was pernicious, especially on Bill Plantagenet, who frightfully feels that his lot is no better than that of Caspar, dodging from one side of the stage to the other from the clutches of the giant. Bill Plantagenet feels driven friendless, through hostile country into even darker corners, more remote hiding-places. The baneful result flowing from Dr. Claggart's mode of treatment is brought to the fore by

ironic detachment. Dr. Claggart's pragmatism has its utility but it is too narrow and limited to grapple with the intensely human problem of inmates at Bellevue.

The theme of Lunar Caustic is mirrored through the consciousness of Bill Plantagenet but other characters such as Kalowsky, Garry, Battle and Dr. Claggart with their pattern of life come to the reader as images of life interacting with Bill Plantagenet and painting the canvas of Lunar Caustic. Apart from these human characters the novel has a puppeteer with his troupe comprising of Caspar Punch, Judy and the chief of the African tribe. The puppet show besides being composed of human characters was also controlled by some demonic agents. The world of the puppeteer imparted a nightmarish experience and the novel moved not only in the realm of men but also in the world of giants.

Lunar Caustic, in the words of Malcolm Lowry was a master-work and not a mere tale of alcoholism²⁹. Bill Plantagenet when he conversed on a rambling note with Dr. Claggart emphatically declared that drinking was not his problem. The trouble lay deep inside his psyche and all through the novel Bill Plantagenet who was supposed to be Lowry's second self, wrestled with the epistemological side of the problem which not only made Bill Plantagenet restless but also became the bane of entire civilisation. Richard K. Cross in Malcolm Lowry : A Preface to his Fiction, rightly observed that Lowry through Bill Plantagenet challenged the -

"opacity of the world"³⁰

with the potent weapon of imagination.

The problem which Bill Plantagenet was confronted with was the problem which is being faced by the humanity today. Today the humanity is cut off from sanctions both moral as well as metaphysical. The creeping isolation from the moral and metaphysical universe has led to utter confusion which in the words of Garry, encompassed not only the individual but the whole world. Bill Plantagenet in his nightmarish soliloquy said -

"that even Nature herself is shot
through with jitteriness"³¹.

Bill Plantagenet in Lunar Caustic was metaphorically named as Mr. Remorse. It revolves round a man who was given to penitence. It moved from alcoholism which was Lowry's obsession and gave an account of how Bill Plantagenet strove hard to peel off the layers of vices for a luminous self. Bill Plantagenet mirrored more about himself because he recalled his past. He meditated on his past and gave a coherence to the fragments of his life.

Bill Plantagenet was a character of our times. He did not thrive on illusions of life but looked at reality, as it was itself. Lowry through the character of Bill Plantagenet has the gift to see both beauty and ugliness.

"What had they not learned about the
world and each other in that cabin so
high up in the ship? They had not
learned that with all the beauty of the

evening, the softness of the night, the tenderness of the blue morning, that every beat of the engine which took them nearer to New Bedford, nearer to Herman Melville, was also taking them nearer to their own White Whale, their own destruction"³².

Malcolm Lowry through the character of Bill Plantagenet depicts how the protagonist was exposed to the reality of unheglaoured world of ours. His perception of the world was unique.

Bill Plantagenet did not believe in a world of fantasy and make belief. He wanted to get rid of the evil in order to create a new life and with candour he spoke of the glimmer of rebirth even in patients who had been sunk in stupor or at Bellevue.

"Because many who are supposed to be mad here, as opposed to the ones who are drunks, are simply people who perhaps once saw however confusedly the necessity for change in themselves for rebirth, that's the word"³³.

Malcolm Lowry's use of flashback in October Ferry to Gabriola adds to the rich formal organisation of the novel. The first flashback recalls to mind the two films Ethan witnesses in the novel. The first is the film Outward Bound and the second Isn't Life Wonderful?. During Outward Bound Ethan is wooing Jacqueline. There is a great dichotomy

between the amorous mood of courtship and the sinister and macabre film Outward Bound. This film is connected with suicide and the punishment for those who commit suicide. The suicide of Peter Cordwainer fills Ethan with remorse, because Ethan has a feeling that he has goaded his friend Peter Cordwainer to commit suicide. The second film Isn't Life Wonderful? is a tale of immense suffering and eviction, which Ethan sees just before he is betrothed to Jacqueline. This film holds the forebodings of the future of Ethan and Jacqueline. It is suggestive of the struggle of the two searching for happiness.

The second flashback relates to the film The Wandering Jew. In this film the tortuous predicament of someone, who is denied death despite his intense longing for it, is the predicament of Ethan. Ethan prays to the Lord for deliverance, he wants a burial of his old self, and he craves for a new life of felicity but that life escapes from him. Ethan also sees the film Wuthering Heights. This film too helped to build up the sinister and terrifying world of Heathcliff. The Heathcliff universe has a kinship with the harrowing world of Ethan. Thus films, with their tales of ordeals and death, psychologically prepare the reader for the right type of responses he has to make, when he reads October Ferry to Gabriola.

The last flashback is the scene of the room in Ixion College at the University of Ely, where Peter Cordwainer commits suicide. This flashback has a profound static effect on the mind of Ethan and it is evoked by the adver-

tisement of Mother Kettle - Simmered Soup. This advertisement is like an octopus that has fastened its tentacles on the mind of Ethan.

The above discussion of major characters and the methods employed by Malcolm Lowry reveal his unique way of delineation of characters. When we come across a modern novelist like Malcolm Lowry we find him writing in a letter to Albert Frskine that -

"character - drawing is virtually non-existent"³⁴.

The statement is apt and appropriate so far as his works are concerned especially in the novels October Ferry to Gabriola and Under the Volcano. A modern novelist is haunted with retreat from character. That retreat from character was on account of the absence of stable values in life. In the case of a modern novelist like Malcolm Lowry he is haunted by an increasing sense of alienation. He is tormented by the radical doubts about the nature of reality.

CHAPTER NOTES

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A PEEP INTO THE SMITHY

CHAPTER - 5

A PEEP INTO THE SMITHY

Technique in fiction, according to Mark Schorer, is not a supplementary element that adds embellishment to the content. It is not the arrangement of events to create a plot, suspense, climax and the analysis of character motivation. Technique is not something external to the content. Technique is the only means at the disposal of a novelist -

"Of discovering, exploring, developing
his subject, of conveying its meaning,
and finally, of evaluating it"¹.

Technique is a mould into which an artist pours his material to give it shape, texture and form.

This Chapter concerns with the study of Lowry's use of various techniques like stream - of- consciousness, expressionism, stylistic devices including the use of symbols and imagery. The technique of the stream - of - consciousness recaptures memories, thoughts and feelings which exist outside the primary consciousness. It intrudes into the depth of the psyche beneath the surface of the conscious mind. This technique helps to reveal the psychic being of the characters. Modern writers such as Dorothy Richardson, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf and William Faulkner exploited this technique in their works because it helped to describe the flux of thought. It's most prominent technique is the interior monologue, which reveals the minds of the charac-

ters in such a manner as to reflect the fluid and unending activity of the mind with all its apparent irrelevancies, and chaotic thought sequences.

Malcolm Lowry made use of this technique in his novels Ultramarine and October Ferry to Gabriola. In Ultramarine he employed this technique to show Dana Hilliot who was in a constant state of unstable equilibrium and whose mood was never anything static but a fluid pattern which mingled and blended memory with desire. Through this technique the totality of response to the outer and inner reality is accomplished. The fabric of the stream -of- consciousness weaves into its texture intuition, vision and sometimes the occult. A reader encounters these strands when he sees the protagonist Dana Hilliot who was prone to see visions.

In Ultramarine the interior monologue of Dana Hilliot is a recurrent motif from the beginning to the end. Lowry fashioned Ultramarine which was based on Aiken's syncopated dialogue and interior monologue. Even though Conrad Aiken had a sharp and a finer ear than Malcolm Lowry, nevertheless, Lowry's dialogue, even when it appeared forced and flat, managed to suggest the isolation from which his characters suffered from and the difficulty they had in communicating with one another.

The most energised writing in Ultramarine was found in those passages that captured the protagonists inward life, and throughout the novelist's career his forte remained the depiction of mental processes. Hilliot's reflections concerning Janet, the sea, his boyhood experiences, and the

identity he was seeking occur typically as extended parentheses in the dialogue. Often they are elaborated into imagined scenes more vividly realised than any of those that represent overt action. At the end of Chapter One, Dana, his brain saturated with gin, drifts off to sleep amid a swirl of impressions.

"Then he was walking again with Janet, slowly, through the crowd, electric lights swam past. Gas jets, crocus-colored, steadily flared and whirred..... All at once, every lamp in the street exploded their globes flew out, darted into the sky and the street became alive with eyes, eyes greatly dilated, dripping dry scurf, or glued with viscid gum : eyes which held eternity in the fixedness of their stare : eyes which wavered, and spread, and diminishing rapidly, were catapulted east and west : eyes that were gutted windows of a cathedral, blackened, emptiness of the brain, through which bats and ravens wheeled enormously, leathern foulnesses, heeling over in the dry winds : but one eye plunged up at him from the morass, stared at him unwinkingly. It was eye of a pigeon, moist and alone, crying. Where would he die? At sea !.

his body buoyed by slow sustained suspension, pushed at by sea strawberries and sea sponges and fiddler crabs. Coiling and heaving, buzzing and falling. Humus for the sea-polyps, for the ocean-storming behemoth².

In its interweaving of the motifs of guilt, longing and fear of death the stylistic richness and psychological depth of the interior monologues, as compared with the sea men's talk or the scenes of action, point to a critical fissure in the author's being.

Besides Ultramarine Malcolm Lowry made use of the technique of stream-of-consciousness in October Ferry to Gabriola. He found it most appropriate to accommodate the belief of Ethan, the protagonist that -

"man is constantly in flux and constantly changing"³.

The two separate identities of Ethan merge with one another in his mind and they find an evocative portrayal when Ethan broods over the toy model of Moscow which he had received from his father. Malcolm Lowry was a seasoned technician because he knew how to discipline the interior monologue and he established correspondences and harmonies which were underlying the diversities of experiences.

In his first novel Ultramarine and October Ferry to Gabriola, Malcolm Lowry employed the stream of consciousness mode, simplifying it to a great deal, in order to realise

his objective of presenting a vivid picture of both the minds of his protagonists and milieu.

Malcolm Lowry also incorporates the use of the technique of expressionism, a variant of the stream-of-consciousness. To an expressionist the truth resides not in the observable world but in the mind of the perceiver. In a letter to Jonathan Cape, Malcolm Lowry spoke of his "rebellion"⁴ against the realist school with its photographic fidelity in adhering to the externals of life. He was after "a new form, a new approach to reality itself"⁵. It is explicitly clear in his letter to Albert Erskine where he justifies that the perspective on reality which he develops is that of an Expressionist who undermined the foundations of realistic art and rendered visible -

"soul-states and the violent emotions
welling up from the innermost recesses
of the subconscious"....⁶

Malcolm Lowry employed the technique of expressionism in his novel Lunar Caustic. The anti-mimetic approach which is typical of an expressionist is well depicted when Malcolm Lowry lays bare the soul of Bill Plantagenet, the protagonist of Lunar Caustic, who was writhing in anguish. Malcolm Lowry strove to break down the frontiers between subjective and objective reality and to superimpose the subjective reality of Bill Plantagenet upon the external world. In Section X of Lunar Caustic the novelist in a deft manner depicts the blurring of boundaries between subjective and objective reality. Bill Plantagenet was shaken by despair

which was due to the overwhelming sense of guilt which tore away his vitals and in that mood of dejection the surrounding landscape became an extension of his languishing self which lost all its autonomy.

The colossal despair was all-pervasive and it cast sinister blackness over the East River :-

"All at once, watching the strange traffic upon it, he fancied that the East River was as delirious, as haunted as the mind that brooded over it, it was a mad river of grotesque mastless steamers, of flat barges slipping along silent as water snakes, a river of railroad boats the shape of army tanks with their ashew funnels appearing to have been built on to outriggers, they were strange half ships, preposterously high out of the water with naked propellers thrashing like tuna fish, with single masts out of alignment. This world of the river was one where everything was uncompleted while functioning in degeneration, from which as from Garry's barge, the image of their own shattered or unformed souls was cast back at them"⁷.

The deliberate disruption of spatial continuity, that made Malcolm Lowry change "good honest ships"⁸ into night-

mare ships on the East River, was a typical Expressionist stylistic device. The use of this mode enabled Malcolm Lowry to depict the derangement which was part of Bill Plantagenet's psyche with guilt and remorse and by fastening it on the outer landscape.

In the process when Lowry made an effort to superimpose agony which was raging in the soul of the protagonist of Lunar Caustic upon the objective world, things, inner and outer, real and fantastic, became confused and interchanged. In that attempt of grafting inner confusion upon objective reality, landscapes assumed a menacing form.

The works of Malcolm Lowry allows the reader to chart the development of a writer whose apprenticeship was coming to a close and who showed considerable promise as a stylist. Malcolm Lowry's narrative art is at once more experimental and varied and less trammelled by the urge to preach. This is so because of the greater variety of moods and tones which demand their own formal designs and also because of the economy of the form itself.

According to W. C. Booth the point of view signifies the way a story gets told - the perspective or perspectives established by an author through which the reader is presented, with the characters, actions, setting, and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction. The question of point of view has always been a practical concern of the novelist, and there have been a number of scattered observations on the matter in critical writings since the eighteenth century.

Authors have developed many different ways to present a story, and many extended works employ several ways within the single narrative⁹. The third - person points of view incorporate the omniscient point of view wherein the narrator has "privileged" access to a characters thoughts and feelings and motives, as well as to his overt speech and actions. Within this mode, the intrusive narrator is one who not only reports but freely comments on his characters. This is the fashion in which many of the greatest novelists have written, including Fielding, Jane Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, Hardy, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy.

The third-person points of view also includes the limited point of view. The narrator tells the story in the third person, but confines himself to what is experienced, thought, and felt by a single character, or at most by a very limited number of characters, within the story. Later writers developed this technique into stream -of-consciousness narration, in which we are presented with outer observations only as they impinge on the current of thought, memory, and feeling which constitute the observer's total awareness. The limitation of point of view represented both by James' "centre of consciousness" narration and by the "stream-of-consciousness narration in Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Faulkner and others, is often said to exemplify the "self-effacing author", or "the disappearance of the author", even more effectively than the impersonal omniscient narrative.

In Lowry, we find a Jamesian adaptation of third person narration such as found in confessional tales like The Beast in the Jungle and The Jolly corner, allowing for Lowry shifts in viewpoint in each chapter of Under the Volcano. The novel opens with an example of third person narration.

"Two mountain chains traverse the republic roughly from north to south, forming between a number of valleys and plateaus. Overlooking one of these valleys, which is dominated by two volcanoes, lies, six thousand feet above sea-level, the town of Quauhnahuac"¹⁰.

Lowry's narrative technique inevitably reminds us of Ulysses, as do several specific scenes. Throughout he maintains the third-person perspective, permitting his characters the flow of memory and interior monologue. Lowry is also known for the phrases which he employed to set the scene and these aptly describe the tone of the narrative. The following extract from the novel Under the Volcano depicts the tone of the narrative at one stage, which is one of pervasive gloom as well as its impressionistic mode of sporadic but intense illumination -

"into a graveyard darkness, stabbed by
flashes of torchlight like heat
lightning"¹¹.

The structure in Under the Volcano shows a striking advance. There is refinement of interior monologue and reminiscent fantasy, and these are contained within a frame-

work of flexible narration while the dialogue becomes a much more sensitive vehicle of characterisation. The long cumulative sentences, rich in paraphrase and illuminating divagation, are used with almost Proustian suppleness to convey the nuances of atmosphere and the sinuosities of alcoholic fantasy, while the surrealist tenor, of the drunkard's world is conveyed in the sharp juxtapositions of actual perceptions and the sinister images of delirium.

Under the Volcano then, has a double structure. There is, first, a linear flow of events from dawn to death providing a progressive, chronological structure characteristic of any simple narrative. This is counterpointed, but not essentially modified, in the larger mythic patterning which pulls the narrative in the direction of romance, thus expanding the action into the broader dimensions of tragedy. We also find a radiating pattern of ideas flowing out from and back to the anatomical center of the book-death. These two structures constantly intersect; indeed the major achievement of Lowry in Under the Volcano is his use of a symbolic method which allows for an expanding system of vertical referencing - woven against the horizontal flow of the narrative through time¹².

In Dark as the Grave one finds little of the style and structure which characterised the Volcano. In this novel the narrative consists rather of incidents, many of which strike the reader as essentially random in character, related in linear chronological fashion.

Malcolm Lowry was intensely interested in the world of film. He participated in this world as a viewer, a critic and a writer. Lowry was familiar with German Expressionist theatre and films. This resulted in his thorough knowledge and appreciation of cinematic technique. The life-long relationship between Lowry and the cinema reveals itself, everywhere in his work. His main novel Under the Volcano provide evidence of his interests in and experience with cinema. The influence of cinema is noticeable in his choice of characters. The impact of films is noticeable in Chapter One of Under the Volcano.

"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 himself¹³."

The influence of film is noticeable in the use of the technique of flash-back. Under the Volcano begins with M. Laruelle's remembrance of the sequence of events leading to the ruins of Geoffrey. But it is not a mere retrospect of catastrophe that overtakes Geoffrey on the Day of the Dead November 1938.

Laruelle's mind recedes still further to the boyhood scenes, when he finds himself in the company of Geoffrey as guests of the family of an English poet, Abraham Taskerson.

it is flashback within flash-back and abrupt shifts from extended scenes to close-ups.

Lowry in his letter to Cape reader treats Under the Volcano as a sort of a machine. This conception of a novel as a machine owes to the film "La Machine Infernale" which has precise working of a clock. Events unfold in a manner that bring about the ruin of Geoffrey. The spring of the machine has been unwinding the whole length of the Consul's life, bringing him inexorably to the morning of November 1938, the Day of the Dead.

The influence of cinema is also seen in the recurrent expression "Las Manos de Orlac". It is on a poster advertising a film in which the chief actor is Peter Lorre. Just after her arrival Yvonne says to Hugh about Peter Lorre's film -

"I think I've seen Peter Lorre's movie somewhere. He is a great actor but it is a lousy picture"¹⁴.

Through the use of the poster of Peter Lorre's movie at several places in the novel the novelist tries to create the sense of evil and guilt proliferating.

The mechanical use of typographical details is another cinematic technique which cinema borrows from literary art. For instance, the reader's visual sense at the end of Chapter XI is brought to the limelight by the pictorial reproduction of the black hand, which predicts the Consul's death. Lowry makes use of such visual, typographical details. He also makes use of words from posters, advertise-

ments and newspaper headlines. These are always ironically informative.

In Under the Volcano signs by the camera-eye also provide visual landmarks which constantly draw attention to the deep, spiritual currents of the world. The novel makes use of visual images which create montage. Since the novel moves across a landscape of pictorial imagery which is realised with the help of the camera Lowry is provided with the material to flow. Eisenstein Sergei remarked that -

"Cinematography is, first and foremost, montage By the combination of two "depictables" is achieved the representation of something that is graphically undepictable"¹⁵.

Throughout Under the Volcano, Lowry with the combination of several visual images creates a complexity of montage "explosions". Thus, Lowry makes use of, as the filmmaker would, external objects which add richness to the dialogue of the novel. The external images help Lowry with a device for the surrealistic expression of the tormented inner world of the alcoholic.

Malcolm Lowry was a keen jazz fan right from his youth at Cambridge. As a writer Lowry was very often influenced by jazz. He often tried to put prose to work as music. In fact, he often compared his novel Under the Volcano as -

"a kind of symphony, or in another way as a kind of opera - or even a horse opera. It is hot music, a poem, a song,

a tragedy, a comedy, a farce and
so forth"¹⁶.

He referred continuously to chords being resolved, contrapuntal dialogue, and the like. Music had a tremendous influence on his style of writing. His works are mingled with purely musical techniques as reiterated refrain, aria, and the alliterative, rhythmic and onomatopoeic effects which he used to describe nature, the sea and wilderness. His writings bear a close identification between music, sound and the world.

In Ultramarine, for example, the bells on a ship's bridge ring out tin-tin :tin-tin which bring to mind the memory of goat bells, and pure young love which was soon to be pitied against the lure of sin at a port whose name itself was musically related to the young hero's thoughts : Tsang, Tsang. In the novel the emotions of love, fear and memory are all associated and identified with sounds, the creaking music of the ship winches, the bells, the engines, a violin notes blown in the wind from another ship docked nearby. Music had its daemonic aspects too. The young boy's first encounter with a prostitute was accompanied by a jazz number entitled "Dead Man Blues" for Dana Hilliot.

Lowry's literary heroes, three of them are in fact jazz musicians: the Consul's half-brother / alter ego Hugh in Under the Volcano, Bill Plantagenet of Lunar Caustic and the nameless narrator in "The Forest Path to Spring". In order to understand these characters it is absolutely necessary to

have an indepth knowledge of Lowry's jazz background. Such knowledge will help to understand these characters, the conflicts presented and as in the case of Under the Volcano the structure of the plot itself.

It is an accepted fact that Hugh and Consul from the novel Under the Volcano are fictionalised versions of the young and rider Malcolm Lowry. Hugh was known for his musical shenanigans, the Bolowski music publishing fiasco, and song writing.

Lowry was a connoisseur of blues and a amateur song writer himself. The first Chapter of Under the Volcano which was devoted to a lament for the dead was introduced in the slow blues manner. It was especially devoted for the Mexican souls abroad on the Day of the Dead, and a lament for the dead Consul. Lowry makes Laruelle hear -

"a despondent American tune, the
St. Louis Blues' or some such"¹⁷.

The first Chapter depicts the "blues" or the tragic theme of the novel as the Dixieland musicians who played a mournful tune on their way to a funeral stated the theme of death. Besides this, Dr. Vigil and Laruelle provide the chorus.

Similarly Geoffrey's, Yvonne's and Hugh's individual "stories", their points of view may be compared with the improvisations of soloists. The theme in the final chapter is resolved on the same note which ends the first chapter :

"dolente, dolore....."¹⁸.

the ringing of the bell for the souls of the dead.

Malcolm Lowry also had the musician's art for establishing a theme - for example the bull throwing event which took place in Tomalin. This was akin to the jazz soloist's variation on a melody; with the Consul playing lead trumpet throughout while Hugh, Yvonne and Laruelle function as "sidemen" who act and react to his signals.

"Vision" of the perfect pattern of existence at the close of Under the Volcano, is also rendered largely in musical terms:-

"Mozart was it? The Siciliana.....No,
It was something funereal, of Gluck's
perhaps, from Alceste. Yet there was
a Bach-like quality to it. Bach?
A clavichord, heard from far away,
in England in the seventeenth century
England. The chords of a guitar too,
half lost, mingled with the distant
clamour of a waterfall and what
sounded like the cries of love"¹⁹.

Malcolm Lowry's works are filled with references to Niederrhein, Lang, Venuti and others. He made use of his expert knowledge of their musician's style to create metaphysics and moods. He even structured his stories based on their influences. Malcolm Lowry made use of analogies in his works as he compared a beautiful day to a Joe Venuti record in Under the Volcano.

In Lunar Caustic the hero is not only a jazz musician but an alcoholic as well. In the novel we find Bill Plantagenet unemployed, an alien adrift in New York, and hallucinating. The break up of his band in England symbolises the breakup of his marriage and of his total personality. His inability to play, to work as a musician leads to disintegration.

Bill experienced rejection at the Bellevue hospital even from those who could understand his music. Battle a negro patient was irritated and furious when Bill sat down to play the piano. He did not like Bill's music. Bill played Frankie Trumbauer's old version very fast. Among the patients tension mounts up when Battle, Bill's rival sets up a counter song about the sinking of the Titanic and this leads to a discussion about the black versus the white whales.

Bill craved for recognition from Battle and launched into "Clarinet Marmalade" but the Negro stared at him angrily. As a consequence Bill was pushed from the piano by a mentally defective patient who managed to bring all the patients together, even Battle in a symphony of discord Bill's music was not accepted even by the mentally retarded patients.

In contrast to "The Forest Path to the Spring" jazz was used in the novella the Lunar Caustic to depict very clearly the agonising loneliness and disintegration of an artist which represented the loneliness of entire humanity.

Lunar Caustic was Lowry's written tribute to the tragedy of

Bix Beiderbecke's life and his own.

In "The Forest Path to the Spring" a jazz musician is encountered. He has given up the night life of the clubs for the wholesome life in nature - in other words, he has exchanged death for life -

"Before I had married and after I left the sea, I had been a jazz musician, but my health had been ruined by late hours and one-night stands all over the hemisphere. Now I had given up this life for the sake of our marriage and was making a new one - a hard thing for a jazz musician when he loves jazz as much as I"²⁰.

In collaboration and with the help of his older colleagues, the narrator manages to get a piano and is thus able to make his both ends meet by composing and titling jazz tunes. For the time being everything moved smoothly. The narrator developed an art of coping with the hard life of the wilderness - that is, the fetching of water for the cottage from the source of a spring, which requires a rather long walk through the forest. Like most of Lowry's heroes, the narrator falls slowly into a state of despair, undergoes a dark night of the soul as he continues his water-carrying task. The narrator is suddenly bolted by a recollection of a Bix-Beiderbecke solo into a -

"moment of the most pure spontaneous
happiness"²¹.

and the desire -

"to be truly good"²².

In "The Forest Path to Spring" the power of music assumes religious overtones, when the very core of suffering becomes a force for regeneration.

October Ferry to Gabriola's form is such that it is nearer the composition of a symphony, not a sonata or concerto. In a sonata or concerto movements are few but a symphony is the culmination of diverse movements into a unity. Malcolm Lowry observed that the musicalization of fiction consisted in the construction of a novel in which there are changes of moods and abrupt transitions but all modulations from one mood to another are developed into unity.

In October Ferry to Gabriola there was a synchronic orchestration of various moods of Ethan. The various facets of the mind of Ethan-rational, political, ironic or obsessive and anguished, fantastic and manic - are unified into a whole. In October Ferry to Gabriola feelings are blended in a complex manner from the realistic to the fantastic. Like a xylophone player Ethan plays on the different keys and makes modulations from one key to the other and this perpetual shifting of moods and their development into a unity is very much near the symphonic form. Ethan's changing moods mirroring the various movements of a symphony is

summed up here :-

Mightn't he equally well consider that he'd been vouchsafed, was so being vouchsafed, a glimpse into the very workings of creation itself? - indeed with this cognition Ethan seemed to see before his eyes whole universes eternally condensing and recondensing themselves out of the "immaterial" into the "material", and as the continued visualisation of their Creator, being radiated back again. While meantime here on the earth "material" was only cognizable through the mind of man. What was real, what imaginary? Yes, but couldn't the meaning the message, for them, be simply that there had been a message at all? Yes, could he not just as well tell himself as Cyprian of Antioch, that here God had beaten the devil at his own game, that magic was checkmated by a miracle!"²³.

A pattern of Dixieland music itself is woven in each story of Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place. Each story begins slowly, in a melancholic mood and is built in its sorrow until it seems almost too much to bear - then almost suddenly it explodes in a climax of joy and hopefulness.

Muriel Bradbrook has said while discussing Lowry's later works that -

"each book culminates and absorbs the previous books, and its many layers include images that go back to childhood. This combination of fragility and rooted strength arises from the method of writing and the free, almost random mixing of overlapping versions, this allows craftsmanship to combine with spontaneity"²⁴.

There is a definite parallel with jazz, craftsmanship and spontaneity. However, it is important to realise that the language in today's jazz parallels Lowry's writing style more than the language of his heroes such as Beiderbecke and Venuti.

Lowry's countless allusions to jazz form a pattern where the chaos and despair in the minds of Lowry's protagonists merge into perfection and order, during a brief moment of illumination and joy.

SYMBOLISM

In this section I have dealt with analysis of symbolism in Malcolm Lowry's fiction

In ordinary usage a symbol is something that stands for something else. A symbol, however may be something which has the power of arousing deep, but largely inexplicable,

feels. Symbols are organic units of consciousness with a life of their own, and you can never explain them away. A symbolic effect may spring from a whole scene as well as from one particular creature or a thing. It is a descriptive representation : sensory content of a literary work; figurative language intended to evoke a picture or an idea in the mind of the reader.

Some symbols are "conventional" or "public" thus "the Cross", "the Red, White, and Blue", "the good Shepherd" are terms that signify symbolic objects of which the further significance is fixed and traditional in a particular culture. Poets, like all of us, use such conventional symbols; many poets, however, also use "private" or "personal symbols" which they develop themselves. Often they do so by exploiting preexisting and widely shared associations with an object or action - for example, the general tendency to associate a peacock with pride and an eagle with heroic endeavour. Some poets, however, often use symbols whose significance they mainly generate for themselves, and these set the reader a more difficult problem in interpretation. The symbolist movement which began in 1857 had a great influence throughout Europe, in England and America as well, on poets such as Arthur Symonds, Ernest Dowson, Yeats, Eliot, Ezra Pound, Dylan Thomas, Hart Crane, E. E. Cummings and Wallace Stevens²⁵.

In Canadian Literature Lowry occupies a very important place as a symbolist. In his works Lowry makes clear the tragic and universal plight of modern man with the help of

symbols. The symbols which I have discussed in this section strike one then as a work in the tradition of those early twentieth century masters - Conrad and Joyce, Kafka, Mann and Proust whose commitment to a complex symbolic mode did not exclude but rather deepened, a capacity for the realistic rendering of both psyche and circumstance.

Lowry's symbolic art was unique. He made use of both "conventional" or "public" symbols ie. the symbol of cross in Dark as the Grave and "private" and "personal" symbols such as images of still point, past and present etc. In this section I have discussed images of cycle of life, circle imagery, images of death, juxtaposition of the images of life and death, Cross imagery, symbols of past and present, symbols of past, present and future, images of outer and inner life, still point, evil, philosophical symbols, images of time, nature symbols and his recourse to mythology too.

In "The Forest Path to Spring" many important images center on the cycle of life : the cycle of the tides in the inlet, the rising and setting of the sun, the daily walk to the spring the circling constellations, and the perpetual march of the season. Yet in every circle there is a moment of rebirth or renewal, a reflection of the renewal taking place every moment-

"the swim at high tide (suggesting baptism)²⁶

and love at high tide (the very act of creation)

"the brilliant disc of the sun seen

through the fog"²⁷ "the fiery disc of
the rising moon turning the pines
into a vision of a burning windjammer"²⁸.

the replenishing of the water supply each day at the spring,
and the arrival of the season of new life - spring. The
passage of cyclical time becomes, for the narrator and his
wife, another form of the death and renewal that is part of
every moment of time - the continual death of the past and
birth of the future in the undivided now.

Malcolm Lowry also makes use of circle imagery. Ultra-
marine is crowded with images of circles and encircling -
the engines, wheeling birds, eyes, Dana's lost compasses
-even the ship, the harbour of Tsjang - Tsjang, and the sea,
function as further layers of encircling reality. Within
the first four chapters, Lowry counterpoints two geographi-
cal and spiritual points along the circumference of the
superimposed circles of the voyage of Dana's consciousness.
The first geographical and spiritual point is the ship's
departure for the East which Dana remembers as the book
opens. It is essential to emphasize that Ultramarine begins
as the Oedipus Tyrannus is nearing the port of Tsjang -
Tsjang the furthest point of her voyage. In Dana's mind the
ship is still preparing to leave Liverpool. During the
course of the first four Chapters Dana moves deeper into his
past before gradually circling his way back again, in
Chapter IV, to the time of his departure from home. His
memory transcribes an enormous circle until it catches

itself up at the crucial moment of severance, the sailing of his ship. This point in time haunts him because it symbolises severance from his youth and initiation to life. Furthermore, it is just this initiation or birth, this breaking out of the -like circle of his past, from which he shrinks in dead.

The second geographical and spiritual point of Dana's vicious circle is the furthest point of the voyage, the harbour of Tsjang - Tsjang and the abyss of the present self. While the ship is idle at dock, Dana, his mind and soul in an analogous static state, plumbs the very depths of his private hell. The hell, projected upon external reality by his distorted vision, results from his constant reliving of the past in the present and his persistent refusal to welcome life. Transfixed, like a "tin-foil Jesus", between these two points, Dana must first learn to recognise the self-inflicted hell for what it is and then move out of his closed circle of time and space.

Lowry's technique is a miniature example such as this circle imagery, as well as in larger structural units, is one of enfolding and encircling. The image is superficially quite simple, but it vibrates with a plenitude of centripetal meaning.

The imagery of death occupies a significant place in Lowry novel Under the Volcano. When the action takes place in November on the Day of Dead Geoffrey feels that his soul is dying. His soul appears to him a town ravaged and stricken. There is reference to an imaginary town by the

sea that burns up. The death imagery relates to a funeral, the burial customs and to a refrain in Second Chapter :

"A corpse will be transported by
express"²⁹

and to the death of Yvonne's child from her first husband.

Geoffrey imagines a man lying dead near his swimming pool, he recalls Dr. Faustus death. When Geoffrey is on his way to Tomalin he also encounters a dying Indian under the hedge. There is a reference to a Cantina La Sepultra, suggestive of death. Always there are vultures, pariah dogs, the noise of target practice. The novel opens with the desolate splendour which pervades the Hotel Casino del Selva haunted by the ghosts of ruined gamblers. In the Olympic pool no one swims and it's jai-alai courts are grass grown and deserted and the spring boards stand empty and mournful. These symbols of death bring home the truth that the soul of Geoffrey is sick.

Several images of death abound in Under the Volcano : a sandtrap called Hell Bunker, the furnaces of the S. S. Samaritan, the bloody hands of Orlic on a movie poster, a picture of harpies grappling among broken bottles, another of drunkards plunging florid faced belching into hades, a wounded bull hopelessly entangled struggling against inevitable disaster, and a towering pile of broken glasses and bottles. Across a mind obsessed with death these images break in quick succession, or sometimes they seem to reel through some intermediate space that is neither in the minds of the book nor quite outside.

The unfolding hours of the day turn out to be a multiple exposure to death. Long before the Consul is thrown into the barranca we have seen him go through the experience of death, crashing to the ground, losing consciousness, losing the thread. Perhaps the finest image for this is his carnival ride on something called the Infernal Machine, whirled upside down, alone, sickly drunk, everything flying from his pockets, the Consul is left without money, proof of existence, hope of release. Thoughts of destruction flood his mind, among them "Ex - Consul".

In Lunar Caustic at the outset, the image that strikes the reader most is the image of the broken coal barge. Through this symbol of the coal barge Malcolm Lowry portrays the juxtaposition between life and death -

"between the two wharves and fast against the poverty grass before the hospital lay the coal barge, sunken, abandoned, open, hull cracked, bollards, adrift, tiller smashed, its hold still choked with coal dust, silt, and earth through which emerald shoots had sprouted"³⁰.

This image recurred again in Section VI of the novel. It was like a recurrent motif that made an evocation of the dissolution of life, the image of extinction. Malcolm Lowry's design was unique, his art anticipated the shape of things the readers encounter at Bellevue. Garry's stories

were overburdened with the image of decay and dissolution. But the situation is different in Section X of the novel where one encounters a new facet of life couched in images of buoyancy. It was the image of a children's fountain sending up a rainbow, an outspread peacock's fan of water, lovers resting for a while in some given niche of Paradise, lovers running for shelter, laughing, their arms round one another, even the river trees with their crests in the sky yearning into the gloom, lit now by the heliotrope of lightning and the river below sparkled like ginger ale and seething with a million sequins. Bill Plantagenet experienced a sense of freedom, even though the freedom was momentary.

Malcolm Lowry juxtaposed the image of dissolution with the image of joy and life, knowing fully well that joy was ephemeral. The very image of ruin in the coal barge, which rotted in the river, sent emerald shoots, the emblem of life. For Malcolm Lowry life consisted in inmedicable opposites which defied any attempt at a resolution of the antimonies of life. Joy was momentary and it was the experience of wading through evil that gave him an insight into reality.

Malcolm Lowry uses a number of images and symbols to designate Sigbjorn's spiritual development. The most significant of these is the cross, a symbol associated with the rebirth-oriented stage of transition, which appears to follow Sigbjorn from the beginning to the end of his journey. This symbol, which in Christian tradition is of course

representative of death and resurrection, becomes in Lowry's hands an even more universal and resonant image. This image is connected with the Voudoun cross, which represents the intersection of the physical with the metaphysical plane. The centre of the Voudoun cross marks the point by which the "loa", the spirits of the dead now transformed into God's, enter this world in order to communicate with and advise the living. This centre point, then, marks the axis both of the physical cycle of generation and the metaphysical cycle of resurrection. This cross represents a way out of the infernal cycle into renewed voyaging, a movement through the stage of transition towards rebirth.

Sigbjorn and Primose's search for the Southern Cross is also relevant, for they were searching in the Mexican sky for the other half of this cross in order to make the unifying potential of the symbol effective. Moreover, while travelling from Vancouver, the present physical realm, to Mexico, the land of the past, Sigbjorn sees below them the shadow of the plane -

"the eternal moving cross"³¹

following beside them and foreshadowing the ultimate resurrection that is to come. And later on a short trip to Yuatepec, the cross that is there set atop -

"the curious hill"³²

appears as a -

"token of their new life"³³

or as Ignatius Donnelly describes the cross symbol

"an emblem of..... the life to come"³⁴

Even the Calle Humboldt outside the Quinta Dolores appears to Sigbjorn as a -

"Cross Road Puzzle"³⁵

and one, therefore that he must complete before the stage of transition is finally traversed³⁶

The cruciform tombs at Mitla, through which Sigbjorn must pass in the final stage of his underworld journey, represent his last confrontation with the cross symbol.

Dark as the Grave is a Mexican novel which is based on the trip to Mexico which Lowry undertook with his wife Margerie. In this novel he made use of the symbols of past and the present. Lowry's second trip to Mexico was a transcendence of the experiences of the past.

During the course of his journey into the past the novels depressed, self-absorbed Sigbjorn was initiated into a renewed spiritual condition. The rites of passage occurring at these points in a person's life were divided into three major stages--separation, transition and incorporation.

The rite of separation was usually accompanied by acts of embarkation, such as Sigbjorn's leave taking of Eridanus for the mysterious land of Mexico, and was often represented by a symbolic death and journey into the underworld. This marked the primary stage of initiation in which the individual was temporarily withdrawn from outer actions and experiences.

An emergence from that symbolic underworld into the stage of transition resulted in regeneration and renewed

mobility. At that point the individual was capable of entering the final stage of incorporation and being reintegrated into social group. The individual could then devote to the task of contributing to the spiritual and cultural life of society. In Lowry's terms the artist was once again able to create.

To Malcolm Lowry man's psyche was a microcosmic extension of the universe, which existed in a state of continual transformation and development. Initiation was the process by which the psyche moved from one stage of development to the next. The individual consciousness, which underwent constant transformation, could therefore be understood as passing through the cycles of separation, transition and incorporation.

In "The Forest Path to Spring" it seemed clear that the spring was a symbol for the present and the path to and from it was a symbol for the past and future. As the narrator says of the ladder which forms part of the path:

"this vermiculated old ladder, stinking with teredos and sea-worms, washed down from the saw-mill, this sodden snag, half awash when I first saw it, is the past, up and down which one's mind every night meaninglessly climbs"³⁷.

Later he notes of his experience on the path:

"This much I understood, and had understood that as a man I had

become tyrannized by the past, and
that it was my duty to transcend it in
the present."³⁸

To the extent that sequential time is imagined by a line, present time is imaged by a point. But since the present moment was itself timeless, all time was equally "now", which meant that the sequential time bent around the point called "now" as a circle bent around a centre.

In "The Forest Path to Spring" the spiritual integrity of life at Eridanus is portrayed through numerous images of reflection, refraction and sympathetic correspondence, suggestion and the harmony of the inner and outer worlds. The inner world is an abyss reflecting, the world, like the dark water of the inlet reflecting the universe in -

"an inverse moonlight geometry beyond
our conscious knowledge"³⁹

In Lunar Caustic Hill Plantagenet had a great fascination for the ragged man who sat motionless under the tree. He had a feeling that ragged man knew the storm as the tree knew it. The storm was symbolic of outer as well as the inner storm and Bill Plantagenet wanted to have a mastery of the storm that ripped through his psyche.

In "The Forest Path to Spring" just as the death and renewal of the present moment, the "now", found its echo in the cycle of time, so too did the image of the still point of the "here" found its traces in the surrounding world.

the typical image of the still point was the brilliant in the midst of darkness. The night was full of such lights -

"like a great Catherine Wheel"⁴⁰

but there are also the lights in Quaggarr's and Kristbjorg's snacks reminding the narrator of the Isle of Delight -

"where an absolute stillness reigns"⁴¹

the "blazing gold" of the rising moon against the blackness,⁴²

the gleaming white light house on the point, and the brilliant vision when -

"the struggling sunlight turned a patch of black water into boiling diamonds"⁴³

One of the most beautiful images in this sequence occurs when the narrator writes that -

"sometimes too, on the seaboard of the night, a ship would stand drawn, like a jewelled dagger, from the dark scabbard of the town"⁴⁴,

and again, in an image that links the eternal now with the still point -

"in the morning when one got up to make the coffee, with the sun blazing through the windows..... it was like standing in the middle of a diamond"⁴⁵.

In Lunar Caustic Malcolm Lowry has explicitly depicted the appalling image of evil. The city of New York -

"with the screaming of suicides, of

girls tortured in hotels for transients, of people burning to death in vice dens, through all of which a thousand ambulances were screeching like trumpets.⁴⁶

These are images of inferno and Bill Plantagenet's agony in Lunar Caustic was like a great lidless eye which found its symbolic diagram in the landscape.

"Darkness was falling; through the clearing haze the stars came out, over the broken horizon the Scorpion was crawling. There was the red, dying sun, Antares. To the South-East, the Retreat of the Howling appeared. The Stars taking their places were wounds opening in his being, multiple duplications of that agony, of that eye. The constellations might have been monstrosities in the delirium of God. Disaster seemed smeared over the whole universe. It was as if he were living in the pre-existence of some unimaginable catastrophe and he steadied himself against the sill, feeling the doomed earth itself stagger in its heaving spastic flight towards the Hercules Butterfly"⁴⁷

Malcolm Lowry made use of philosophical symbols in "The Forest Path to Spring". There is one image, in the story which links together all these levels of meaning, the image of the Tao, or the way of all things⁴⁸. Set forth in the ancient Chinese Book of changes, the I Ching, The Lao Tzu's philosophical poem, The Tao Te Ching, the concept of the Tao is symbolised by a perfect circle divided into the yang and yin, the bright and the dark. Originally signifying the sunlit and shaded sides of a mountain, Yang and Yin came to represent interrelated opposites; hot and cold, strength and weakness, active and passive, positive and negative, male and female, good and evil, life and death. Sometimes described as two fishes in eternal intercourse, the diagram of the Tao, is so constructed as to suggest that each of these opposites grow out of the other, or is defined by its opposite. Moreover, the Yang-Yin symbol suggests rotation in the same way that a photograph of a galaxy clearly reveals motion in the far-flung trailing stars. This rotary motion implies that the universe is not an absolute dualism of opposites but rather a unified process resulting from continual interaction, from each polarity continually yielding to-or dying to-its opposite. Together Yang and Yin evolve a unity - the seamless robe of nature, the everlasting flux, the ebb and flow of life.

The Yang - Yin Tao symbol may be regarded as an extension of the circle image. If the circle image of the Tao is visualised in rotation, the exact center not only remains motionless, but also rides on the point where Yang meets in

perfect harmony. In terms of time, the still point at the centre is the everlasting "now" containing Yang and Yin in equal measure - a single birth- death process in which the moment is always being created and destroyed. In terms of space, the still point is the infinite "here" which focusses every "there", and since this "here" rests where Yang meets Yin.

Life at the still point may bring the mystical identification of bliss, but even that experience can be terrifying -

"in my agonised confusion of mind, my hatred and suffering were the forest fire itself, the destroyer, which is here, there, all about"⁴⁹.

This total fusion of opposites at the still point is conveyed by dozens of images and symbols.

Yet music - even though it is constant change, indeed, because it constantly changes - presents us with the image of time itself, and especially that time now which encompasses eternity. Music, then is the appropriate vehicle of expression for a life existing simultaneously in the temporal world of constant change and the still point of the eternal now.

In October Ferry to Gabriola Malcolm Lowry takes recourse to nature symbols. The slow, stealthy, despairing, deepening of his mind finds its symbolic enactment in the swirling tides of Eridanus -

".....one of those tides that

rose even higher as they approached, say, the October full moon, that full moon which was tonight, he remembered, the tide already beginning to come in now too in the gulf below them to their right, the invisible tide in the invisible gulf, that same tide they must battle or whose ebbing treacheries would carry them perhaps, this afternoon, one way or another, on their ferry to Gabriola; Yes, and now not so much brimming as lashing and driving up beneath their windows, and with a venomous roaring, devouring, grinding"⁵⁰.

Though this symbolic projection of the mind of Ethan who goes through a phase of agony is overelaborate, it is appropriate in the sense that it vividly recreates the lashing waves dashing against Ethan's cabin and generating in him the feeling of impending doom.

Ethan and Jacqueline discover an imperishable impulse to life which is symbolically rendered in the following extract -

"The golden robin that was the Baltimore oriole and knot expert, and master builder, at its complex work of nesting, whistling in its rich contralto, they had seen the

two orioles making their nest together earlier in the afternoon...."51

In his works, Lowry makes clear the tragic and universal plight of modern man. It is with the help of his symbols that he adds a quality to his presentation.

SYMBOLS WHICH OCCUR ONLY IN UNDER THE VOLCANO

There are certain symbols which occur only in Under the Volcano. This section is concerned with the richness of the symbolic material, its propriety and integrity and above all the facility and dexterity of its organisation in Under the Volcano. In the foregoing section we come across occult numerology, allusions, garden imagery, animals, reptiles and birds, geographical locations and buildings, recurrent symbols and symbols of multiple meanings.

Lowry makes use of both familiar and occult numerology. The twelve chapters correspond to the months of the year, the twelve hours of the book and the twelve labors of Hercules. No 7, is of cabbalistic significance because it is branded on the rump of the horse which Jacques Laruelle sees in Chapter One bearing a drunken rider. It is also a symbol of the deceased Consul and is also the hour on which the day of the book begins and ends. November 3, refers to the three attendants to Geoffrey's passion, the three men surrounding Yvonne, and the three legged retreat from Geoffrey of the obsequious little pariah dog in the cantina El Rosque. Lowry used the hieratic numerology, rituals, ritual objects, and symbols of the Cabala as a structural centre

of the book, much as Joyce used Homeric substance in Ulysses.

Malcolm Lowry makes use of allusions in Under the Volcano. The three epigraphs which Lowry chose for his novel define the scope as well as the antinomies of the highly compacted experience of the Consul's last day. The first epigraph from Antigone of Sophocles, is the eulogy on man who has successfully contended with all the forces of his environment.

"Wonders are many and none is more wonderful than man, Death shall he call for aid in vain, but from baffling maladies he hath devised escape"⁵².

The second epigraph is from Bunyan's Grace Abounding, which refers to the cry uttered by the soul who recognises its refusal of deliverance -

"Now I blessed the condition of the dog and toad, yea, gladly would I have been in the condition of the dog..... I could not find with all my soul that I did desire deliverance"⁵³.

The third well known Goethe's epigraph is -

"Whosoever unceasingly strives upward.... him can we save"⁵⁴.

The mystery of Geoffrey Firmin lies somewhere within the triangle which is formed by these opposed visions. His failure is due to his incapacity to combat the psychological

dilemma which these forces impose upon him.

The garden as a symbol, too, includes both its biblical and private connotation. The novel returns to primal myth of Western man, the allegorised enactment of the fall and expulsion. A snake, appears in the Firmin's sinister garden. The garden is symbolic of the guilt of man, with his remorse, with his ceaseless struggling towards the weight of the past and with his doom. The allegory is that of the Garden of Eden, the Garden representing the world, from which we ourselves run.

Animals, reptiles and birds play a major role in the field of symbolic references in the book. The most prominent is the apocalyptic horse of death which is seen in many moods and many settings during the twelve hours of the books action. Geoffrey is described as being "strong as a horse", and in effect he releases the horse which kills Yvonne in the stampede in the forest. In the First Chapter we find a horse with a rider in great excitement galloping at the breakneck speed. A goat bearing the symbolic order of tragedy and scapegoat attacks Hugh and Yvonne. Through the preponderance of animal imagery the novelist evokes the consciousness of Geoffrey.

Geoffrey is sick in the soul, because his whole consciousness has to contend with ferocious animals prowling and reptiles crawling in his mind. As scorpions passed, the Consul believed that they would only sting themselves to death, as he continued to absorb the death sting of alcohol. Geoffrey sits helplessly in the bathroom and watches a swarm

of insects invading his consciousness -

"A caterpillar started to wriggle towards him peering this way and that, with interrogatory antennae. A large cricket with polished fuselage, clung to the curtain....."⁵⁵.

It is not only the world of reptiles that fills him with sinister and uncanny feelings but animals too intrude into his mind during his stay at Senora Gregorio's Cantina El Bosque!

"A starving pariah dog with the appearance of having lately been skinned and squeezed itself in after the last man, it looked up at the Consul; with beady, gentle eyes."⁵⁶

The pariah dog or dogs which insistently attach themselves to Geoffrey may have a reference to the satanic black poodle which follows Goethe's Faust. At the day's end, of course, the Consul and the dog are joined not in heaven - but in hell.

The most important and effective of bird symbols, including hovering vultures, is the caged eagle which Yvonne releases in Chapter XI. This symbol is concerned with the forces in man which cause him to be terrified of himself.

Geographic locations and buildings equally shift and amplify their meanings as the book progresses. The image of the Volcano is a rich example. Sometimes it is Popocatepetl with ancient Mexican association that has stolen Geoffrey's

heart away. He talks about the Mexican legend about Popocatepetl.

"in the tragic Indian legend Popocatepetl himself was strangley the dreamer : the fires of his warriors love never extinct in the poets heart burned eternally for Ixtaccihuatl"⁵⁷.

The cantinas and bars visited by the Consul during the day are powerfully evoked. They exist on the plot surface of the novel as tangible adjuncts to the days events but they are equally a metaphysical progression from Hope to death.

The Bella Vista of Yvonne's 7. a.m return is a chimera. The Bella Vista is preceded by the Casino de la Selva, where Faruelle finds himself again, one year after the Consul's death. Lowry's letter to Cape explains that the wood (Selva) is in one sense Dante's darkwood of the Inferno, midway on the road that leads to hell. It recurs several times. In Chapter 6 Hugh actually quotes the Inferno. It is to another wood that, in Chapter 7, the Consul goes - the terminal cantina El Rosque - and at the end it is the dark nocturnal woods of Farian that Yvonne and Geoffrey die as they seek the Farolito - the lighthouse cantina of death. Certainly the lighthouse was of cardinal importance to Lowry as an emblem.

No one uses local background more creatively or more sensitively than Lowry. In Under the Volcano the fair is, clearly, a pictorial and local image of life - not only the

Consul's life but that of humanity. Its accreted symbols have both a particular meaning for Geoffrey and a larger one for the reader.

In Under the Volcano Malcolm Lowry takes recourse to the recurrent symbols, reminding us of the recurrent symbols of Shakespeare that unify diverse materials into a unity. The different meanings of the word barranca have been brought out by the analysis done by Terence Bareham. He states that the barranca which is the novel's primary symbol has at least five 'meanings'. It is a physical ravine, part of the book's necessary geography and atmosphere. It also represents the slow melancholy tragic rhythm of Mexico. The barranca is also a state boundary which suggests the book's political meaning. Beyond this the barranca is also a symbol of the schism between the forces of love and of destruction. The barranca is also a kind of intellectual gulf. It warns of the danger of thinking too precisely on the event from which the Consul suffers. Allied to the suggestions of intellectual hell made by the barranca and to those of schism between love and disruption, is the emblem of the dog which is present through the novel. Behind these meanings exists yet another in which the barranca can be seen as a symbol of the female sexual principle⁵⁸.

The journey by bus to Tomalin is preceded by Geoffrey's encounter with a dominant symbol in the novel, the Ferris Wheel, both anticipating and repeating the device with which the transition from Chapter One was made. Outside the dark, tempestuous night backwards revolved the luminous wheel.

This wheel is of course the Ferris wheel in the square, but it is, if you like also many other things; it is Buddha's wheel of the law, it is eternity, it is the instrument of eternal recurrence, the eternal return, and it is in the form of the book; or superficially it can be seen simply in an obvious movie sense as the wheel of time whirling backwards until we have reached the year⁵⁹.

As observed by Lowry himself in his letter to Jonathan Cape, to the Jewish Cabbala the number 12 is of the highest symbolic importance. The Cabbala is used for political purposes because it represents man's spiritual aspiration. The Tree of Life which is its emblem, is a kind of a complicated ladder with Kether, or Light, at the top and an extremely unpleasant abyss some way above the middle. The Consul's spiritual domain in this regard is probably the Oliphoth the world of shells and demons, represented by the tree of life upside down⁶⁰.

The symbols in Under the Volcano are expressive rather than initiative -

"existing as a powerful, autonomous figure of speech from which radiate a host of evocative meanings"⁶¹

these symbols have ever-expanding associations and it becomes difficult for a reader to restrict the varied meanings of the symbol.

Lowry's symbols are fluid, prolific and flamboyant and the manner they are deployed reveals his intellect. Under the Volcano is technically a symbolic novel. In this novel

he displays the meticulous use of symbols and one is reminded of the complex hierarchy of symbols, correspondences and anticipation as in Ulysses of James Joyce. His symbols are integrated and compulsive and they spring from the novel's own subconscious exegesis.

MYTH

A myth is one story in a mythology - a system of hereditary stories which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group, and which served to explain why the world is as it is and things happen as they do, and to establish the rationale for social customs and observances and the sanctions for the rules by which men conduct their lives. A number of modern writers such as Joyce, Eliot, O'Neill and many other writers have deliberately woven their modern material on the pattern of ancient myths.

Lowry's most interesting experiment is the use of myth. The reader is constantly aware that patterns of imagery and action in Under the Volcano are reenactments of patterns from the Bible or Dante's Commedia or, Goethe's Faust, so that a mythic quality is woven through the mimetic or novelistic strand of the story. The imaginative richness of the novel comes from the all embracing mythic evocation which is truly Joycean in character.

The use of myth in Under the Volcano is different from that of in Joyce and Eliot. Stephen Spender makes a subtle distinction between the use of myth in Lowry's Under the Volcano" and the creative works of Joyce and Eliot. In

Lowry's novel the myth becomes an illustration of the fragmentary character of the phase of history of the thirties and the forties. In the first Chapter the writer says that Quauhnhuac splits at several places, when Christ was crucified. The crucifixion of Christ is not used here as a symbol of abounding love for the sinning humanity and a device for mastering the tormented psyche of Geoffrey. The myth of Christ is simply a picture of the disturbed period of the thirties and the forties through the character of Geoffrey and Geoffrey is a mask for the writer himself⁶².

The process of spiritual initiation is metaphorically presented in Dark as the Grave, in terms of a symbolic passage into and out of the underworld, a process of death and rebirth, in the form of Sigbjorn's southern journey to Mexico. In the typical layering process by which Lowry creates a symbolic meaning, he draws upon various myths and tales associated with cycles of death and rebirth. These images clarify Sigbjorn's psychic condition at each stage of his initiation process.

The reference to the four cardinal points can be related to the significance of the cross in the Voodoo religion. The Voudoun cross, representing -

"the intersection of the horizontal plane, which is this mortal world, by the vertical plane, the metaphysical axis is an appropriate symbol for Sigbjorn's temporary entrance into the Metaphysical plane - the land of death"⁶³

And while Sigbjorn may not, as Dr. Hippolyta later tells him in Cuernavaca, be possessed by Baron Samedi or Papa Legba, the two Voudoun gods associated with the underworld and cross roads, he has necessarily journeyed past these figures in his progression through the land of death towards re-birth.

Yet while Mexico becomes the location of Sigbjorn's symbolic death, he does not experience the true initiatory death until he descends into the Valley of Etla towards Oaxaca.

To a reader who is familiar with the literature of neo-Platonism it seems likely that at times Malcolm Lowry is drawing on a system of symbols derived not only from general Cabbalistic lore, but from more particular sources in neo-Platonic tradition.

If Lowry makes a deliberate use of the neo-Platonic tradition, it seems fruitless to ask where Lowry might have come across it. Interest in Neo-Platonism and the publishing of Taylor's works flourished in America until 1890, as Professor Harper records. It is possible that Lowry came across Taylor either directly or through conversation in the course of his research into the esoteric⁶⁴.

Other Outstanding Features of Lowry's Style

I have noted the traits of poetic language in Malcolm Lowry's writing. It is an accepted fact that prose is not poetry but prose can be poetical. Prose language is poeti-

cal when it merely partakes of some of the devices of poetry, for prose to be poetic something more is demanded. In poetry language achieves the expressiveness and density, it deploys succession of images, moods, epiphanies.

Lowry makes use of poetic dialogue in Under the Volcano. Lowry's dialogue even though it appears forced and flat, does manage to suggest isolation from which his characters suffer and the difficulty they have in communicating with one another. Lowry experimented with syncopated dialogue and he made a more skillful use of the technique in such crucial scenes of Under the Volcano the one in which Yvonne returns to Geoffrey at the beginning of Chapter Two and the final episode in the Farolito.

Lowry made use of short dialogues and conversation to reflect the traits of the individual character:

"It's true that at Cambridge, the Consul was saying, tapping Hugh on the shoulder, you may have learned about Guelphs and so on But did you know that no angel with six wings is ever transformed? I seem to have learned that no bird ever flew with one"⁶⁵.

Lowry was by no means without lyric gifts. His talents however, were those of a poet in prose. Lowry's medium in Under the Volcano is prose, but he writes poetry -

"It is that the author's equipment, such as it is subjective rather

than objective, a better equipment,
in short, for a certain kind of
a poet than a novelist"⁶⁶.

To Lowry, the conception of Under the Volcano is essentially poetic because -

"he saw that the novel-forms only hope
of survival lay in its being taken
over by poets"⁶⁷.

Chapter Six of the novel proves how Malcolm Lowry's style is poetic -

"Behind them walked the only living
thing that shared their pilgrimage,
the dog. And by degrees they reached
the briny sea. Then, with souls well
disciplined they reached the northern
region, and beheld, with heaven aspiring
hearts, the mighty mountain Himavat -
whereupon the lake was lapping, the
lilacs were blowing, the chenars
were budding, the mountains were
glistening"⁶⁸.

If the overt action in Under the Volcano is slight the metaphorical action is intense. In such a sense the novel is poetic. The poetic organisation of Under the Volcano becomes evident because once we are into the story we are less aware of the realistic side of the story, than of the imaginative richness. If the reader does not recognise the

poetic organisation of the novel, he is bound to agree with the Cape reader that the book is too long, monotonous and over elaborate for its content. The reader may also be convinced that the book could have been more effective if some of its bulk would have been excised. There is enough evidence to believe that Under the Volcano is poetic rather than novelistic.

Lowry's style is also descriptive . The following extract from the novel Dark as the Grave is filled with details :

"The mountains stood around desolately in the rain and those few distant factory chimneys, a few shacks and huts, and the swampy desolate Gogolian landscape was, as is the way with airports from that matter in relation to most large town, all one could see of the metropolis....."69.

Malcolm Lowry was an artist with a grand design. He writes with superb vigor and dash and he creates through his graphic picturesque style no less than through his acute capacity for sensuous observation, a novel of opulent texture and consequently resonant meaning. Under the Volcano opens with an example of Lowry's graphic and picturesque mode of writing :

"The Hotel Casino de la Selva stands on a slightly higher hill just outside the town, near the railway station....."

The spring boards stand empty and mourn-
ful. It's jai-alai courts are grass-
grown and deserted"⁷⁰.

Another remarkable trait of Lowry's style was his use of French words. He has used French words in almost all his works. He has made use of them in "The Forest Path to Spring" -

"Frere Jacques
Frere Jacques
Dormez-vous?
Dormez-vous?"⁷¹.

Malcolm Lowry's use of French words can limit the wider readership. A good knowledge of French is a must for a better understanding of his works.

Besides French, Gaelic is also used in Dark as the Grave. When Eddie returns Sigbjorn utters -

"Chin-Chin'
'Lhiat myr hoillin"⁷².

Malcolm Lowry also made use of songs and his use of songs has a resemblance to some of the plays of Shakespeare. Here is a song which Jacques sings and one can well notice the rhythm and rhyme in it too:

"Oh we all il work ze wibberlee wobberlee walk
And we all il work ze wibberlee wobberlee talk
And we all il wear wibberlee wobberlee ties
And- look- at - all- ze - pretty- girls - with
wibberlee wobberlee eyes"⁷³.

Malcolm Lowry resorts to repetitions and alliteration in most of his works to intensify the dramatic effect. In Dark as the Grave the dreadful repetitious thing began booming out again!

"The bomb!

The bomb!

The bombditty bomb de bomb!

The bomb!

The bomb!

The bombditty bomb de bomb!" 74.

Lowry's dialogue in Under the Volcano is colloquial and at the same time graceful and dignified -

"Your horse doesn't want to drink Yvonne,
just to look at her reflection, let her,
Don't yank her head" 75.

His use of colloquial words testify that he had seen with minuteness a variety of locales and ways of living.

Lowry's use of irony in his works needs to be emphasized. He makes use of it as a dramatic device as the instrument of a vision of reality. Under the Volcano consists, then, of a cluster of intricately related ironies: a homecoming and a final leave taking; restoration and deprivation, love offered and love betrayed; life affirmed while it is being brutally denied, and a quest which has already ended.

Another feature of Lowry's style in Ultramarine is his embedding and weaving of the text with phrases from the works of authors such as Shakespeare, Keats and T. S. Eliot.

T. S. Eliot incorporates this form of style in his writings for the sake of setting up an ironic contrast between two modes of life. Malcolm Lowry makes use of it to evoke an intense association of feeling and thought

Keat's lines -

"Forlorn! the very word like a bell.

To toll me back from thee to my sole self"⁷⁶.

figure in Chapter One of Ultramarine with the word 'Sole' replaced by 'Sad'.

Shakespeare's line-

"Never, never, never, never, never"⁷⁷.

in King Lear occurs in Chapter Two of Ultramarine.

This Shakespearean tag occurs to Dana Hilliot's mind, when he finds his pledge of fidelity to Janet is under strain and his old relation of purity was going to be snapped for good.

T. S. Eliot's lines-

"I should have been a pair of ragged claws

Scuttling across the floor of silent seas"⁷⁸

in The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock are adapted by Malcolm Lowry in Ultramarine within a variation -

"I wish. I were...I wish I were - what?

A pair of ragged clauses scuttling

between two dark parentheses"⁷⁹.

Dana Hilliot and Prufrock had a craving for a noble mission. Dana Hilliot wanted to whip the sea and Prufrock desired to disturb the universe but something acted on them.

The foregoing analysis of his technique reveals that he was a conscious artist. Lowry's style is not plain, direct and a matter of fact one. He is not straightforward and clear. Malcolm Lowry's style was an insight. It was not merely a device, a tool or a medium, a dress or a mask. In Malcolm Lowry style was organic and poetical.

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CONCLUSION

CHAPTER - 6

CONCLUSION

Malcolm Lowry is one of the post-war Canadian writers. Generally he is known for his novel Under the Volcano. In the words of Dale Edmonds "Malcolm Lowry is a "one book author"¹. This speaks unique qualities of his masterpiece. However, I have considered and defended in the foregoing chapters that it is not fair to exclude his other writings from our consideration. My thesis shows that his prose fiction as well as his poetry deserve our attention for critical examination.

I have stated in my first chapter that he along with other immigrant writers such as Brian Moore and Kildare have given a splendid voice to the regions of Canada. Malcolm Lowry had spent almost a third of his life in Canada. It was Dollarton which formed the base and foundation of his writing. Dollarton has acquired significance and Niagara - on - the - lake too because it was at these places that Lowry finished the last, and the published version of Under the Volcano². Besides, this unique masterpiece, it was also at Dollarton that he wrote the stories which are published in the volume entitled Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place. Simultaneously he worked at the same time on one novel about Mexico which is Dark as the Grave Wherein my Friend is Laid. October Ferry to Gabriola is also set in British Columbia. Apart from the novels and the short stories some of the poems which Malcolm Lowry wrote like 'King

fishers in British Columbia', 'In a Mexican Church' have their settings in British Columbia and Mexico respectively.

Malcolm Lowry's writings reveal that he was totally immersed in the Canadian way of life and he wrote about Canada as a writer who had lived into that environment for more than fifteen years. Among the poems "Dodder" which he wrote on Burrard Inlet, the three Canadian stories in Hear Us O Lord from Heaven Thy Dwelling Place - 'The Bravest Boat', 'Gin and the Golden Rod', particularly 'The Forest Path to Spring' provide enough evidence to the reader that he is not writing about Canada as an outsider but as a man who breathed in the freshness of Canadian life.

I consider Malcolm Lowry as a truly Canadian writer. However, Margaret Atwood has not considered appropriate to include Malcolm Lowry's work in her selected critical prose on Canadian literature. In Second Words. She observes -

"It's quite true that some literature writers in Canada, which I happen to enjoy and find 'good' - got left out, things like George Jona's poetry, Michael Ondaatje's poetry, Malcolm Lowry's prose, a lot of Brian Moore, nor do I pay as much attention to some as some might like"³

She gives the reason for excluding these writers -

"It seems to me dangerous to talk about Canadian Patterns of sensibility in the work of people who entered and /

or entered and left the country at a developmentally late stage of their lives"⁴.

Margaret Atwood was concerned with patterns and not with authors. I consider that one could feel the throbs and the heart beat of Canada pulsating in his works and moreover the Canadian sensibility is also reflected in his works. Malcolm Lowry occupies a very important place in the canons of Canadian Literature.

Most of his work is autobiographical. He was a neglected child in the family. Malcolm Lowry had a feeling that he was "the last and the least wanted of four children of Arthur U Lowry"⁵. This accounts for feeling of rejection and isolation in his work. The step - motherly treatment which he had received at the hands of sadistic series of nannies had done an irreparable damage to his being. The loveless treatment which he had suffered from made him feel forlorn and castaway. This resulted into excessive self - engrossment.

It was undoubtedly Cambridge which shaped, nourished and moulded Lowry's mind. When he was at Cambridge he came in close contact with Conrad Aiken and he was especially influenced by Nordahl Grieg. He had read apart from the Elizabethan writers with special interest Joyce and Eliot. Malcolm Lowry's reading was integrated in an unusual way. His acquaintance with scholars was overwhelming. Malcolm Lowry's reading, influences and references offers a glimpse

to the readers of his ideas in the process of being born.

Once he said that he learnt to write while listening to Bix Beiderbecke. The influence of music especially, was all pervading in his entire work. To break the monotony he used to write letters. He corresponded with many friends such as Nordahl Grieg, Jonathan Cape, Albert Frekine, Conrad Aiken, James Stern, David Markson and others. Many of the letters were not just letters but the only true meeting of hearts. His letters were revelatory as his autobiographical fiction. The expression of his thought was crystal clear and never vague or obscure. Lowry often longed to communicate, but he remained silent, when he did open his mouth, a flood of words would flow out which would leave a listener bewildered because of his inability to grasp the depths of the broad leaps in Lowry's thoughts.

Malcolm Lowry's letters reveal that he was a sensitive critic of literature, politics, music, art and philosophy. His letters reveal that he was a man of acute unusual perception because in a clear style he gives the readers a glimpse of a wide range of unusual subjects⁶. He never wrote any specific article expressing his views on art but through his letters we come to know about his views on art and literature. Art and life were inseparable for him. He turned his experiences into art. It is said that he lived to write and what he wrote was his life. Much of his subject matter lies within the areas of his own experience. He was akin to Joyce. They had the same vocation. Conrad Aiken recognised his genius long before the others could.

His first novel Ultramarine received a setback but Conrad Aiken encouraged, motivated and stimulated him to write. He paid attention even to minor details. He was fond of re-writing. He was a conscious artist.

The central features of post modernism are represented in his work. The elements of post modern writings - of pastiche, self-reference, a schizophrenic attitude to history, the death of the author and of the subject, collage and allegory are reflected in his works, especially these features are seen and are evident in Lowry's Under the Volcano. The post modern work is an extension of the world rather than an image of it.

Under the Volcano preserves all the features of post-modernism. It shows in action the death of the subject and of the author. It also relies on pastiche and collage besides, having a particular relation to the past. It also uses traditional forms in a displaced manner. Under the Volcano also includes elements of romantic and existentialist novels.

In Chapter Two entitled 'Naked and doomed Face of the Man Himself' I have dealt with the Selected Poems of Malcolm Lowry. Though his poetry is overshadowed by his prose work yet it has its own place in the writings of Malcolm Lowry. There is a difference between two manuscripts the one written by him and the one edited by his wife. It is said that he wrote a number of poems on exercise books of the type used by school children. These yield a profusion of pages corresponding to the puzzle of the various stages in text

production and suggest worthwhile remarks that contribute both to the definition of Lowry's creative process and to the conclusions that can be reached about Lowry as a person.

Suzanne Kim unravels that when one attempts to reconstruct a highly structured imagination as Lowry's, the genetic critic cannot simply rule out the problems of synchrony and / or diachrony⁷. The reader, therefore is confronted with the task of date evaluation. Only a few poems were dated by the author himself at the time of production. It was Margerie Lowry and Earle Birney, when they worked on the manuscripts for the 1962 publication, endeavoured to ascribe dates wherever they could.

Lowry did not always start writing under the pressure of circumstance, however traumatic, and yet this kind of incentive can no more be totally disregarded than the Wordsworthian recollection in tranquility incentive. Also, as Lowry was a perfectionist, he revised most of his poems again and again over many years.

Malcolm Lowry's poetry is more appealing than his prose work. Malcolm Lowry's poems contain the sap of a spiritual autobiography. They have their roots in Mexico and in British Columbia. They reveal the intense inner world of a highly sensitive and suffering modern man. They reveal the intensity with which experiences have been encountered by the poet. They expound the emotions of hate, fear, anger and despair. Malcolm Lowry's poems bear the stamp of integrity and clarity.

Malcolm Lowry's poetry is a fusion of literary styles. Many forms mingle in his poetry to give his poems depth and richness. Each poem of Malcolm Lowry is unique in its tone, texture and composition. His poems are simple and easy to understand. They are devoid of philosophical element. His poems are autobiographical because most of them are projections of the author's personality himself. His poems are the immediate voices of his despair, love, self-reproaches, nostalgia and wry resurgent hope.

The texture of Lowry's novels are interwoven with deep literary allusiveness, the commitment to formal experiment, the quality of strain and anguish which was typical of the modern age. The past always exists in the present. It is the past which determines the nature of the present response. Malcolm Lowry was influenced by this view of time and consciousness and he has sought ways by making use of the thematic pattern to communicate to the readers the simultaneity and different levels of consciousness. His themes which speak volumes about restlessness, rejection, love etc. fit well into this framework.

Malcolm Lowry's themes are varied. They are akin to British and American writers too. He has depicted his characters as suffering from the malaise of alienation and isolation and they are projections of his own personality. Malcolm Lowry has expounded in his thematic pattern the theme of loneliness which is seen as the necessary condition of man. He has portrayed social conventions which are seen

as empty and mechanical bearing no relationship to the inner life of man.

Apart from the themes which are discussed in the third chapter entitled 'Thematic Collage - Voice of a Modern', we find the political theme of the Spanish Civil war moving disturbingly through Under the Volcano⁶. The Consul's murder at the Farolito in Parian is not a trick of fate, but is the outcome of a series of interrelated circumstances depending upon the Consul's past, his role in Quauhnauc, and conditions in Mexico during the time of the novel's action. Careful scrutiny reveals that the Chapters II-XII form an intricate mosaic of doom for the Consul. This mosaic is formed upon a background of the political situation in Mexico in 1938 - 39.

Malcolm Lowry's thematic collage concentrates on aspects of the human situation and with his new insights and technical experiments he enlarged the bounds of the art of fiction. Malcolm Lowry's thematic pattern provides the reader with insights into the nature of the individual and collective tragedies of the characters of the novel, and makes a powerful statement concerning the plight of man and women in the twentieth century. His depiction of these themes reveal him as true "modern". This shows that his vision is a vision of reality. Infact human life is the very basis of his art. Art and life are inseparable in his work. Lowry through his thematic collage presents a bleak vision of life and generates a feeling of despair. However, his work lacks the profundity of tragedy. In his meticulous

ways he moves from regionalism to universalism while depicting the themes common to humanity irrespective of time and space. Malcolm Lowry was optimistic of the present human predicament. He believed that human beings who strove towards rebirth would achieve a better world and future. In his novel Under the Volcano Malcolm Lowry shows an awareness that man would destroy himself if he did not take care and he felt that the revolutionary forces of his time would change for the better showing a marked improvement in the world political situation. His novel Under the Volcano in particular contains an optimistic ray of hope that revolution by its nature not only contains within it the seeds of its own destruction but a change for the better.

The fourth Chapter 'A Plunge into the Psyche' depicts that Malcolm Lowry's art of characterization was unique and different from the other novelists. Lowry provides the reader with insight into the nature of the individual and collective tragedies of the characters of the novels, and makes a powerful statement concerning the plight of man and woman in the twentieth century. He provides ample opportunity to observe the interplay of thought and action among the main characters.

Malcolm Lowry does not believe in the traditional method of characterisation. He admitted that characterisation was non-existent in the creation of static characters. Malcolm Lowry made use of the devices associated with the twentieth century experimental fiction such as mythic evocation, recurrent motifs, interior monologues, flash back,

montage besides stream - of - consciousness and expressionism to delineate characters. He probes deeply into the respective past of the characters by means of reflection generated by present actions, associations and circumstances. We see each character from at least three external view points as well as from within the characters own consciousness.

Malcolm Lowry made use of stream - of - consciousness technique not only to describe states of mind but through this method he also presents character outside time and place. He also employs the method of expressionism to unravel a character. Malcolm Lowry belonged to the tradition inaugurated by Richardson and which culminated in Conrad and Henry James. He tried to explore beneath the surface appearance of things, which moved towards the inner depths of experience. Malcolm Lowry was concerned with the highly volatile state of mind of his protagonist. A modern novelist like Lowry is haunted with retreat from character. That retreat from character was on account of the absence of stable values in life. In the case of a modern novelist like Malcolm Lowry he is haunted by an increasing sense of alienation. He is tormented by the radical doubts about the nature of reality.

Lowry's discussion of character in Under the Volcano is of particular interest for it contains the seeds of his growing preoccupation with Ortega's idea that-

"The best image of man himself is a novelist" He says - "Character

was my last consideration as it was Aristotle's - since there isn't room, for one thing"⁹

Malcolm Lowry work allows us to measure the man himself against the characters he invented, and to find that he is, indeed the Consul, but he is also Hugh, and Laruelle and Sigbjorn Wilderness.

The fifth Chapter - 'A Peep into the Smithy' depicts how style in Malcolm Lowry's works is central to our understanding of his works. Malcolm Lowry's style is a mode of comprehending reality and an aspect of reality too. For Malcolm Lowry's style was an insight. It was not merely a device, a tool or a medium, a dress or a mask. In Malcolm Lowry style was organic and poetical as in the case of Shakespeare. He made use of various techniques like stream - of - consciousness, Expressionism, stylistic devices including the use of symbols and imagery.

Lowry's technique of stream - of - consciousness owed much to his tutor Conrad Aiken but -

"he had a powerful mind - more powerful, perhaps even than Aiken's - and one of the delights of his fiction could be the spectacle of that mind examining itself"¹⁰.

He employed the technique of stream - of - consciousness to recapture memories, thoughts and feelings which exist outside the primary consciousness.

Malcolm Lowry employed the expressionistic stylistic device too. In Lunar Caustic Malcolm Lowry strove to break down the frontiers between subjective and objective reality. He superimposed the subjective reality of Bill Plantagenet upon the external world. He employed this device to depict the derangement which was part of the protagonist's psyche.

Malcolm Lowry's narrative art is unique, experimental and varied. He incorporated the third person points of view. Hence he is akin to many of the greatest novelists including Fielding, Jane Austen, Hardy, Dickens and the others. The third person point - of - view permitted his characters to incorporate the flow of memory and interior monologue. Malcolm Lowry's use of structure in Under the Volcano and Dark as the Grave wherein my Friend is Laid shows a striking advance.

Malcolm Lowry showed a great interest in the world of film. The influence of film is noticeable in his use of the technique of flash-back. As a writer, Malcolm Lowry was influenced by jazz. He put prose to work as music. His writings bear a close identification between music, sound and the world. Malcolm Lowry was a scrupulous craftsman. He was attentive to the smallest details of his work. His works are mingled with purely musical techniques as reiterated refrain, aria and the alliterative, rhythmic and onomatopoeic effects. Malcolm Lowry was always engaged in a continuous effort to discover the form exactly appropriate to his material. He was a conscious artist as he used to

revise his drafts. Malcolm Lowry's countless allusions to jazz form a pattern where the chaos and despair in the minds of Lowry's protagonists merge into perfection and order, during a brief moment of illumination and joy.

The outstanding features of Malcolm Lowry's style are worth mentioning. He made use of poetic dialogue. He was a poet in prose. The use of poetic organisation discards the monotony and over-elaborateness of the content. Malcolm Lowry also made use of descriptive style in his works. Besides, he made use of songs, repetition, alliteration, colloquial words, irony and phrases from other writers too. Malcolm Lowry's style is also picturesque. He was a creative artist who painted graphic pictures on his canvas for sensuous observation.

Malcolm Lowry made use of both conventional or public and private or personal symbols. In Canadian Literature Lowry occupies a very important place as a symbolist. As a symbolist Malcolm Lowry's work strikes one then as a work in the tradition of those early twentieth century masters - Conrad and Joyce, Kafka, Mann and Proust, whose commitment to a complex symbolic mode did not exclude but rather deepened a capacity for the realistic rendering of both psyche and circumstance. The images of cycle of life, circle imagery, images of death, cross imagery, symbols of past and present, symbols of past, present and future, images of outer and inner life, still point, evil, philosophical symbols, images of time, nature symbols and his recourse to mythology makes clear the tragic and universal plight of

modern man.

Malcolm Lowry was an exceptional artist. It is with great lyrical power and profusion of images he created unforgettable pictures of life in the midst of darkness. His use of symbols add a quality to his presentation. The power of imagination stamp his work as unique, original, intense and rare masterpieces. The rapport between character and universalizing agents of symbols in his works are rigorous, thorough and so incredibly clever that it is never allowed to intrude as mechanical or contrived. Each novel sustains itself as a priceless work of art, in the most triumphant and absolute sense because of its cogency and integrity of image. His symbols are not imposed but they are part of his artistic design.

Lowry's most interesting experiment is the use of myth. In Lowry's novels the use of myth becomes an illustration of the fragmentary character of the phase of history of the thirties and the forties. There are certain symbols which occur only in Under the Volcano. In Under the Volcano the symbols, both individually and in groups, hold together matter which is, but the nature of plot itself, often incoherent. In Under the Volcano we come across occult numerology, allusions, garden imagery, animals, reptiles and birds, geographical locations and buildings, recurrent symbols and symbols of multiple meanings. Under the Volcano is technically a symbolic novel. His symbols are integrated and compulsive and they spring from the novels own subconscious exegesis.

Malcolm Lowry's writing lacks the vulgar appeal. Malcolm Lowry did not deal with contemporary times in his writings because his writing is too autobiographical. He was engrossed with his own life, his addiction to alcohol etc. His writing is Lowry writing about Lowry. He wrote about selective experiences. He never kept in mind his readers. Graham Collier asserts that "Mosaics of experience" is another phrase used about Lowry's writing that has relevance to jazz and is, perhaps, a way of explaining how a jazz musician improvises. He doesn't usually attempt to build a structure logically, moving from A to Z through B, C, D, etc; he explores his subject, uses his experience in a stream - of - consciousness way, moving from idea to idea until his allotted space is up or he has said all he has to say at this time"¹¹.

His experience is related to music and not logic. His work does not appeal logically to people. One cannot read one book in isolation. Each book culminates and absorbs the previous books. Muriel Bradbrook has said that "many layers of his books include images that go back to childhood. This combination of fragility and rooted strength arises from the method of writing and the free, almost random mixing of overlapping versions; this allows craftsmanship to combine with spontaneity"¹².

Muriel Bradbrook also cites the enormous sentence length in Lowry's later work :

"He uses what the Greeks termed the Kai'

style, phrases linked by 'and... and... and... and'. It is the style used by children but also by the great jazzmen. The effect is to stress the musical element and to give a unified sweep analogous to that of ..."¹³

The points which Muriel Bradbrook raises have indeed validity. Another parallel to jazz was found in Conrad Aiken's use, in a review, of a quotation about poetry :

"The initial stimulus, the stimulus which first set the language habit to work, is soon lost sight of in the wealth of other language associations which are evoked from the subconscious"¹⁴.

Malcolm Lowry also employed the use of French words in his work. The use of a foreign language limited the wider readership. A good knowledge of French is a must for a better understanding of his works.

Malcolm Lowry's unfinished texts those corrupt editions put together by other hands constitute encyclopaedic explorations of the modern work. Language was a key to Lowry. He was obsessed with words and with anxieties of verbal influence from other writers. He was extraordinarily sensitive to the multiplicity of voices surrounding him from literary tradition (Shakespeare, Chaucer, Marlowe, Coleridge, Melville, Tolstoy, O'Neill, Poe, Kafka, Cocteau, Baudelaire) and in his immediate milieu (in newspapers, bars, films, music, painting, or the inconsequential sign or

document), he transformed these voices and his "hysterical identifications" into art. As a result, his writing is an orchestration of voices within the fictions created by his protagonists¹⁵.

In October Ferry to Gabriola Malcolm Lowry made use of the device of symbolism. He depicted the varied themes in the novel with the help of symbols. But in letters he himself acknowledged the flaws of his symbolic presentation in October Ferry to Gabriola :

"Symbols are pointed out blatantly instead of being concealed or subsumed in the material, or better still simply not there at all, it is-or is as it stands-repetitions to the point beyond that which you can believe"¹⁶.

In interpreting Lowry to ourselves and others is not a child play. It is an uphill task because we must listen to the political discussions, recognise the literary allusions and myriad references to films, music, and painting. Besides, we must be alert to the wide scope of his historical references and be prepared to pursue a host of details, hints or echoes drawn from familiar or arcane areas of philosophical and religious knowledge.

He left his works unfinished and thus suffered from lack of high reputation except for his one work Under the Volcano. The main concern of his work is the human situation which he projects in a realistic manner. While probing the reality and the inner most recesses of man's psyche he

exposes the evil forces in society around us in all walks of life. Lowry envisaged man's psyche as a micro-cosmic extension of the universe, existing in a state of continual transformation and development. It was, he believed, of prime importance that man not inhabit this pattern of psychic growth for in so doing he would stifle his own potential for creativity, development and regeneration. The individual, then, must continually be integrating his past experiences into his present state of consciousness in order that he may not become fixated, on a particular period of his past and cease to progress. As so many of Lowry's protagonists demonstrate, at such a point of stasis man becomes incapable of functioning productively within his environment and utterly isolated from his fellow beings.

Malcolm Lowry never pondered over the religious mystery of life, and by temperament he is precluded from such strenuous gropings and searchings, it would be fitting to conclude that his gloom as revealed in his fiction has psychological and sociological rather than religious or spiritual genesis.

Malcolm Lowry's work voices the universal motif of compassion for the humanity. His work affirms the value of life itself. Malcolm Lowry's vision is a vision of reality. His work is pervaded with "air of reality". All his work is an example of man in contact with man. It focuses upon the human condition and human relationship. Malcolm Lowry's art is an invitation to reflection and contemplation. Malcolm Lowry is akin to modern writers such as Conrad, Virginia,

Woolf, Mann, Faulkner etc but he lacks their scope and vision. His vision is limited but it is authentic. He is not a regional writer. His work's appeal have always been intrinsic. His portrayal of human relations is universal.

CHAPTER NOTES

1. Quoted by Mark Ellis Thomas in her article "Under the Shadow of the Volcano : Malcolm Lowry's poetry" which appears in Sherrill Grace, Swinging the Maelstrom : New Perspectives on Malcolm Lowry (Mc Gill - Queen's University Press, 1992), p. 232.
2. George Woodcock, Odysseus Ever Returning : Essays on Canadian Writers and Writings (Mc Clelland and Stewart Ltd, 1970), p. 67.
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4. Ibid. p. 142.
5. Stephen Spender, Introduction to Under the Volcano (Thirty Bedford Square, London, 1967), p. XIX.
6. See Selected Letters of Malcolm Lowry (ed), Harvey Breit and Margerie Bonner Lowry (Philadelphia and New York : J. B. Lippincott, Company, 1965).
7. Quoted by Suzanne Kim in her article "The Emergence of an Authorial Figure" which appears in Sherrill Grace, Swinging the Maelstrom : New Perspectives on Malcolm Lowry (Mc Gill - Queen's University Press, 1992), p. 222.
8. Stephen Spender, Introduction : Under the Volcano (London : Jonathan Cape, 1967), p. XXIII.
9. From Selected Letters of Malcolm Lowry (ed) Harvey Breit and Margerie Bonner Lowry (Philadelphia and New York : J. B. Lippincott Company, 1965) which appears in Harry Wood (ed), Malcolm Lowry : The Writer and his Critics (Ottawa - Canada : The Tecumseh Press, 1980), p. 37.
10. Douglas Day, Malcolm Lowry : A Biography (London : Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 171-172.
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MANUSCRIPTS

The Special Collections Department of the Library of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver 8, B.C., contains the Lowry MSS from his homes in Dollarton and in Ripon, Sussex, including letters, notes and the MS of the unpublished novel La Mordida (419 pp plus notes) 'The Ordeal of Sigbjorn Wilderness' (160 pp) and a number of fragmentary short stories. There is also a political essay, 'Halt! I Protest!'

The following is a summary of the MS of La Mordida:

There is a pencil MS, very incomplete and in this the hero is of the later ones only a page or two - and in this the hero is Sigbjorn Wilderness. The first four chapters, about one third of the whole, describe the journey to Acapulco, the mood being joyful, though punctuated by past fears and troubles. In Chapter V trouble threatens them with the 50 pesos fine (La Mordida) and deportation. Then comes a kind of parenthesis, most of Chapter VI, headed "A Dream about a Voyage from New Orleans to Haiti". From then on the nightmarish Kafkaesque quality increases, with the theme of imprisonment underlined and more drunkenness till eventually the American frontier is reached. All the last part is sketchy and interrupted by notes from the author or Margerie saying this must be changed or developed. There are also railway and bus time-tables and paper clippings.

The short stories include 'China' (7pp.); 'Enter One in Sumptuous Armour' (32 pp.); 'In the Black Hills' (5 pp.); 'June 30th 1934' (21 pp.); 'Noblesse Oblige' (11 pp.); 'Nocturnal Genius' (11 pp.); 'Portrait of the Conquistador' (9 pp. handwritten); 'Shadow' (17 pp.); 'Tramps' (8 pp.); and 'We're all Good Ducks Here' (9 pp.).

III

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