Malcolm Lowry: A study of the sea metaphor in "Ultramarine" and "Under the Volcano".

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MALCOLM LOWRY: A STUDY OF THE SEA METAPHOR

IN ULTRAMARINE AND UNDER THE VOLCANO

BY

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through
the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts at the
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1967
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ABSTRACT

In this study of the sea metaphor in *Ultramarine* and *Under the Volcano*, a very important progression is suggested from the traditional use of the sea metaphor in the first novel to a much more complex and many-levelled interpretation of it in the second novel.

In Chapter 1, I tried to show the sea as the battle ground for the initiation experience that is to lead Dana Hilliot from his callow, romantic notions to some understanding of the world of men and of the meaning of life. The sea became his University of Life, a world within a world, where growth to maturity is possible, and where the young sailor can continue to view the sea as a place of romance despite a gruelling initiation.

The early book gives some indication of the central sense of creativity which blossomed into the powerful study of a spiritual and psychological conflict in *Under the Volcano*.

In Chapter 11, I used Chapter VI of *Under the Volcano* as a point of departure because Malcolm Lowry himself indicated that this chapter brought "a much-needed ozone of sea air into the picture. Hugh is a much more sophisticated Dana Hilliot, and his sea experience, while parallel- ing Dana's, carries greater complexity. For him the sea is a panacea offering regeneration and escape whenever a crisis faces him. It has been a compelling force with him from the time he was seventeen until his
somewhat less immature twenty-nine.

Chapter 111 deals with the Consul and Yvonne. The Consul is really the counterpart of Hugh, the man who has taken a road less travelled at one stage of development, "And that has made all the difference." For the Consul the sea has been a place of romance, but it has become a world where romance is juxtaposed to evil, and so it has become a nemesis as well. Yvonne, still loved and loving after a year of separation, brings a ray of hope into the picture. She clings to her vision of the sea as a beacon of safety and a haven of rest for herself and the man she loves.

In the Conclusion I point out that the tracing of the sea metaphor in the two novels serves to show an expanding panorama, including the whole human condition, and emphasizes the growth in skill and artistry on the part of the novelist, Malcolm Lowry. Lowry moves to the more complex Under the Volcano, where romance is exposed to evil, but where, amid growing darkness, the novelist also places a vision of hope. Yvonne carries her dream of regeneration and a new life with the Consul into death, but the novelist himself carries the vision of happiness and spiritual fulfillment into the intriguing human story, "The Forest Path to the Spring." A growing scholarly interest in Lowry's work suggests that his faith in this study of the human condition was justified. Even for the general reader Ultramarine and Under the Volcano belong together for a complete appreciation of Lowry's creative handling of the sea metaphor.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| CHAPTER 1
  ULTRAMARINE                | 9    |
| CHAPTER 11
  UNDER THE VOLCANO - HUGH  | 28   |
| CHAPTER 111
  UNDER THE VOLCANO - THE CONSUL AND YVONNE | 53  |
| CONCLUSION                    | 69   |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY                  | 74   |
| VITA AUCTORIS                  | 77   |
INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I would like to explore just how Malcolm Lowry used the sea metaphor in his first novel, Ultramarine, and in his major work, Under the Volcano. The ocean, alcohol, death and the need for love -- 'No se puede vivir sin amar' -- seem veritable obsessions of Lowry's thinking and writing. Of these, the ocean metaphor should be a fascinating study because, at times, Lowry "broods on ocean less than on the gall/ In seamen's minds."2

In Ultramarine, the young Malcolm Lowry concentrated on how Dana Hilliot, the lonely outsider among the crew, underwent his initiation in the unique "world within a world" which was his ship. In Under the Volcano, the mature artist made the memory of the sea operate on several levels, and let the sea continue to beckon as a panacea bringing regeneration and escape for Hugh, as a haven and a beacon for Yvonne, and as an ambivalent experience of reward and nemesis for the Consul. Hence the tracing of the metaphor in the two novels reveals the intellectual growth of the author. The somewhat self-conscious writer of Ultramarine became the man who was so learned that he himself forgot how

1Malcolm Lowry, Under the Volcano (Signet Book, 1966), p. 32. This is the text copyrighted in 1947. Subsequent references to this text will be indicated by: (UtV and the appropriate page number).

learned. Allusions came natural to him, and gave a Joycean richness to his work. 3

Mr. Jacques Barzun accused Malcolm Lowry of being a mere imitator of Joyce and Hemingway, of Dos Passos and Sterne and others. 4 However, Lowry had some original and ambitious things to say, and he said them with quite consummate skill. He felt he was something of a stylistic trailblazer, and he pointed out that the cry against him had been heard by many a new voice before this:

Whatever your larger motive -- which I incidentally believe to be extremely sound -- do you not seem to have heard this passage or something like it before? I certainly do. I seem to recognize the voice, slightly disguised, that greeted Mr. Wolfe himself, not to say Mr. Faulkner, Mr. Melville and Mr. James, -- an immortal voice, indeed, that once addressed Keats in the same terms that it informed Mr. Whitman that he knew less about poetry than a hog about Mathematics. 5

Malcolm Lowry wrote Ultramarine under the very obvious influence of Conrad Aiken's Blue Voyage, and Nordahl Grieg's The Ship Sails On. 6

3 In his thesis, The Use of Literary Sources for Theme and Style in Under the Volcano, Toronto, 1965, Mr. Anthony Kilgallin points out that literary themes "emphasize layers of meaning and assert literary depths through evocation," p. 27. Later he adds that Lowry's technique of universal literary and mythical evocation follows the formula predicted by T.S. Eliot in 1923 in his essay, Ulysses, Order and Myth.


5 Malcolm Lowry, Letter to Jacques Barzun in Selected Letters by Malcolm Lowry (New York: Lippincott, 1965), ed. Harvey Breit and Margerie Bonner Lowry, p. 143. Subsequent references to this text will be indicated by: (SL and the appropriate page number).

6 See Malcolm Lowry, Ultramarine (Vancouver: Clarke, Irwin and Co., 1963), p. 15. This new and revised edition is used throughout this thesis because it embodies the changes Malcolm Lowry intended. Subsequent references to this text will be indicated by: ( appropriate page).
It is also reminiscent of Herman Melville's *Redburn*, and, like the latter, it is autobiographical. In this story the lure of the sea brought Dana Hilliot as mess-boy on the freighter *Oedipus Tyrannus*. The obsession of the sea is there, but as a backdrop against which young Dana lived through his growing pains as he fought hopefully towards proving himself a man among men. His gift from the sea was the exuberant joy of being accepted — and accepted in particular by "the chinless wonder," Andy, whose apparent hostility haunted Hilliot throughout the story. It was a much-matured young man who watched the Oxenstjerna pulling alongside the *Oedipus Tyrannus* at the end of the story. Yes, he had seen her once or twice before. "But, oh Janet, no sorrow is so bad as that which quite goes by." (203) Despite this nostalgic comment, Dana did not really come out of the experience with heart "embittered with sea salt."³

Malcolm Lowry himself was conscious of much immaturity in *Ultramarine*. Mr. Earle Birney⁴ felt that the author often seemed embarrassed by this, his first novel, and, repeatedly, expressed the hope that he would get round to revising it some day. Mrs. Margerie Bonner Lowry, the author's widow, had a new edition of *Ultramarine* printed which reproduces the changes Malcolm had made, over the years, since 1933, in his own copy of the original edition. During the years ... there was a spasmodic running commentary on *Ultramarine*. I would

---

³"Old Freighter in an Old Port" in *Selected Poems*, p. 14.
come upon him with the battered copy in his hands staring at it angrily and making notes on the pages, or sometimes just holding it and gazing out of the window; he would turn to me and say: "You know I must re-write this some day." (7)

Mrs. Lowry does not remember just when Malcolm Lowry decided that, in its re-written form, _Ultramarine_ would become the first volume in a group of six or seven novels, all under the general title of _The Voyage That Never Ends_, -- something in the nature of a Proustian masterpiece. However, it was at this time that he changed the name of the ship from _Nawab_ to _Oedipus Tyrannus_, to conform with Hugh's second ship in _Under the Volcano_.

The sea! The watches pass, the hours take wing
Like sea-gulls stuffed with bread, Tin-tin; pang, pang.
And this monotony is our Sturm und Drang, 9
Of which few poets have the heart to sing.

In _Under the Volcano_, Yvonne was carried into the bay of Acapulco by the long, pure waves of the Pacific "through a hurricane of immense and gorgeous butterflies swooping seaward to greet the Pennsylvania." (UtV,71) The idyllic cabin of her dream for the Consul and herself was located at the edge of a forest, "slap spang on the sea." (UtV,119) Hugh's conscience told him he was a liar, a traitor to his own brother, a coward! "And they are losing the Battle of the Ebro. Because of you." This is a refrain that troubles him throughout the book. In a romantic notion of expiating the guilt that haunted him, he planned to go to sea again to bring help to the hard-pressed forces of the Loyalists in Spain, -- men

9"Look out! The Bloody Bosun" in _Selected Poems_, p. 12.
whom he felt he had also let down. Nevertheless, in his heart, he knew that this was another empty gesture. Thus Hugh remained romantically immature as he, like Yvonne, yearned for the sea which, to both, represented a regenerating and purifying element.

If for Hugh and Yvonne the sea was a vision of escape, and a promise of regeneration, it was nemesis with a vengeance for the Consul. As a rule, memories of the sea brought him no consolation. His peace of mind was disturbed by haunting images of death and disgrace at sea: for him, the sea and the disastrous affair of the Samaritan blended into one searing experience, and whether imagined or real, at times it became a harrowing nightmare for him.

Perhaps Geoffrey Firmin, more than anything else in Under the Volcano, brings to mind evocations of Herman Melville. The Consul has been compared to Ahab and to Moby Dick:

In Victoria ... they have decided that the Consul is really Moby Dick, masquerading as the unconscious aspect of the Cadbosaurus in the book of Jonah, or words to that effect. (SL, 196)

My wife says it would be more true to say that in the Volcano the Consul bore some relation to Moby Dick himself rather than to Ahab. However, it was not patterned after Moby Dick (the book) which I never studied till fairly recently (and it would seem not hard enough.) (SL, 197)

It is an interesting fact that in a letter to Mr. Derek Pethick, dated March 6, 1950, Malcolm Lowry admitted that, on his side, the identification was with Melville himself and with his life. This was partly because, like Melville, Lowry had sailed before the mast, partly because
his own grandfather had been a skipper of a windjammer, and went down with his ship. However, Malcolm Lowry added that there was "the purely romantic reason that Melville had had a son named Malcolm who simply disappeared." (SL, 197) It is significant that Lowry ended by saying that most of all he identified with Melville because of the "latter's failure as a writer, and because of his whole outlook generally." (SL, 197) Lowry does not explain just what it was that fascinated him—Melville's lack of financial success, or the long twilight experienced by some of his work, including his masterpiece, Moby Dick.

His failure for some reason absolutely fascinated me and it seems to me that from an early age I determined to emulate it, in every possible way— for which reason I have always been very fond of Pierre (even without having read it at all). (SL, 197)

Like Melville, Malcolm Lowry delighted in the oceanic majesty of literary and Biblical rhythms, and, like Melville, he was intrigued by the demoniac in nature which hailed back to the old mythologies.°° Certainly Ultramarine quite catches the spirit and the mood of the old superstitions that have long been a part of a sailor's creed.

Under the Volcano itself was written on numerous planes with provisions made, according to its author, for almost every kind of reader. Lowry felt his approach was the opposite of that of James Joyce. His approach was autobiographical, personal and at times even subjective; in contrast writers like Joyce and Eliot aimed to invent a modern "ob-

jective" literature, which was free of autobiographical and subjective elements.

The novel can be read simply as a story which you can skip if you want. It can be read as a story you will get more out of if you don't skip. It can be regarded as a symphony, or in another way as a kind of opera ... It is hot music, a poem, a song, a tragedy, a comedy, a farce, and so forth. ... It is a prophecy, a political warning, a cryptogram, a preposterous movie, and a writing on the wall. (SL,66)

In this analysis of his own work, Malcolm Lowry continued to discuss his novel which deals with forces in man which cause him to be afraid of himself. Under the Volcano deals with the guilt of man, with his remorse, with his ceaseless struggle to reach the light, despite the burdens placed on man from his heritage of the past. The allegory is that of the Garden of Eden, the Garden representing the world, a Garden which is constantly threatened to become our Paradise Lost. The drunkenness of Geoffrey Firmin is taken on one plane to symbolize the universal drunkenness of mankind during the war, or during the period immediately preceding it. Of course, it is important to remember, as Mr. Stephen Spender points out, "fundamentally, Under the Volcano is no more about drinking than King Lear is about senility." (UtV, ix)

It is significant that in the general plan for The Journey That Never Ends, Malcolm Lowry placed "The Forest Path to the Spring," "which is concerned with human happiness and ends on a note of fulfillment," at the

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Malcolm Lowry, Hear Us, O Lord From Heaven Thy Dwelling Place (New York: Lippincott, 1961), End of Publisher’s note. (No pagination).
end of what was destined to be a posthumous volume. Amid his constant obsessions with the ocean, with alcohol, with death and with the need for love in the human condition, Malcolm Lowry also placed this intriguing story with its message of hope and love.

_Ultramarine_ is a young man's first work; _Under the Volcano_ is an exhaustive and powerful work, dealing in a unique way with a total vision of life. In its many-levelled appeal, _Under the Volcano_ should prove a rewarding study when taken from the point of view of the sea metaphor.

In Chapter 1, I will discuss _Ultramarine_ from two points of view: first the sea voyage became an initiation experience in which "the cold clean scourge of the sea" (70) did its share in Dana's maturation process. Secondly, I would like to review the story of _Ultramarine_ in some detail because this shows clearly how the sea became a microcosm of universal life. Moreover, this is relevant to my study of _Under the Volcano_ in Chapters 11 and 111, because Lowry's use of the sea metaphor grew in complexity between the writing of the two books. The somewhat simplistic and romantic view of the first novel blossomed into the many-levelled and complex view of the masterpiece, _Under the Volcano_.

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In Ultramarine the sea became an initiation experience. Like "the cold clean scourge of the sea" this brought pain but also an exhilarating cleansing with it. Dana Hilliot's naive plunge into this new world brought a rude awakening; the scourge of his initiation, like a scouring, cleansed him of his romantic notions and brought growth and a dawning maturity. There was the added factor that, once on the ship, young Dana had no choice but to face this University of Life. In one sense he was in a life-denying cage. On the other hand, through this very scourging, he grew from boy to young man by the time the curtain rang down on the final scene of the story.

In Ultramarine, Malcolm Lowry used two quotations as epigraphs, which seem particularly significant for a study of his use of the sea metaphor. He quoted Geoffrey Chaucer's Maunciple's Tale:

Take any brid and put it in a cage  
And do all thy entente and courage  
To foster it tenderly

...  
Yet hath this brid by twenty thousand fold  
Lever in a forest that is rude and cold  
Gon ete wormes and swich wrecchedness.

From Samuel Richardson he added:

Let who will speak against Sailors; they are the Glory and the Safeguard of the Land! And what would have become of Old England long ago but for them?

Lowry used these particular passages to underscore the fact that the
sea is in the blood of some men, and nothing but the sea, "the cold clean scourge of the sea" can begin to give them any sense of fulfillment in facing the fact of their own being. It has been a traditional theme with writers from Walter Scott, James Fenimore Cooper and Richard Henry Dana to Herman Melville, Joseph Conrad, Conrad Aiken and Nordahl Grieg.

Malcolm Lowry could have been thinking of his youthful protagonist, Dana Hilliot, unhappy in his home, and suffering from growing pains, when he wrote:

When I was young, the mildew on my soul,
like Antipholus, it chanced to me,
Or Melville’s Redburn, to take that soul to sea
and have it scourged.¹

In this sea voyage which became a journey of initiation, Dana’s soul was "scourged" and toughened, and, to some extent, cleansed of childish "mildew." As he faced the isolation of the sea and the isolation of his own soul, he came to understand something of himself and of the world of men around him.

In the Dana Hilliot "Seductio ad ABSURDUM" scene with the Quarter­master, the latter asked him why he went to sea:

"Search me," said Hilliot, "To amuse myself I suppose."
"Well a man who’d go to sea for fun’d go to hell for a pastime," said the quartermaster, drinking his gin.
"That’s what Andy said to me the first time I saw him."
"It’s an old sailor expression like more days more dollars." (38)

Later there was a sequel to this somewhat desultory conversation, this time in the course of Dana's night out with Popplereuter in Hong Kong. Dana had reached a point where he was just drunk enough to be very much on his dignity, somewhat in the fashion of the Taskersons in Under the Volcano. He wanted to avoid explaining what had put him into his present predicament, his being at sea, not only physically, but also at sea about his relationship with his parents and with his girl.

Were it possible to explain he would not understand it any more than I would understand why Popplereuter had gone to sea. I could not for that matter explain it to myself. (98)

Later he confided to his new acquaintance that his grandfather, on his mother's side, was a sea captain who went down with his ship. "Consequently, I have in me an inborn craving for the unrest of the sea." (103) He extemporized that this craving was not conscious enough "intellectually to be diluted into a mere intangible wanderlust." (103) However, he protested that he would not make a profession of the sea: "I'm not going to stick around chipping winches, don't you think. I simply cannot imagine why I'm here so many miles away in this god-awful place." (98)

They "must go to the sea" -- but, typically reserve themselves the right to criticise the sea and what it stands for. So, Dana Hilliot, "Narcissus, Bollocky Bill the Sailor, Bollocky Bill, aspiring writer, drawn magically from the groves of the Muses by Poseidon" (98) often pondered the why of his going to sea. As often as not, his thoughts were colored by self-pity and guilt, or were brilliant, disconnected fantasies of heroism, and, as often as not, he really did not want to meet the actual issue.
This is in line with another fact that becomes evident as the story develops: he was not so much in love with Janet as in love with the romantic notion of love. Through an alcoholic haze even Olga Sologub had "something mysterious about her, like stars," the "same curious impression" that Janet had made on him the first time he met her. (113)

Dana Hilliot was haunted by growing pains, and by the fears and sorrows of parental rejection, a fear so great that, on one occasion, he described it as a daily dying. A child's instinctive knowledge had told him long ago that his parents did not love him. Then his "soul died suddenly at the age of eight." (70) The trend of his thoughts on this occasion led him to "Ibsen, the author of Ghosts." (72) Like other allusions which Lowry used in this novel, and in Under the Volcano, this parallel is appropriate. Mrs. Alving tried desperately to free Oswald and herself from all taint of the Alving heritage, only to find ghosts walking in her son's infatuation with Regina. The terrible realization made her almost visualize "We are all ghosts." So the ghosts of Dana Hilliot's heritage haunted him, as his own personality pursued him:

There is no getting away from the unfortunate Hilliot, this strong creature with a head of filthy infected hair, and a maggoty brain and a rotting consciousness, who dreams of archetypal images. (98)

Looking deep into his glass, Dana shrank from the ghost of himself that he saw. Sadness, misery, self-disgust, and terror took a hand in the initiation which continued its inexorable course. He thought of his own personality as something of an evil ghost with which he must live and with which he would have to come to terms. (98) The very isolation imposed on
him by the sea made this confrontation not only possible but imperative.

Prompted by the forces of the present, Dana was acted on by the forces of the past. He thought of himself as crucified in his life, and crucified particularly in undertaking this voyage with some notion of making it a magnificent and heroic proof to Janet that he was a man among men. To her and to himself this had to become true, even if he was a non-entity, an outcast to his own father, and even if he mourned that his own mother did not love him. (97)

Symbolically there was an "Oedipus Tyrannus" element in Dana Hilliot that he had to contend with, and so it was not surprising that the contrast of city and ship came strongly and nostalgically to him in Hong Kong:

... on the ship was dead silence, save for the hiss of water that was part of the silence, falling from her side into the darkness. Oh God, oh God, if sea life were only always like that! If it were only the open sea, and the wind racing through the blood, the sea and the stars forever! (82)

Of course, this outcry was but part of his romantic notion, and perhaps akin to what may have been his juvenile idea that part of his proving his manhood to Janet and to others involved "trying to wrap the deck around him" "for a blanket in every port," - so "regular a booze artist" that his fellow sailors said: "It is not natural" at his age. (65) It was an echo of his small personal satisfaction that he was the best swimmer on the Oedipus Tyrannus even if he did not make the swimming team at school. Mixed up adolescent that Dana was, he "thrilled to a dream of strange trafficking and curious merchandise," at one point; (29) watched a shark for which "he now felt almost a sort of affection" at another;

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and then went into "Dead Men's Blues" at the precious little meaning left
in "this life which so surprisingly had opened before him. Nor could he
see why he had ever been fool enough to set his seal upon such a wild
self-dedication." (17)

In one of his poems Malcolm Lowry wrote:

> Perhaps this tramp rolls towards a futurity
> That broods on ocean less than on the gall
> In seamen's minds.

There was much bitter gall in the heart of young Dana when he first
went to sea. However, despite the initial rebuffs, there was an aura that
glowed enchantingly over his first impression of the men. Out of these
he chose

Norman, the galley boy, with his fair hair falling over his eyes,
and Andersen, the tattooed cook, him whom they called Andy, whose
weakness of chin was complemented by his extra-ordinarily digni-
fied forehead, as those among the crew who would be his friends. (17)

But it was Andy, "the chinless wonder," from whom above all he would have
liked a kind word, and from whom he received unsympathetic and morose
treatment, and who usually went out of his way to be cruel to Dana, -- to
"Miss Bloody Hilliot," as he jeeringly called him.

Certainly young Dana was given just the same as any of the other
sailors got on their first voyage. And at the end he himself recognized
it as part of "the cold clean scourge of the sea," -- as part of an in-
evitable initiation into the world of men and of sailors. However, at
times, life seemed to be turned inside out for him into a hell that
irked him badly, and "the old despair came back rending him with its
claws." (28) Symbols of hell abounded as the homesick, young sailor envisioned the clanging freighter as the bottomless pit itself. He marveled at "How swiftly, how incredibly swiftly," the fourteen men in the forecastle had become a community; "almost, he thought, a world," and from "world within a world, sea within a sea, void within a void," (21) he went on to give us a glimpse of what the visible structure of the ship meant to him. At this point the sea had become a visible world to him, albeit this visible world held shades of the Inferno\textsuperscript{2} for him. Certainly this is also one of the passages that shows us what Malcolm Lowry could do with the magic of words even at that early age at which he wrote Ultramarine.

Hilliot suddenly lifted the skylight by which he was standing, and looked down into the messroom of the sailors' forecastle. He yearned over these men who had become a community from which he was excluded, and suddenly, he saw the very structure of the ship paralleling his thoughts about the circles in Dante's Inferno. "The ultimate, the inescapable, the ninth circle. Great circle. . ." (21-22) Circle on circle, deck on deck, gave him a visual presentation of the vast funnel which was Dante's Inferno, and beneath it the white-painted galley with its geniculated,

\textsuperscript{2}Dante Alighieri, The Divine Comedy , Carlyle-Wickstead Translation (New York: The Modern Library, 1932). Dante divides hell into a moral as well as a physical structure. His description indicates a vast funnel broken into nine regions or circles, each running around the circumference of the cavity, each holding a particular type of damned group. The ninth circle, a region of ice, punishes traitors.
blackened smoke stack splayed at the top like ... a devastated cigar, the quartermasters' rooms and roundhouse amidships, up to the bridge, which the officer on watch paced ceaselessly." (22)

Dana Hilliot turned from his vision of the nine circles of hell and walked briskly, stimulated by his thoughts to angry energy, along the throbbing alleyway.

... Cloom - cloom - cloom. The Oedipus Tyrannus was making about eight knots, and her engines throbbed cheerfully somewhere down below; a shovel clanged and an endless spout of water and refuse was splashing from her rusty side into the Yellow Sea. And there, and there, the joyous derangement of the boundless waste must be their harbor ... The ship rose slowly to the slow blue combers, a ton of spray was flung to leeward, and that other sea, the sky, smiled happily on seamen and firemen alike, while a small Japanese fishing boat glimmered white against the black coast -- oh, in spite of all, it was grand to be alive! (23)

Certainly at times, young Malcolm Lowry was moving towards making us recognize the very feel and texture of young Dana's experience.

No man becomes himself by himself; neither did Dana Hilliot. For him all this was part of the "cold clean scourge of the sea" whose ultimate gift to him would be the dawning recognition that community made sense, and that appearance did often hide the core of reality. Even Andy's chinessness did not make him chinless, but covered him with a new glory as of an unsung hero.

Malcolm Lowry had written -- perhaps echoing inner anguish and despair:

There is no pity
There is no pity at sea
The sea is the sea.  

In Ultramarine this sentiment is not entirely true. Dana got the "mildew" scoured from his soul in a gruelling initiation experience, but his quest in this "world within a world" was not without its relieving elements. "It was all very strange, like a nightmare, but also exciting."

(20) Part of Dana Hilliot's closing dream was "to sail into an unknown spring, or receive one's baptism on storm's promontory, where the solitary albatross heels over in the gale and at last to come to land." (201)

At the opening of Ultramarine Dana Hilliot's rebellious day-dreams made him loathe the inexorable precision of the ship's engines. He "thought of the whirling clanks holding horribly in their nerveless grip the penetrating shaft that turned the screws, that internal dynamic thing, the life of the ship." (23) At the end of the story the engines hammered out a song of home, (172) and Dana wrote -- in a letter he would never send to Janet -- "I have identified with Andy ... Mentally, I have surrounded Andy's position, instead of being baffled and hurt by it." (185) The ship that had been a "sort of Moloch" (U1) to him had become a haven and a passage to better things. The sea metaphor had taken on an aura of romance once more.

At this point it would be meaningful to examine Ultramarine in somewhat greater detail to show how young Dana Hilliot's first sea voyage be-

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came an initiation experience revealing life on shipboard as a microcosm of universal life, and how it merged into the resolution just indicated. The thought-flow of Dana's musings, the outward happenings of the voyage, the contrapuntal conversation of the other sailors -- all created a commentary on life which was somewhat of a nightmare to the young adventurer. Caged in the ship -- and isolated also by the sea -- Dana went through a hell of his own, through something that he considered a crucifixion.

_Ultramarine_ is divided into six chapters which we could think of as a series of waves, each a crescendo of emotional experience, the theme of which is sounded early in the story: "Forlorn! Lost! Lost! Lost!" This feature of the _Inferno_ came up again particularly in the search for Janet's lost letter. It foreshadowed the theme of "lost in a dark wood" which was so prominent a part of _Under the Volcano_. This theme of doom and loss reached a climax in _Ultramarine_ when Dana echoed the dying Christ in "Oh God, why has Thou forsaken me?" It finds a counterpart in _Under the Volcano_ in Geoffrey's search for Yvonne's lost letter, and his biblical allusion: "look and see if there be any sorrow like unto mine."^4^ "Lost, lost. The letter. Searching, groping all the time for things: for facts, for letters, for dates, for beauty, for love. And never knowing when we have found it." (119) However, _Ultramarine_ does have an acceptable resolution, a kind of happy ending.

For young Dana the sea became "six weeks' engulfing darkness of in-

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^4^The Bible, Lamentations 1:12.
terminable ritual spelt out by bells and jobs, a six weeks' whirlwind of suffering," (1h) -- a six weeks' third degree initiation into the life of a sailor. Above the continued throbbing of the engines, there was an insistent note of the memory of his childhood frustrations, now accentuated by his adolescent frustrations of not belonging, of not finding any easy way of being accepted by the crew, particularly no sign of breaking through to any kind of communication with Andy, who had taken on the proportions of the alter-ego of Dana's dreams. The melancholy of Keats' "Nightingale" echoed through his mind: "Forlorn! The very word is like a bell/ To toll me back from thee to my sad self." (2h) However, the resilience of youth is also there, and, even while he briefly saw the ship as hell itself, he also came under the influence of the "glad serenity" that hung over the sea, giving a gold-flecked sparkle to the threat of the ocean. In the joy and the sorrow, in the dream and the reality that made up Dana's life on board ship, we have indeed a microcosm of life itself.

Suddenly three bells rang out, tin, tin, tin, and were echoed by the lookout man, and from far below, down in the engine room, three submarine notes floated up and were followed by the jangling of the telegraph, while the engine changed key. (2h)

With the others he thrilled to the glad uproar as the Oedipus Tyrannus' siren roared, and the mountains and the rice fields and the town itself roared back thunderously.

It seemed to Hilliot that a new, vague delight now possessed those standing on the poop. . . half-joyous, half-tired faces gathered round the crowded bulwarks, eager yet humiliated eyes hailed with gladness this new port; tonight meant perhaps to a young scared face the marvels of an unknown land; to others the renewal of an old passion,
long mutilated, drowned in sad sea horizons, clouded by the smoke of far cities and snoring volcanoes. ; (29)

From idyllic dreams, Dana swung back to a minor key as his school boy memories of youthful frustrations merged into memories of the lost instrument box, with geometry itself a sort of monster to torment his schooldays. "It resolved itself into a human and dreadful shape of perpendicularly arranged concentric circles with a long tangent of arms, with huge hand throttling and triangular." (41) Of course, this was an echo of Dante's circles of hell, Hilliot's vision of the ship mentioned earlier in this thesis.

The sea is the great revealer of the hearts of men. On it, in the fellowship of sailors, all men appear as they are, -- in their littleness, in their bigotry, and in the surprise of their hidden magnanimity of heart and character. Herman Melville's Redburn, Richard Henry Dana's Two Years Before the Mast, Rudyard Kipling's Captains Courageous and Malcolm Lowry's Ultramarine carry the same story of hostility experiences by "outsiders" -- outsiders who had a sense of belonging to a different world, of speaking a different language, of thinking different thoughts -- outsiders who would have liked to break through the barriers and get out of their isolation, but who, somehow, met frustrations at every turn. In the case of Ultramarine, Dana Hilliot was isolated not only by his naivete and middle-class strangeness, but by his shipmates' prejudice against an intruder from the well-to-do bourgeois world, -- "the bloody toffs who come to sea for experience." (19)
At the end of Chapter 1, in the face of the "brutal mountains" of Manchuria striding into the blazing sky, it did not help the tormented young Hilliot to remember that elsewhere smiling vineyards might come down to the water's edge. The first long deep-sea comber was reaching a peak, and Dana Hilliot nightmared into "Lost without a compass, I am on a ship. I am on a ship, and I am going to Japan. Lost. Lost. Lost."(45)

It was the Ishmael motif, a frequent facet in the traditional use of the sea metaphor, the cry of the man whose unhappy fate it was to be alienated from the human community in which he found himself, but who was looking for a human shoulder to share the burden of himself.

The second Chapter and its wave of memories, its small time persecutions, and the interjected story of the Oedipus Tyrannus — whose very history was enough to fill Hilliot "with a narcissistic compassion" — crescendo slowly into a prayer voicing a grief and a pain which Malcolm Lowry later transmuted into the art which was his masterpiece:

(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 in impotent prayer; Oh Thou who createst my eyes from the green mantle of the standing pool, who createst everything, the weak and the strong, the tender with the cruel, the just with the unjust, pity his small impulses of lust, and see that little beauty in his life, which so soon shall be among the green undertow of the tides; and as he stands alone, naked, weaponless, deliver him from his bondage and bring him out of the darkness and the grief and the pain into the sunlight.) (77)

Chapter IIII — the third wave — became a churning, twisting Maelstrom of crescendoing dark comedy ending on an ironic note. It began with Dana
Hilliot's determination that "Tonight things would be changed," Tonight he would be "the hero, the monster." (81) Things were different indeed. Hilliot wove through a monumental binge in Hong Kong, during which he spun an alcoholic phantasmagoria of an imaginary past for the benefit of Hans Popplereuter:

My youth was ruined by a curious passion for collecting among other things, universities... I played baseball in Harvard and set fire to Brattle Square. In Princeton I nearly drank myself to death. In Moscow I was a camera man under Pudovkin. In Oxford, Missouri, I wrote a song. In Yokohama I taught Botany... Once, for a week adrift in an open boat, I kept up the spirit of the crew by playing the tarot patch. In the end we had to eat the strings... You see, unemolumented but monumental. (100-101)

There was the weird theatre featuring Richard Barthelmess in The Amateur Gentleman, and Olga Tschechowa in Love's Crucifixion, where Norman kept thumping the box-office window for a "third day-return to Birkenhead Centre." (103) They were swept into an even more weird museum of caution-ary anatomical exhibits. There was a lost letter -- the one mentioned previously. There was a lost Andy. And, harping on lost things, Dana Hilliot recalled the "dunghawk," which became Norman's pet pigeon whose message, whatever it might have been, was also lost because no one could decipher it.

This motif of loss and doom carried over into Under the Volcano.

The wave of this Gargantuan drunk of Dana Hilliot broke on ironic disenchantment, when Dana heard Olga Solugub use to another sailor what he had naively thought was very personally his: "You've got nice hands, sailor boy!" Then, as "the music rose to a scream of dreadful pain," (127) he realized his precious Olga was dancing with none other than Andy himself!
This was not Dantean symbolism. This was hell itself for Dana! Andy, the "chinless wonder" was the idol of his dreams but also the impregnable Rock of Gibraltar standing in his way. Once again Andy had scored against him!

Chapter IV must inevitably be the backwash of the hurly-burly of Chapter III. If the sea was life, it was life in all its shades of experience. There had been a subtle aura of association between Dan Hilliot and Hamlet earlier in the story, reminiscent of the same kind of subtle association used by T.S. Eliot in Prufrock:

No! I am not Hamlet, nor was meant to be;  
Am an attendant Lord,  
Almost at times, a Fool,
said Prufrock, and just as Prufrock never mustered the courage actually to sing a love-song, so, Dana Hilliot, sensing a relationship no doubt, misquoted the same frustrated gentleman who

... should have been a pair of ragged claws  
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas. (143)
The ragged claws were a perfect image of Prufrock's frustrated, tentative sexual desires, easily arrested and often disappointed; the scuttling was an apt illustration of Prufrock's way of facing difficulties by running away from them. Dana, who had planned to be "the hero, the monster" also found himself not measuring up to what seemed to him a sine qua non of a tough sailor like Andy. (79) In his own mind he despised himself as a Prufrock. This was all part of his fear of not being a man among men. (80)
of not being able to convince Janet that he was indeed a masculine he-man.

In this chapter, perhaps more than elsewhere in Ultramarine, we are brought "sense close to the very grain of shipboard life," the sea, the sailor's inimitable talk, Dana Hilliot's extempore of the fool-proof murder he would perpetrate on Andy. Suddenly life exploded into the reality of a show-down with Andy. There was the inevitable intervention and the resolution. And then all the fight was gone: "Andy lost his chin in the war, and he's plates in it, and all, and if you hit him on it, he might croak." (152)

Chapter V and Chapter VI can do only one thing: effect a reconciliation and complete the resolution, thus crystallizing the sea metaphor into significance for the young sailor. The uneasy build-up of Chapter V is like the hidden agitation which rolls a wave to a peak. There was the reconciliation with Andy, and

The tragedy of the afternoon, the horrors of the voyage were forgotten; all at once he had a perfectly clear vision of himself, as if a red leaf should fall on a white torrent. Instantly there was no lack of order in his life, no factors wrongly co-ordinated, no loose tangled ends. It was he and no other who brushed disarray with his pinions.

And all at once the maelstrom of noise, of tangled motion, of shining steel in his mind was succeeded by a clear perception of the meaning of the pitiless regularity of those moving bars; the jiggering levers began to keep time... and he saw that at last the interdependence of rod grasping rod, of shooting straight line seizing curved arms, of links limping backward and wriggling forward on their

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queer pivots, had become related to his own meaning and his own struggles. At last there dawned on him a reason for his voyage, and it was the strong, generous ship he knew he must thank for giving it to him. (170)

He had a dawning recognition that a man must face the starker realities of life to achieve manhood.

This chapter closed on the pleasant note of three sailors -- Andy, Norman and Dana Hilliot, at last and inevitably united -- happily anticipating the arrival home, sooner or later, while "outside was the roar of the sea and the darkness." (175) The Ishmael of this tale had found his Queegueg, and, for the moment, that spelled peace.

As its share of the synthesis, Chapter VI returned Janet's lost letter, and occasioned another word-spinning rhapsody for the young Dana, and another excursion into T.S.Eliot:

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams
In death's dream kingdom. . . (198)

It is significant that Eliot's title The Hollow Men suggested Dante's description of the entrance of hell where dwell those who were lukewarm -- the wretched souls of those who lived without infamy and without praise -- who never lived because they were not positive enough spiritually to be either good or evil. "Eyes I dare not meet" indicated Dana Hilliot's recognition that Janet's eyes, like Beatrice's, were a symbol of spiritual reality -- and, that, like Dante, Dana Hilliot both longed and dreaded to behold them. At the end of his first sea-voyage Hilliot faced the facts of his own life. His Inferno could not be written off. The end was not.
yet. "Oh Janet, no sorrow is so bad as that which quite goes by," (203) are his last words in the story. It was a final touch of poetic melancholy, a kind of wintry appeal, somewhat typical of the love-sick misfit whose fatal attraction to drink, and whose obsession with the sea became major themes in Malcolm Lowry's masterpiece, Under the Volcano. The sea became the University of Life, bringing a dawning maturity to the romantic young protagonist of this traditional sea story.

The evocation of Conrad, the Oedipus theme, the Inferno reference, -- all these unite to make an appropriate ending for this book, which, in its sounding of basic themes occupying Lowry, becomes an exciting prelude to Under the Volcano. When the "day of dappled seaborne clouds" gave James Joyce his first real epiphany, and set him on the road to Ulysses and Finnegans Wake, he knew what direction he had to walk, but he did not at that time see the end. When Malcolm Lowry had written Ultramarine, he diffidently told Nordahl Grieg that much of it was "paraphrase, plagiarism or pastiche from you." (SL, 16) In the novel itself he spoke of it as "that usual self-conscious first novel." (96) However, even concentrating only on the sea metaphor as the major interest has proved a rewarding


7It is interesting to note that in a letter to Mr. James Stern, May 7, 1940, Malcolm Lowry remarked that the novel he wrote seven years before, that is, Ultramarine, had "quotations from quotations from other novels." (SL, 28)
study. In a sense there is a parallel between the relationship of Lowry's two novels, and the relationship of Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and his *Ulysses*. In both cases the central sense of creativity was present in the early book, which only mildly suggested the achievement of the later major work. In Lowry's case, it may be surprising to find both books so much taken up with the sea metaphor. It is a natural subject for *Ultramarine*. However, in *Under the Volcano*, the subtleness of the sea casts an allure of its own over this powerful study of mental and emotional conflict. *Ultramarine* and *Under the Volcano* belong together.
CHAPTER 11

UNDER THE VOLCANO: HUGH

On the surface, it would seem that Under the Volcano would not have anything at all to do with the sea in plot, or have an obvious sea metaphor. The very title suggests desert rather than ocean. Moreover, the novel captures "the slow melancholy tragic rhythm of Mexico itself -- its sadness -- . . . its terrain." (SL, 58) Quanahuaec's twin volcanoes, Popocatepetl and Ixtaccihuatl, -- and its prison -- are constantly peeping over the shoulders of the protagonists of the story, and its ominous barranca is forever yawning into sight, keeping the theme of the Inferno well in the foreground of what is transpiring. Nevertheless, the ocean metaphor does play a very important role in this novel, and in a much more complex way than in his first novel, Ultramarine.

It is significant that the author planned to make Ultramarine, the first volume, and Under the Volcano, the centre volume of six or possibly seven books, under the general title of The Journey That Never Ends. This title does suggest travel-literature, and, in the way of tradition, conjures up stories of the sea. Accordingly it is not at all surprising

1Malcolm Lowry mentioned Popocatepetl in Ultramarine (p. 95), indicating an early interest in Mexico and its volcanoes.
that the ocean metaphor -- one of several obsessions of Lowry's thinking and writing -- is a motif very much in evidence in this story.

In Ultramarine the sea metaphor was used in the traditional way established by writers like Joseph Conrad in Lord Jim, Herman Melville in Redburn, Billy Budd and Moby Dick, Conrad Aiken in Blue Voyage, Nordahl Grieg in The Ship Sails On and, to quote Malcolm Lowry, Rudyard Kipling in Captains Courageous. The ship becomes a society, a world in itself, a microcosm of universal life and of the emotions that actuate humanity at large.

In the first chapter I have shown in some detail how Malcolm Lowry used the sea metaphor in Ultramarine, largely in the mode traditional with writers of sea stories. The ocean functions as the ground for the exploration of the nature and condition of man.

In his major work, Under the Volcano, Malcolm Lowry used the sea metaphor in multiple and complex ways. The romantic is juxtaposed to a sense of evil.

As one of several points of contact between the two novels under consideration, the first part of Chapter VI of Under the Volcano draws heavily from Ultramarine, Hugh appearing quite obviously as an older Dana Hilliot.

In Under the Volcano neither the fire under the volcano, nor the possibility of its disastrous eruption are ever far from the reader's consciousness. And again this suggests a difficulty as far as having "much
needed ozone blow in with the sea air." (SL, 75) However, both the Consul and Hugh have spent much of their lives at sea, and both have been involved in wars in which ships and navies have exercised significant roles. This gives the novelist a biographical point of departure, for the use of the sea metaphor, the motif of an Odyssey.

For Hugh and Yvonne the sea was a panacea offering regeneration and escape from the nightmare of the present; for the Consul it was much more in the nature of a nemesis, offering only death and disgrace to this man already sufficiently haunted by his own private hell, and suffering from a compulsive alienation from the world and from those who loved him. Of course, the development of these aspects of the problem is much more complex than this brief preview suggests.

Malcolm Lowry considered Chapter VI of Under the Volcano as the heart of the book. (SL, 65, 67) It begins with the slightly misquoted opening lines of Dante's Divine Comedy: "Nel mezzo del bloody camin di nostra vita me ritrovai in . . ." Although this suggests the Inferno theme, I will use this chapter as my starting point in discussing the significance of the sea metaphor as Malcolm Lowry used it to reveal Hugh's character and to add substance to the novel. Then I will consider its relevance in the case of the Consul and Yvonne in Chapter III. Finally I will continue to speculate on the correspondences and differences be-

2David Markson mentions this biographical point of departure for the sea analogy in "Myth in Under the Volcano" in Prairie Schooner, XXXVI, p. 342.
tween the two novels, Ultramarine and Under the Volcano, from the point of view of the sea metaphor, and its relevance to the author's chief preoccupations in the two novels -- the ocean, alcohol, death and the need for love.

A brief summary of the narrative surface action and its theme is relevant at this point. The overt action is slight but, on the metaphorical level, the action is gripping, very intense and of deep spiritual concern.

While Chapter 1 of Under the Volcano is concerned with the thoughts of Jacques Laruelle on the first anniversary of the deaths of Yvonne and Geoffrey Firmin, essentially, Under the Volcano tells the story of a single day, beginning at seven in the morning, and ending, with the death of Geoffrey Firmin, at seven o'clock on the evening of the same day, the Day of the Dead, November 2, 1938. Geoffrey, former British Consul, then living in the town of Quauhnahuac in Mexico had spent the night in hard, unbroken drinking. Yvonne Firmin, divorced from the Consul but still loved and loving, had come back, after a year's separation, in a brave attempt to rescue Geoffrey from inevitable disaster, and to salvage what she could of their disrupted lives. Yvonne's return was the answer to Geoffrey's prayers and yearnings. Nevertheless he was also plagued with the desire to be left at peace with his bottle, and was pursued with a sense of the utter futility of anything he might attempt. Eventually this overcame his passing desire to leave with Yvonne and start life anew in the dream cabin by the sea. He decided not to accept "offers of a sober and non-alcoholic
Paradise." (UtV, 344)

From the Bella Vista bar where Yvonne had found Geoffrey, the two wandered back to their old home, where the Consul's half-brother, Hugh, a young radical journalist was the Consul's guest. He was on his way to Spain to help the Loyalists, now losing the Civil War. All day long the intricate relationships of the three continued to develop while the Consul continued to drink. In the course of the morning Hugh and Yvonne took a walk, which ended in a ride through the sunlit Mexican countryside. They rejoined Geoffrey, who asked Hugh to help him shave. Hugh's presence, as later that of Laruelle, French movie producer and former lover of Yvonne, only added to the dilemma, and awakened the unreasoning resentment of Geoffrey, for he knew that Hugh also had had an affair with Yvonne. However, at this point, there was no doubt that Yvonne was wholly devoted to Geoffrey, and wholly occupied with the problem of reclaiming her husband.

Out of a blue haze of alcohol, Geoffrey suggested that they go to a bull-throwing at Tomalin. On the way there, the bus stopped near a dying Indian, assassinated by one of his own race. Yvonne turned away from the wounded man because she could not "stand the sight of blood." (UtV, 272) Geoffrey asked Hugh to observe a local law not to intervene but to await the arrival of the police. So they left again without anyone having done anything for the man, who literally and metaphorically had fallen among thieves. This is part of the important Samaritan theme that runs through the story as one phase of the love motif, which is the central theme of
At Tomalin the three attended the bull-throwing. They were bored, the performers were drunk, and, to the disgust of the Consul, at one point, Hugh himself entered the arena and rode the bull, — not to show off as Yvonne told Geoffrey: "No, he was simply submitting to the absurd necessity he felt for action, so wildly exacerbated by the dawdling inhuman day." (UtV, 306) This moment of action brought Yvonne and the Consul closer together than they had been all day, and almost led to the reconciliation and the escape from Mexico, which they both desired with such helpless and such futile yearning.

Later Geoffrey, who had been constantly getting separated from Yvonne and Hugh, abused and accused them both, and turned most bitterly on Yvonne. Then, his jealousy, which, at this point, was as ill-founded as Othello's, precipitated him into his final flight, which ended in his death and that of Yvonne, just as the devilish insinuations of Iago, whose words he paraphrased (UtV, 344), led Othello to murder Desdemona.

Yvonne and Hugh searched for Geoffrey, and got lost in the jungle, where Yvonne was trampled to death by a panic-stricken horse, which Geoffrey had drunkenly released during the storm that reverberated through the last pages of the book. The separate deaths of Yvonne and Geoffrey

Malcolm Lowry himself indicated this in his critical analysis of his novel, Under the Volcano. (SL, 74)
were in keeping with their split lives, but each thought of the other to
the end, and there was a haunting note of loneliness and love in these
thoughts of each other. Separated tragically in life, it was ironic that,
unwittingly, Geoffrey dragged Yvonne down with him in death. Almost his
last conscious thought was that "No se puede vivir sin amar" would some-
how explain everything. (UtV, 405) The Consul himself was killed -- mis-
takenly for Hugh -- by sadistic Mexican fascist police who accused him of
being "antichrista" and a Jew. (UtV, 400)

Around this sequence of events, Lowry created a web of interlocking
metaphors, and, as we shall see, one of the most crucial is the sea meta-
phor.

The novel opens on the terrace of the Casino de la Selva. Selva --
wood -- strikes the opening chord of the Inferno, the opening words of
which filtered through the mind of Hugh at the opening of Chapter VI. He,
too, was lost in a dark wood, as we learned early in the novel. Wood --
Selva -- El Bosque -- are variations of the major theme found throughout
the book, the theme of the Garden of Eden, of a Paradise Lost through the
loss of love. (SL, 74) Here the guilt theme, and the theme of man's guilt
takes on a new shade of meaning -- the Garden despoiled by your children.
There were "vague images of grief and tragedy," which at one time become
symbolized in the mind of Geoffrey as a "butterfly flying out to sea" and
becoming lost out there with Geoffrey's frustrations at the whole "queer
dumbshow of incommunicable tendernesses and loyalties and eternal hopes of
their marriage." (UtV, 114) It was as if at least at this moment even the Consul regarded the sea as that vast expanse of endless waters, where new hopes could blossom -- only to be lost as the butterfly would be lost -- as his own best memories of the sea would turn to bitter gall.

There was a keen sense of loss in Hugh's mind also as he mused on how quickly life sped by him, and he recognized his own immaturity at twenty-nine. (UtV, 179) As mentioned previously, Malcolm Lowry considered this chapter the heart of the book, and he made the significant remark that "a much needed ozone blows into the book here with the sea air." (SL, 75) Hugh mused on the problem of aging and recalled A.E. Housman, whose Shropshire Lad had much to say on human relations and death, a thought quite in keeping with Hugh's despondency at this time, and a significant aspect of the sea metaphor as used here. His Spanish project made the sea loom large as a possible death-trap.

Hugh's unexpected meeting with Yvonne on this Day of the Dead, 1938, had caused such a turmoil in his mind, guilt-ridden as it was about his inadequate way of meeting life, that he was willing to let his thoughts seethe on just to have surcease from thoughts of Yvonne, -- the memories she evoked and the dreams she enkindled. When they met that morning Hugh admitted having been in Spain, having run away from the fighting, and then having returned. He admitted he was going back now -- "going back to sea for a while," and he admitted that he saw the sea as the panacea for assuaging his guilt feelings. Between actual speech and stream of conscious-
ness, the reader learns some of the intricate details of Hugh's plan to run the blockade, using the S.S. Noemijolea. This ship, the beautiful Noemi, had as an ironic a name as did the Samaritan, Geoffrey's ship. It was named for a woman for love of whom Ruth could be "homesick amid the alien corn." Now the Beautiful Noemi was bringing TNT so that brother might kill brother in Spain. Even while Yvonne stared fascinated into the Malebolge, the horrible barranca, that met them at every turn during their morning ride, Hugh saw himself standing at the wheel of his ship, "Columbus in reverse;"

below him the foredeck of the Noemijolea lay over in the blue trough and spray slowly exploded through the lee scuppers into the eyes of the seaman chipping a winch: on the forecastle head the lookout echoed one bell, struck by Hugh a moment before, and the seaman gathered up his tools: Hugh's heart was lifting with the ship, he was aware that the officer on duty had changed from white to blue for winter but at the same time of exhilaration, the limitless purification of the sea . . . (UtV, 131)

But if one part of his dreaming made the five feet eleven man stretch to his "full mental height of six feet two," (UtV, 131) the repeated thought of "They are losing the Battle of the Ebro because of you," told too plainly that Hugh was not at all at peace with himself and that the "limitless purification of the sea" for which he yearned was really a dream to assuage his torments of conscience. At this point the evocation

1 John Keats, "Ode to the Nightingale."

5 In Dante, the Malebolge is the eighth circle, a name derived from the ten ditches in the circle, each ditch called a "bogia." Those punished in the Malebolge include panders and seducers, flatterers, simonists, soothsayers, grafters, hypocrites, thieves, sowers of discord, and those who practised frauds of similar nature.
of the sea metaphor brought little comfort.

It was ironic that Hugh's ship at this time was also a disguised ship, ostensibly on a peaceful mission, but also bound for a war, where brother was fighting brother. It was another link between him and his alter-ego, his half-brother, Geoffrey.

Conscience told him that he was a liar, a coward, a traitor, "And they are losing the Battle of the Ebro. Because of you." In a way he was as frustrated as Geoffrey, -- but he had not taken his half-brother's way out. In a romantic notion of expiating the guilt which haunted him, he planned to go to sea again, -- to "run away to sea again" as he had done before -- to rejoin the Loyalists of Spain. However, in his heart he knew it for an empty gesture. The sea was beginning to fail him as a universal panacea. His romantic notions were being pared down to the core of reality. His ambivalent self-appraisal and his all but childish rationalization did not ring sincere. "And yet is it nothing that I am beginning to atone, to atone for my past, so largely negative, selfish and dishonest? That I propose to sit on top of a shipload of dynamite bound for the hard-pressed Loyalist armies?" (UtV, 182) Here he visualized himself as a martyr going to sea, as he had once rationalized himself into a hero, when, as a young boy, the sea became alluring as a place offering a refuge and a cleansing from guilt. Even for Hugh personally the sea metaphor was taking on a disturbing complexity and creating ambivalence.

A little later, during the shaving scene, he asked himself:
Can it be that I am afraid; I know what the sea is like; can it be that I am returning to it with my dreams intact, nay, with dreams, that being without viciousness, are more child-like than before? I love the sea, the pure Norwegian sea. My disillusionment once more is a pose. (UtV, 211)

He decided to accept himself with all his contradictions: -- sentimentalist, muddler, realist, dreamer, coward, hypocrite, hero, "An Englishman, in short, unable to follow out his own metaphors," (UtV, 211) including the sea metaphor as he envisioned it here.

Despite his recognition of the futility of his sea adventure serving a truly useful purpose, for a moment the sea-gull seemed to him to be an emblem of liberation, a sort of phoenix-symbol, 6 which, it it led to death, would also spell rebirth.

No: I am much afraid there is little enough in your past which will come to your aid against the future. Not, even the sea-gull? said Hugh... The sea-gull, pure scavenger of the empyrean, hunter of the edible stars -- I rescued that day as a boy when it was caught in a fence on the cliffside and was beating itself to death, blinded by the snow, and though it attacked me, I drew it out unharmed, with one hand by its feet, and for one magnificent moment held it up to the sunlight, before it soared away on angelic wings over the freezing estuary. (UtV, 180-181)

In his long letter to Jonathan Cape analyzing Under the Volcano, Malcolm Lowry spoke of his projected The Voyage That Never Ends as being concerned with "the battering the human spirit takes (doubtless because it is over-reaching itself) in its ascent towards its true purpose." (SL, 6Anthony Kilgallin, "The Use of Literary Sources for Theme and Style in Under the Volcano" (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Toronto, 1965), discusses the phoenix symbolism in the sea-gull episode.

6
63) He said *Under the Volcano* itself was principally concerned with "the forces in man which cause him to be terrified of himself. It is also concerned with the guilt of man, with his remorse, with his ceaseless struggle toward the light under the weight of the past, and with his doom." (SL, 66) Of Hugh himself, Lowry said, he may "be a bit of a fool but he none the less typifies the sort of person who make or break our future... He is Everyman tightened a screw... And he is the youth of Everyman." (SL, 75) He went on to say that Hugh's desire to go to sea was really everyone's desire, conscious or unconscious, to be a part of the brotherhood of man. It was this very thing, this need to go to sea, to a world where all men were brothers, where guilt could be washed away, that made Hugh's frustrations with music, with the sea, his "desire to be good and decent, his very self-deceptions, triumphs, defeats and dishonesties" (SL, 75) part of that much needed ozone that only the seascape and the sea-escape could give. This also helps to clarify what Lowry himself wanted to include in his interpretation of the sea metaphor.

Herman Melville's *Pequod* had nine gams, seven meetings with significant communications made possible, not one of which brought any benefit to Ahab. On the other hand, Ishmael, who had found values in this "wolfish world" was saved by the captain of the *Rachel*, whose searchings were promp-
ted by a father's love. Lowry's Oedipus Tyrannus in Ultramarine carried Dana Hilliot within sight of the Oxenstjerna on various occasions, and "big cow" though that ship was, there was something of "-stjerna," -- of starlight about her for Hilliot each time he saw her. The communication was meaningful for him. This communication, or lack of it, of one world with another is a significant facet in any major sea story. In Under the Volcano, two ships have special significance for Hugh other than the S.S. Noemijolea: the S.S. Philoctetes and the Oedipus Tyrannus, "another Greek in trouble." Certainly while Hugh lived at the end of Under the Volcano, and apparently went to sea for his Quixotic journey to Spain, he also went as "another Greek in trouble." It is suggested that the sea metaphor had taken on a more significant meaning for him after the tragic deaths of Yvonne and Geoffrey. To some extent the sea remained a panacea for him, but there was also the suggestion that the sea was the mother, fostering maturity.

It is particularly in his treatment of Hugh's reminiscences of his "career in the navy" that Malcolm Lowry gave rein to his extravagant comic sense. This adds another dimension to his sea metaphor. After Dana Hilliot's experiences of psychological martyrdom and self-crucifixion on his

8 It is interesting to note that in his thesis, Anthony Kilgallin says: "Both Philoctetes and Oedipus Tyrannus are plays by Sophocles. In the former play the relationship of Philoctetes and the older Neoptolemus is psychologically parallel to that of Hugh and Geoffrey. Therefore it is noteworthy that the book's first epigraph is from yet another Sophoclean play: Antigone." Thesis, p. 63.
Oedipus Tyrannus, Hugh's experiences on the S.S.Phoictetes and his Oedipus Tyrannus read like comic diminution skilfully handled. Malcolm Lowry made this humorous interlude of sea air serve a twofold purpose. On the one hand, it spelled out various facets of Hugh's personality. On the other hand, Hugh's sea story and its metaphorical significance are as valuable here as was the hell-porter scene in Macbeth. In the course of the intense psychological drama of the Consul's last encounter with himself, Geoffrey himself evoked this "knocking at the Gate scene" when he pursued the bottle he had "carefully and lovingly" hidden in the shrubbery of his neglected garden. Quincey, who shared with the sunflower the unique role of being something like the eye of God watching Geoffrey's every move, also brought to the Consul's well-stocked mind the memory of DeQuincey — "that mere dope addict" — and his "Knocking at the Gate." (UtV, 164)

On this Day of the Dead, 1938, Hugh was much pre-occupied with his Spanish expedition, his most recent attempt to assuage his guilt feelings by going to sea. As a matter of fact he wondered if, having been born in India, he should not be considered "a piece of driftwood on the Indian Ocean." (UtV, 182) Certainly there was accuracy in the metaphor. Later, in the same chapter, during the desperate nonsense of the shaving scene — when Hugh "shaves the corpse" — Geoffrey recalled taking care of the seasick three-year-old on the old Cocanada, the "P and Q boat, coming back from India," (UtV, 204) paralleling his action with Hugh's return service now. Unfortunately Geoffrey's present "sea-sickness" was a sickness unto death.
In reviewing the events that had taken him to sea as a teenager, "Hugh reflected that he would have to admit that a guitar made a pretty important symbol in his life." (UtV, 184) He realized that there was an odd spuriousness about his reputation as a guitarist like so much else about him, but "at all events, he thought, his guitar had probably been the least fake thing about him." (UtV, 134) Fake or not, it had "certainly been behind most of the major decisions of his life." (UtV, 185) It was involved in his decision to become a journalist, in his attempt to be a song-writer, and, when he had muddied up his song-writing and his guitar-playing, he ran away to sea, and at the memory, "Hugh felt himself suffused by a slow, burning flush of shame." (UtV, 185) Ironically, on the Day of the Dead, November 2, 1938, when he and Yvonne were searching for the Consul in the jungle under the Volcano, he took time out to buy a guitar once again.

His reminiscences of that first sea-voyage revealed him as a liar, as did his story about his return from the Spanish Civil War. At one point he admitted that "perhaps it was true he had been reading too much Jack London even then." (UtV, 186) Hugh realized at this point that he looked on the sea as an escape, and that at the same time, he saw a romantic aura of pleasure and adventure attached to it. His appraisal of the S.S. Philoctetes was determined by the yardstick of how Wolf Larsen would react. "Imagine the Sea Wolf sitting down to afternoon tea at four o'clock with tabnabs!" (UtV, 190) Then suddenly realizing how very much he had
"made an ass of himself," (UtV, 187) by surreptitiously, and, as he thought, cleverly getting his name sprawled all over the papers, he suddenly protested that "far from aspiring to be a Conrad, as the papers suggested, he had not then read a word of him." (UtV, 192) And, unconscious liar that he was, he went right on quoting Conrad as his authority for what he expected to find on this journey on the S.S. Philoctetes.

Ironically when he stopped playing the guitar, he again went to sea, writing a series of articles, the first for the Globe on the British coasting trade. "Then, yet another trip -- coming to naught spiritually." (UtV, 210) He ended as a passenger -- but his articles were a success, even if in his own mind he scored himself a failure.

In this incident Malcolm Lowry used the sea metaphor largely in a traditional sense, but with special overtones, characteristic of Lowry's thinking. It is significant that Hugh instinctively saw the sea as a panacea for the solution of whatever problem faced him, but his view took on shades of increasing complexity. His first voyage was undertaken to escape from conditions that had become psychologically insufferable at home -- a journey, that would wipe Hugh's slate clean, take him to sea where all men were brothers, and where regeneration would give him a new start in a life of independence. In this particular instance, Hugh expected to come back to the glamorous existence of a much-acclaimed new song-writer.

However, even Hugh's first going to sea suffered an undercutting.
He mysteriously imagined himself running away to sea, but he got every assistance from the very people he thought he was running away from, and, to top it all, Geoffrey "wired back sportingly from Rabat to their father's sister: Nonsense, Consider Hugh's proposed trip best possible thing for him. Strongly urge you give him every freedom." (UtV, 188) So his trip was deprived neatly not only of its heroic aspect but of any possible flavor of rebellion as well. Somehow Hugh blamed Geoffrey for spoiling his heroic stance, and even on this Day of the Dead, 1938, Hugh felt that he had not yet forgiven his half-brother completely. (UtV, 108)

In one of his poems, Lowry captured Hugh's ambivalent mood:

Here is the ship, with decks all holly white,
Pure as the stone that scrubbed them to the bone,
Scuppers cleansed: and red lead shining where it
Would be, the blood all carefully washed from the deck,
The poop a pure arc on the Indian sky,
Cabined and perfect, with flag flying,
And bosun reading the Bible, while with t'o ther hand
He gropes for Ahab's solution ... 9

Some details about Hugh's experience on the S.S. Philoctetes would be relevant at this point. To the starry-eyed young adventurer, teetering on a rope of comic fancies ranging from visions of grandeur to nightmares of self-pity, the world of his ship was a deep disappointment. Unlike Dana Hilliot who saw nine circles of hell in the visible structure of his ship, Hugh was too naive even to know anything about the symbolism that the very name of his ship might stand for.

9 "No Kraken Shall Be Found Till Sought By Name," in Selected Poems, p. 11.
Hugh himself, not knowing whether he voyaged east or west, nor even what the lowliest hand had at least heard vaguely rumored, that Philoctetes was a figure in Greek mythology -- son of Poeas, friend of Heracles, and whose cross-bow proved almost as proud and unfortunate a possession as Hugh's guitar -- set sail for Cathay and the brothels of Palambang. Hugh writhed on the bed to think of all the humiliations his little publicity stunt had really brought down on his head, a humiliation in itself sufficient to send anyone into even more desperate retreat than the sea. (UtV, 188-189)

To Hugh's further chagrin, the world of brotherhood he had expected to find on board ship dissolved into the same kind of a world he had left behind. Anything that could happen in a remote village or an isolated sector of a town could happen in this world that was his ship -- the same type of profit-hunting, the same kind of ugly and petty meannesses. In this microcosm of the world, many of the men at first seemed kind, but it turned out that they had ulterior motives. "Many on the other hand seemed unbelievably spiteful and malignant, though in a petty way never before associated with the sea," (UtV, 189) -- and, romantic dreamer that Hugh was, never since had he associated that kind of spite and malignity with the proletariat, his most recent object of devoted enthusiasm. "They read his diary behind his back. They stole his money. They even stole his dungarees and made him 'buy them back again, on credit... They hid chipping hammers in his bunk and in his sea-bag." (UtV, 189) Then some very young seaman would grow mysteriously obsequious and suggest confidentially: "Do you realize, man, that your're working for us when we should be working for you?" Later Hugh found himself almost believing that the sailor had voiced what was actually the case. The sea had indeed become his University of Life,
but his learning in depth remained his big problem.

Part of Hugh's guilt complex longed for martyrdom to expiate that very guilt, and for that reason these petty persecutions and misunderstandings vaguely compensated for what was to him one of the most serious deficiencies in his new life. He found that life too "soft."

In one short paragraph, Malcolm Lowry epitomizes the world of Ultramarine which had been such a trial to young Dana Hilliot, and which was now the world of Hugh on the S.S. Philoctetes.

Not that it was not a nightmare. It was, but of a very special kind he was scarcely old enough to appreciate. Nor that his hands were not worked raw then hard as boards. Or that he did not nearly go crazy with heat and boredom working under winches in the tropics and putting red lead on the decks. Nor that it was not all rather worse than fagging at school . . . It was, he did, they were; he raised no mental objections. What he objected to were little, inconceivable things.¹⁰ (UtV, 189)

Then followed a particularly humorous passage in which the novelist detailed picayune odds and ends which Hugh recalled as the "little inconceivable things," he objected to on the ship: the name and the place of the forecastle, the ordinariness of the men on board the Philoctetes who "neither fought, nor whored, nor murdered," the regularity of each day on which tea was served at tea time, and excellent food at meal time.

Fundamentally, however, the real problem was not the one most in the forefront of his thoughts. The heart of the matter was that Hugh "felt trapped," the more completely for the realization that in no essential

¹⁰The omitted portion in this quotation has nothing to do with "It was, he did, they were." "They were" seems to refer to his hands being worked raw.
sense had he escaped from his past life. And, rationalizing as always, he somehow shifted the blame for his predicament on others — in this case, he alleged his unhappy frame of mind was due to the unbelievable British snobbery that he saw at every turn he took on the ship. "Still he had to pretend to himself that there was something romantic in what he had done, as was there not!" (UtV, 192) He might easily have consoled himself by looking at a map. However, maps suggested school, and therefore Hugh avoided them and so lost an opportunity that might have added interest and glamor and significance to his first sea-voyage. His mind, busied with petty criticisms, missed the Suez, its nearness to the Sphinxes, Ismailia and Mount Sinai. He did not know they were going through the Red Sea, and passing Hejaz, Asir, Yemen. "Because Perim belonged to India while so remote from it, that Island had always fascinated him. Yet they stood off the terrible place a whole forenoon without his grasping the fact..." (UtV, 192) He passed places that interested him theoretically — and got no more out of the experience than he did when he passed the same points going in the opposite direction as a child of three. "Maybe he did not know himself what he thought about; bells struck, the engine thrummed; videre; videre; and far above was perhaps another sea, where the soul ploughed its high invisible wake —" (UtV, 192) Certainly Sokotra only became a symbol for him much later, and that in Karachi homeward bound he might have passed within figurative hailing distance of his birthplace never occurred to him...¹¹

¹¹This ellipsis is Malcolm Lowry's. The quotation continues on the next page.
Hongkong, Shanghai; but the opportunities to get ashore were few and far between, the little money there was they could never touch, and after having lain at Yokohama a full month without one shore leave Hugh's cup of bitterness was full. Yet where permission was granted instead of roaring in bars the men merely sat on board sewing and telling the dirty jokes Hugh had heard at the age of eleven. (UtV, 192-193)

If Blake saw "the world in a grain of sand," certainly Hugh saw the world in his ship, and he saw it in much greater complexity than Dan Hilliott ever did. Malcolm Lowry, the mature artist, gave the sea metaphor both depth and many-levelled significance. Moreover something of importance did happen to Hugh, thanks to the isolation of the sea. There was a good library on board and Hugh rounded out his education through reading under the tutelage of the lamp-trimmer, a kindly quasi-communist. It was this man, too, who influenced him not to bypass Cambridge but to get what he "bloody well" could out of University life.

Suddenly Hugh became homesick for England. Thus a further value accrued to him from the sea: it became the school that made him appreciate what had been his. And, then, suddenly, heroism did stare him in the face. He did go through fire. The Oedipus Tyrannus all but collided with the Philoctetes, and metaphorically, bumped right into Hugh's life. Romantic action lay in his path! The Oedipus Tyrannus, "that other Greek in trouble," had been turned into something of a sea tramp. Just as everyone was expecting to go home after being away for "the incredible period of fourteen months," the ship was ordered back to New York. Needless to say, the crew, especially the firemen, were weary to death of this state of
affairs. The next morning, as the two ships rode side by side, men on the *Philocletes* were asked to volunteer to replace three seamen and four firemen of the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. The purpose of this was to give the men of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* an opportunity to return to England with the *Philocletes*, which had been only three months at sea, but which was to be homeward bound within the week on leaving Yokohama.

Echoing *Ultramarine* (38) Malcolm Lowry remarked: "Now at sea more days are more dollars, however few." With memories of *Moby Dick* obviously in mind, Lowry went on to say that at sea three months was a terribly long time while fourteen months was an eternity.

It was not likely that the *Oedipus Tyrannus* would face another six of vagrancy; then one never knew; it might be the idea gradually to transfer her more long-suffering hands to home-going vessels when she contacted them and keep her wandering two more years. (UtV, 195) -- a kind of *Pequod* on an Odyssey of its own. Subconsciously Hugh, like Ahab, was goaded at this point by a romantic mission his fellow sailors would not have understood, and would probably have scoffed at if he had tried to explain. On this occasion he saw the sea vividly in its role of redemption and compensation.

At the end of two days there were only two volunteers, a wireless operator and an ordinary seaman. Meantime, the rebel in Hugh recognized the rebel in the *Oedipus Tyrannus*. Unlike the unromantic *Philocletes*, she was everything in Hugh's eyes a ship should be:

First of all she was not in rig a football boat, a mass of low goalposts and trankums. Her masts and derricks were of the lofty coffee-pot variety. These former were black, of iron. Her funnel was tall, and needed paint. She was foul and rusty, red lead showed along her
side. She had a marked list to port, and who knows, one to starboard as well. The condition of her bridge suggested recent contact — could it be possible? — with a typhoon. If not, she possessed the air of one who would soon attract them. She was battered, ancient, and happy thought, perhaps even about to sink. And yet there was something youthful about her, like an illusion that will never die, but always remains hull-down on the horizon. (UtV, 195)

Subconsciously, Hugh had made his decision. Yet on a realistic level, he struggled against his romantic instinct. He weighed the pros and cons of volunteering, and, faced with the need to make his own decision, he longed to know what Geoffrey would do under the circumstances — Geoffrey who knew "these seas, these pastures of experience." (UtV, 196) Still some romantic inner self urged him to volunteer "so that another sea-weary man, homesick longer than he, might take his place. Hugh signed on board the Oedipus Tyrannus." (UtV, 196)

Suddenly a month later, he was back on the Philoctetes, a bit wiser, a bit more cynical, a little clearer about himself, and horribly ashamed that he had ever exploited the romance of the sea with a senseless publicity stunt. Miserable and sick with dysentery, he was man enough to recognize the real stature of the men who were tough enough to take the life of a sailor and its "years of crashing dullness, of exposure, to every kind of peril and disease." (UtV, 197)

At this point, life on board the Oedipus Tyrannus became Malcolm Lowry's vehicle to theorize about what it was that made seamen distrust and fear members of the monied classes, and why greenhorns from that social stratum -- greenhorns like Dana Hilliot and Hugh Firmin -- were made to undergo such trying initiation experiences.
On the *Oedipus Tyrannus* there was none of the snobbery or of the suspicion of class which Hugh had found so prevalent on the *Philoctetes*. Hugh had neither been abused nor toadied to. He had been treated like a comrade, and that was unction to his heart. Its very hardships made him take on stature, and his four weeks on the *Oedipus Tyrannus* had reconciled him to the *Philoctetes*. In his greater understanding of others he became "bitterly concerned that so long as he stayed sick someone else must do his job." (UtV, 198) Therefore he returned to his job before he was really well enough to do so. He continued to dream of England and of home, but now he was more concerned with finishing his work in style. During these last weeks he seldom played his guitar. "He seemed to be getting along splendidly. So splendidly that, before docking his shipmates insisted on packing his bag for him. As it turned out, with stale bread." (UtV, 198) If the sea was his University of life, it also brought him back to reality whenever he was inclined to dream himself into an Ivory Tower.

Not only does this long sea-story give us another view of the traditional panorama of sea-stories, of the ship that is a world within a world, but it gives us Hugh's special view of the sea as a place where all men are brothers, one angle of the Samaritan theme of brotherhood which plays such a vital part in the novel. As mentioned above, it has also a kind of hell-porter value in *Under the Volcano* and, just as in *Macbeth*, that scene is more of a hell-gate than the speaker realizes, so here the theme of brotherhood of man is given an almost parallel significance. The *Samaritan*, too,
became a hell-gate. Hugh's reminiscences were interrupted by the Consul's call for help. We are then introduced into Geoffrey's room with his picture of his old ship, the Samaritan, on board which the brotherhood of man became a hellish mockery, and the name of the ship an ironic deception.
It is significant that at this point Malcolm Lowry underscored a point which he also made elsewhere, namely, that "Hugh and Geoffrey were the same person." (SL, 75) Hugh thought of him as his "ghostly other self," who was always in Rabat or Timbuctoo, but never quite where he would be most useful to Hugh. This suggested another reason for the length of Hugh's reminiscences about the sea. Those memories were very revelatory of Hugh's personality and character. If Hugh and Geoffrey were but two sides of the same character, it also revealed the basic pattern with which Geoffrey started out. Yet somewhere along the way, their development took slightly different orbits. Hugh remained the romantic dream-spinner, viewing the sea as a panacea offering refuge and renewal. On the other hand, Geoffrey fled to the sea of alcohol and its dazzling disintegration. Both Hugh and Geoffrey were haunted by feelings of guilt. Hugh grasped at straws in an optimism that sprang eternal: the sea, the sea in a "cold, clean scourge" would give him another chance. So he ran away to sea as a teenager, and he was still running away to sea as a fairly adult man. In

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contrast, the Consul grasped his bottle, and, interestingly enough, at a
tense moment in the shaving episode, when the Consul needed a drink to
stop his palsied shaking, and control his incipient Delirium Tremens, sud-
denly "not only did the Consul now appear fresh and lively but to be dis­
possessed of any air of dissipation whatsoever." (UtV, 213)

In the course of that last fatal day, Geoffrey drank himself sober
a number of times. Hugh analyzed the situation, describing his half-
brother's condition as if his objective self "had at last withdrawn from
him altogether, like a ship secretly leaving harbor." (UtV, 213) Indeed
this was a perfect image of what the Consul was doing progressively on
this his last Day of the Dead. His life was a ship secretly leaving har­
bor. All through the shaving episode, Hugh's stream of consciousness pur­
sued his thoughts about the sea, and what his experiences on it had done
to him. Malcolm Lowry used this fact, too, to give a sort of unity to his
sea metaphor. Hugh reminisced that the harsh reality of his first voyage
somehow recalled the farm that Yvonne was talking about earlier in the
morning, -- the farm, somewhere on the sea shore where she and Geoffrey
could start their lives over again. And, suddenly, all three and their
relation to the sea were brought together into one focus when Hugh recog­
nized that his persistent sea-dreaming at this time was doubtless subcon­
sciously brought on by the photograph on the wall -- the photograph that
both Geoffrey and Hugh found themselves studying. It was the picture of
a small camouflaged freighter, everything about it suggesting the Sea­
Devil's ship of World War 1, including the fact that the picture came from
a German magazine which also carried the picture of the Emden.² (UtV, 214) This also recalled Geoffrey's earlier stream of consciousness evoking this episode of his life: "Liverpool whence sailed so often during the war under sealed orders those mysterious submarine catchers Q-boats, fake freighters turning into turreted men-of-war at a moment's notice, obsolete peril of submarines, the snouted voyagers of the sea's unconscious..." (UtV, 159)

Like so much that was fake about Hugh, everything about the Samaritan was a ruse. At this point Geoffrey was enthusiastic about the cleverness that went into making the Samaritan such a menace to the German submarine. (UtV, 214) However, just as the audience knew that Duncan was dead when the hell-porter opened his gates, so readers remember in this case that Laruelle's back-flashing in Chapter 1 of Under the Volcano had dwelled on the unsavory details of this incident. The story seemed to be that the German officers from the captured submarine had found a fiery death in the furnaces of the Samaritan. This was one of the secret griefs and torments of the Consul. He, too, was lost in a dark wood, and he, too, carried the woe of the world on his shoulders. (UtV, 165) Laruelle dwelled on the dichotomy surrounding the Consul's guilt feelings despite the fact that the courts declared him innocent. It was one of the motifs that threaded its way through the consciousness of Geoffrey on various occasions in the course

²Thomas Lowell, Count Luckner, The Sea-Devil (Garden City, N.Y., 1927), This is the story of a German War-raider of World War 1, the story of a camouflaged "windjammer" that did much damage to allied shipping during the latter part of that war.
of that last fateful day -- the guilt associated with the Samaritan, --
the Samaritan that more than any other ship should have proved the home of
brothers, but had degenerated in its disguise into something of an agoniz­
ing hell. It was part of the shattered paradise, the destroyed garden
theme which Malcolm Lowry himself indicated as the most important theme of
the book. (SL, 74) They had destroyed the Eden of their happiness, and
therefore they themselves would eventually be destroyed because without
love it was impossible to live: "No se puede vivir sin amar." This adds a
sobering note of reality to the sea metaphor. The sea may have been a re­
fuge for Hugh, and a haven for Yvonne. But the Consul knew it was also the
home of evil, and therein lay part of his problem.

In his reminiscences a year after Geoffrey's death, Jacques Laruelle
thought of the Consul as a "kind of lachrymose pseudo "Lord Jim" living in
a self-imposed exile, brooding," (UtV, 60) despite the court's decision in
his favor, "over his lost honor, his secret, and imagining that a stigma
would cling to him because of it throughout his life." (UtV, 60) Nowhere
is the matter cleared up as to the actual or merely imaginary guilt of the
Consul. On the one hand, Geoffrey showed no reluctance in discussing the
incident with Laruelle, nor did he show himself conscience-stricken during
the shaving scene. On the other hand, once or twice during the last months
of his life, Geoffrey had astonished Laruelle when, in a drunken state, he
not only proclaimed his guilt but admitted that "he'd always suffered hor‐
ribly on account of it." Hugh admitted that he himself was a liar, and,
unconsciously, demonstrated the truth of the self-accusation. Geoffrey, his
somewhat older counterpart, "had by this time lost almost all capacity for telling the truth," (UtV, 60) and so, Laruelle could not decide how to interpret the dichotomy. He thought of Geoffrey's life as a "quixotic oral fiction. Unlike "Jim" he had grown careless of his honor and the German officers were merely an excuse to buy another bottle of mescal." (UtV, 60)

The evocation of Lord Jim is significant from another point of view; there was a similar, almost passive acceptance of death in each of the two men, Jim and Geoffrey. However, Geoffrey's death also evoked another important feature as well; Geoffrey was a seeker, not merely because of his interest in Caballa, but it was evident that he was in search of his own soul, of Christ, of God. He was much occupied with the Samaritan theme. And in the end he was mistaken for his brother. He knew it. But he refused to identify himself. In the person of his brother he was accused of being "antichrista" and a Jew (UtV, 400) -- and, in the end, he became the wounded man by the roadside, and, for him, the face of a Samaritan shone out of the gloom, "a mask of compassion." It was the old fiddler, stooping over him and calling him "companero." Geoffrey saw himself as the thief -- the "pilferer of meaningless, muddled ideas out of which his rejection of life had grown." (UtV, 404) His disguises slipped away from him; the bell tolled the Dantean theme: "Dolente... Dolore!" But, someone had called him "companero" which was much better. It made him happy.3 This

3Max-Pol Fouchet refers to this theme of charity not heeded in "No se puede..." in Les Lettres Nouvelles, July-August, 1960, p. 25
indicates that Geoffrey's immediate confrontation with death gave the sea metaphor greater complexity. For Geoffrey, as for Jim, the sea became the teacher preparing him for a manly acceptance of death. But it also encompassed the spiritual vision of the true brotherhood of man. Thus it holds some hint of future vision -- something that Lowry refined and crystallized in "The Forest Path to the Spring."

At one time on that last day of his life, in the Cantina El Bosque, Geoffrey paraphrased the first Italian line of the Inferno as Hugh had done earlier, but Geoffrey emphasized the "bosca obscura," the dark wood motif. It was in this Cantina that the Consul recalled that "Yvonne had abandoned him for the seventh time that evening," (UtV, 257) failing him in his need for her love. It was here, too, that, feeling sympathy for a dog, the Consul paraphrased one of the last words of Christ on the Cross -- the word spoken to the Good Thief. This evoked Bunyan as quoted in the epigraph of the novel, and evoked other levels of meaning as well. However, it also made the final undercutting in the story seem appropriate. Amid the dying images flitting consolingly or painfully through his mind, Geoffrey realized that now he was indeed the one dying by the wayside where no good Samaritan would pass; then he thought he was in the jungle, racing by ambulance to the top of the Volcano he had wanted to climb. This was his Dantean dream of climbing out of the Inferno to the hilltop bathed in sunlight,\(^{1}\) where he

\(^{1}\) Referring to Geoffrey's father, lost in the Himalayas, Anthony Kilgallin said "In a deeper sense, God is calling Adam to the Dantean mountain of Purgatory, the top of which is the new Eden." Thesis, p. 65. I believe there is a parallel implication here.
would find salvation. His last thoughts were of Yvonne and that "No se puede vivir sin amor" would somehow explain everything. Suddenly there was the startled recognition that the world was collapsing, that he was falling through a bursting world, a world on fire, catapulted through the "inconceivable: pandemonium of a million tanks, through the blazing of ten million burning bodies, falling, into a forest, falling --

Suddenly he screamed. . ." (UtV, 406)

And ignominy and horror! "Somebody threw a dead dog after him down the ravine." (UtV, 406)

Malcolm Lowry used the Samaritan theme suggested by the ship called the Samaritan to link the sea experience of Geoffrey's life with the major theme of the story of the Paradise Lost because of the loss of love. Thus the sea metaphor is inextricably interwoven with the very heart of the story. Yvonne had written: "What is a lost soul? It is one that has turned from its true path and is groping in the darkness of remembered ways. . ." (UtV, 376) The Samaritan theme went with Geoffrey to his death, and in his journey to the Volcano, there was an analogy to Ahab's quest, both in its futility and in its final horror, -- another quest that had ended in a question mark.

Although the study of the sea metaphor in this thesis has centered the discussion on Hugh to such a great extent, Geoffrey is the principal concern of the novel itself, and the main character in this thesis as in the novel. While Hugh, a perfect foil to Geoffrey, often spoke in a kind
of "sound and fury, signifying nothing," by contrast, Geoffrey wins the full sympathy of the reader. Stuck away in his own particular lost paradise, his mind staggering through "horripilating hangovers thunderclapping about his skull, and accompanied by a protective screen of demons gnawing in his ears," (UtV, 154) his "agenbite of invit" gave him little peace as he slipped into a consuming sea of alcohol.

A very important progression is suggested here, from the callow Dana Hilliot in Ultramarine to the more sophisticated Hugh and the tragic figure of Geoffrey in Under the Volcano: Dana Hilliot, "so regular a booze artist" that his fellow sailors said "it was not natural at his age;" (65) Hugh "with ideas which," Geoffrey hoped, "may prove less calamitous to [him] than did our father's to him;" and Geoffrey who "continua[d] in a bottle." (UtV, 105) Hugh was an older Dana Hilliot, but Geoffrey was the counterpart of Hugh, the man who had taken the other road at some crucial point in the meeting of the ways. On the other hand, Dana, Hugh and Geoffrey met in their aspirations as writers. Actually in this field, Dana's "cacoethes scribendi" (96) met Hugh in his song-writing, and the Consul in the book he was writing or planning to write.

Since a passage to India had often been on his agenda, and since the disastrous expedition of his Samaritan, rightly or wrongly, haunted him, it was appropriate that Geoffrey's thoughts were often expressed in terms

of a sea metaphor. When Yvonne came back to him after that harrowing
year of separation, he felt a suble change in her, "Much as the demoted
skipper's lost command seen through the barroom window lying out in the
harbor is changed." (UtV, 99) With this vision of the ship's world, Geof-
frey became engrossed with the sea. The sea became all waters! In his
mind "the swimming pool ticked on," and the message it conveyed was "Might
a soul bathe there and be cleansed and slake its drought?" (UtV, 100) The
The same message did a repeat hammering at his brain somewhat later when
he imagined he saw a fountain as the source of cleansing and revivifying
waters. What with this persistent image of water, and Geoffrey's need
for it for cleansing his conscience and for slaking his thirst, "his
thoughts crashed like cannon balls through his brain," (UtV, 102) and
evoked Melville. Geoffrey watched while Popocatepetl "like a gigantic sur-
facing whale shouldered out of the clouds again." (UtV, 103) This sight
brought a queer foreboding to Geoffrey's heart, and it is significant that
as the day progressed the need for climbing Popocatepetl became an obses-
sion. Like Ahab, pursuing Moby Dick, the Consul finally headed for his
white whale, his promise of an elusive paradise, and his Moby Dick destroyed
him in the process. Even the "frightful extremity" in which he found him-
self on this last day of his life finally struck the Consul "as something
almost beautiful," -- as something of oceanic proportions. "It was a hang-
over like a dark ocean swell finally rolled up against a foundering steamer,
by countless gales to windward that have long since blown themselves out,"
(UtV, 323)
It is significant that Malcolm Lowry used Yvonne to bring a ray of hope into the story at various points but particularly during Chapter XI. Of course, this makes the final denouement of Chapter XII all the more climactic. Towards the end of their early morning ride, just before Hugh and Yvonne stopped at another ruined paradise, the ruined palace of Maximilian and Carlotta, Yvonne finally got it across to Hugh that she was serious about getting Geoffrey away from Mexico and going to Canada where the healing powers of the sea would save Geoffrey. Then it was the poet in Hugh that saw the possibilities of having "a shack slap spang on the sea," the forest on one side, the pier going down to the water on the other. As he dreamed for the two, somehow this vision of a redeeming sea, shared with Yvonne, made him feel a sense of change, "the keen elemental pleasure one experiences on board a ship which, leaving the choppy waters of the estuary, gives way to the pitch and swing of the open sea." (UtV, 149) He felt that somehow his betrayal of his brother had been redeemed. Judas had not forgotten: "nay, Judas had been, somehow, redeemed." (UtV, 150) The sea metaphor assumed an iridescent gleam of hope.

It is a revealing fact that Malcolm Lowry managed to make it seem plausible that Geoffrey, Hugh and Yvonne were somehow counterparts of each other. Some features of the Hugh-Geoffrey picture have been sketched in the course of this thesis. Hugh and his half-brother were aspects of Every-

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6 Lowry speaks of this in his letter to Jonathan Cape, January 2, 1946, when he discusses character drawing in Under the Volcano. (SL, 60)
man, just as Yvonne was the Eternal Woman. Yvonne was also a counterpart, particularly of Hugh, as she herself recognized in the course of Chapter IX, when her flashbacks sketched in the story of her life, and pictured her as growing up "from a childhood of swimming and surfboarding on the Hawaiian breakers." (UtV, 292) Hugh's fantastic clothing on that Day of the Dead, 1938, seemed like a picture of Yvonne as the Hollywood "Boomp Girl," dressed "in fringed leather shirts and riding breeches and high-heeled boots and wearing a ten-gallon hat" so that in Laruelle's amazed and bewildered recognition of her that dreadful morning, she had wondered if "there had not been just an instant's faltering as he saw Hugh and Yvonne transposed for one another in some grotesque fashion." (UtV, 295)

During the bull-throwing at Tomalin, Yvonne continued to dream again and again of that cabin by the sea where salvation beckoned for her and the man she loved. But it would not be a shack -- "it was a home!"

There was a wide porch. . . and a pier going right down into the water. They would build this pier themselves when the tide was out, sinking the posts they'd build it until one day they could dive from the end into the sea. The sea was blue and cold and they would swim every day, and every day climb back up a ladder onto their pier, and run straight along it to their house. (UtV, 299-300)

In this way her vision of hope and of a new life with Geoffrey took shape. The sight of the sea spelled salvation to her. She dreamed of Geoffrey working happily on his book, which she would type for him.

They would continue to live, in simplicity and love, in their home between the forest and the sea. And at half-tide they would look down from their pier into water and see, in the shallow lucid water, turquoise and vermilion and purple starfish, and small brown velvet crabs sidling among barnacled stones brocaded like heart-shaped pin-
cushions. While at week-ends, cut on the inlet, every little while, ferryboats would pass, ferrying song upstream. (UtV, 302)

Almost echoing her thoughts of the ocean as a vista of hope for them, the Consul did a clever misquote of Keats' "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" with Cortes gazing on the Pacific with a wild surmise "Silent on a peak in Quauhnahuac." (UtV, 304)

Despite the ominous awareness on Yvonne's part that a man seemed to have been shadowing the Consul all day, the estranged couple came closer to each other at Tomalin than they had been at any other time that day, and the little house across the water seemed within reach of both of them. "She saw it from the beach rising above her, and she saw it, tiny, in the distance, a haven and a beacon against the trees, from the sea." (UtV, 309)

Even as the beacon of hope and the haven of safety beckoned encouragingly, part of her mind recognized the very fragile tenuousness of the metaphor that had captured her imagination. Their very conversation was "A little boat... moored precariously; she could hear it banging against the rocks; later she would drag it up further where it was safe." (UtV, 309-310)

There was a haunting moment of deep significance — almost an epiphany underscoring the ultimate futility of Yvonne's dream — not only in her mental picture of "a woman having hysterics, jerking like a puppet and banging her fists upon the ground," but also in the ageless drama of life enacted before them, as Geoffrey, Hugh and Yvonne watched an old lame Indian "carrying on his back... another poor Indian, yet older and more decrepit than himself." (UtV, 310)
To hammer home the relevance of this moment of truth, Chapter X begins with the word "Mescal" as does Chapter XI somewhat later. The ominous Tolling of the Bell on the Day of the Dead had begun. "Oozing alcohol from every pore," (UtV, 314) Geoffrey quickly reached the stage, where, in his misery and deep unhappiness, he turned on Hugh and Yvonne. Lines from Hamlet, Othello and Doctor Faustus teased his tortured mind, and became as real as the hallucinations of his Delirium Tremens. "Was this the face that launched five hundred ships?" (UtV, 317) preluded his ugly, unjustified attack, first on Hugh and Yvonne, and then scathingly on Yvonne. Inevitably, he ended by rejecting what he called "their offers of a non-alcoholic paradise," (UtV, 344) hurled his defiance at them with "I love hell," (UtV, 345) and rushed out into the night, on towards the volcanoes which "seemed to draw nearer." (UtV, 345)

As Hugh and Yvonne followed Geoffrey out into the darkening world, hope eternal still went with them. At one point there was a parallel to Hugh's seagull episode. Appropriately Yvonne's bird was "a long-winged dark furious shape, a wild world of fierce despairs and dreams, and memories of floating high above Popocatepetl." (UtV, 350) To her, as his seagull had been to Hugh, there was something of the phoenix-symbol in this caged creature in which she saw herself. Like Hugh, she freed the bird. It fluttered out, and alighted at her feet, hesitated, took flight... and then abruptly flew off through the dusk, not to the nearest tree as might have been expected, but up -- she knew she was right, it knew it was free -- up soaring, with a sudden cleaving of pinions into the dark blue pure sky above, in which at that moment appeared one star. (UtV, 350)
It became a beacon of hope. Much as Dana Hilliot moved from the world of his ship to other worlds, and on to the universe, so from her star, Yvonne’s thoughts moved on to other stars and to the universe where sea and stars melted into one meaningful whole for her.

Far away to the southeast the low leaning horn of the moon, their pale companion of the morning, was setting finally, and she watched it. -- the dead child of the earth -- with a strange hungry supplication -- the Sea of Fecundity, diamond-shaped, and the Sea of Nectar, pentagonal in form and Frascatorous with its north wall broken down. (UtV, 353)

This is reminiscent of Hugh and Yvonne’s visit to Maximilian’s palace earlier in the day, when Hugh could recall only that one of the places on the moon was called “Marsh of Corruption,” but Yvonne relished the beauty of the "Sea of Darkness... Sea of Tranquility." (UtV, 151)

As in desperate yearning, she reached out for rebirth, loving thoughts once more enveloped her visions of life with the Consul, "and once more too" she became conscious of seeing "a woman ceaselessly beating her fists on the ground." (UtV, 356) In spirit she saw "their house by the sea" on fire.

She stretched out her hand for the other mescal, Hugh’s mescal and the fire went out, was overwhelmed by a sudden wave through her whole being of desperate love and tenderness for the Consul.


Yvonne’s faith in the all-healing power of the sea was fighting a losing battle. However the obsession with the sea continued into the final hours
of the day. As Hugh and Yvonne continued to search for the Consul, who, they suspected, had fled to the Farolito, the Lighthouse, "the treetops made a sound like rushing water over their heads." The sound of the surf continued in their hearts as they held on to their dream of making the sea the haven that would save Geoffrey.

That morning when Yvonne had stopped at the Bella Vista, instinctively knowing that the Consul was there, her consciousness was so "lashed by wind and air and voyage, she still seemed to be travelling, still sailing into Acapulco harbor yesterday evening through a hurricane of immense and gorgeous butterflies swooping seaward to greet the Pennsylvania." (UtV, 71) Now, when she had been hurt to death by the riderless horse set loose when the Consul was shot, when her mind was completely occupied with her yearning over Geoffrey, the stars above her somehow changed to myriads of butterflies "zigzagging overhead and endlessly vanishing astern over the sea, the sea rough and pure, the long dawn rollers advancing, rising, and crashing down to glide in colorless ellipses over the sand," (UtV, 365)—and then she heard someone calling her; she knew they were in a dark wood, and she knew she must escape to "their little home by the sea." But the house was burning -- she and Geoffrey were involved in a terrible conflagration, and then Yvonne imagined herself being swept up through the stars "through eddies of stars scattering aloft with ever widening circlings like rings on water" right up to the Pleiades. Later it became clear that it was at that moment that the Consul had hurtled down into the
abyss under the Volcano. Goethe's Faust and his Gretchen had found another parallel.  

7Lowry says his notion came from Faust, where Marguerite is "hauling up to heaven on pulleys, while the devil hauls Faust down to hell." (SL, 84) Eventually Goethe's Faust finds redemption through the power of love, something which Lowry envisions in "The Forest Path to the Spring."
CONCLUSION

Ultramarine is the work of a young man, and shows traces of the power which is so evident in Under the Volcano. In it we have the traditional picture of the ship as a world within a world where the initiation experience sears a young man into maturity, where a young sailor suffering from alienation and experiencing the loneliness of the human spirit, learns something of the real meaning of the ship as that "other world." It is the presence of other men in the close quarters of shipboard life that circumscribes the individuality and the freedom of will of the men in this world within a world. Conflict is inevitable, but, with the resolution comes growth of spirit, and despite his sobering experiences on the sea, Dana can continue to view the ocean as a place of romance.

In Under the Volcano Mexico gives the protagonists an isolation from society that parallels Dana Hilliot's isolation on shipboard. Despite the setting, Malcolm Lowry used the sea metaphor on many levels, and achieved a many-faceted world, a true microcosm within the macrocosm and within the cosmos. Geoffrey, Hugh and Yvonne frequently thought and spoke in terms of sea experience because the sea metaphor in its many shades of meaning had such cogent significance for each of them. Hugh was an older Dana Hilliot, who lived on the memories of wrecked romantic enterprises, but who still expected to unravel the complexities of life by turning to the sea as
the regenerating and purifying element in his life. He was another Robert Jordan of For Whom the Bell Tolls, for whom the world was one, and for whom what concerned one segment concerned all. In his personal involvement the sea became a compelling force to which he turned in every major crisis. Yvonne turned to the sea, essentially as a haven of rest and a beacon of hope for herself and for the man she loved. Geoffrey's attitude to the sea revealed a peculiar ambivalence: on the one hand, he treated the sea as the home of brave men, of brothers, an opinion natural to the man who had learned to love and understand the sea in all its moods; on the other hand, he thought of the sea as the place where evil can happen. His real or imagined guilt connected with his experience of evil on the Samaritan at times occasioned him intense suffering and invested the sea with stark realism.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the ocean, alcohol, death and the need for love are major themes of Malcolm Lowry's thinking and writing. In this thesis I have examined the first theme, that of the sea metaphor, and have indicated some of its relationships with the other major themes, particularly the all-important theme of love. The vast solitude of waters became a factor that shaped and symbolized human destiny in a complex world where death, alcohol and the loss of love also played significant roles. The struggle against the elements in the isolation of the ocean and against the human condition in that world showed man's inner worth, not only to others but to himself. It was a test that ultimately brought
self-knowledge as perhaps the greatest gift from the sea.

In Ultramarine we have the sea in all its mystery and allure, that "other world" where problems are solved in a satisfactory synthesis. This same vision is evoked in Under the Volcano, with the added realism that evil can enter this world, and with a strong underscoring that, essentially the world of the ship is but a microcosm of the great world in general. The sea can be a haven of happiness and fulfillment but it is also the place of grim reality. Many-levelled features add to the symphonic whole.

Considering all these factors, the tracing of the sea metaphor in both Ultramarine and Under the Volcano serves to show an expanding panorama, including the whole human condition, and emphasizes the growth in skill and artistry on the part of the novelist, Malcolm Lowry. Lowry moved to the more complex Under the Volcano, where the romantic is juxtaposed to a sense of evil but where, amid growing darkness, the novelist also placed a vision of hope. Yvonne carried her dream of salvation and a new life with the Consul into death, but the novelist himself carried the vision of happiness and fulfillment into the intriguing human story, "The Forest Path to the Spring." This, too, evokes Goethe's Faust, where Faust ultimately finds elevation to higher spheres through the power of love. There is a similar intense, tragic and emotional atmosphere in Faust, Part 1, and the final hours of Under the Volcano. What is said of Faust is true of both Faust and Under the Volcano:

In the flood of life, in the torrent of deeds,
I toss up and down,
I am blown to and fro!
Cradle and grave,  
An eternal sea;  
A changing web,  
A glowing life.

Earlier in this thesis I have indicated a progression from Dana Hilliot to Hugh to Geoffrey. That parallel could be expanded on several levels. Here I would like to mention the fact that Dana Hilliot analyzes "Cacoethes scribendi" in reference to what could be taken as Lowry's first novel, Ultramarine:

... But the desire to write is a disease like any other disease; and what one writes, if one is to be any good, must be rooted firmly in some sort of autochthony... What I could achieve would be that usual self-conscious first novel, to be reviewed in the mortuary of The Times Literary Supplement... of which the principal character would be no more and no less, whether in liquor or in love, than the abominable author himself. (96)

In Under the Volcano Hugh was Dana's counterpart in song-writing, and he went on to be a journalist. It was Geoffrey who matched Dana's staggering number of drinks, which somehow did not drown his wit nor cancel his obvious suffering. It was also Geoffrey who became the writer or at least the man who was allegedly writing a book, the completion of which was to be part of the dream of rehabilitation in that home "slap spang on the sea" that the Consul and Yvonne shared occasionally and about which Yvonne dreamed constantly on that last unhappy day. Significantly the parallel carried over into Lowry's own life. Lowry, like Geoffrey, was a writer -- but one who did get his shack on the sea -- and a man whose Under the Volcano was rated, as Geoffrey imagined his book would be, the "most extraordinary thing of its kind," and one whose further work was "interrupted by his untimely death," (UtV, 113) as was Geoffrey's.
Malcolm Lowry hoped that when the reader had read the book carefully, he would once again go to the beginning where his "eye might alight once more upon Sophocles' Wonders are many and none is more wonderful than man." (SL, 88) His hopes for his book seem to be coming true. Not only have several Master's theses been done on Under the Volcano, but two doctoral dissertations on Lowry's work are presently in progress. This suggests that scholars find his work meaningful and significant.

Indeed, "Wonders are many and none is more wonderful than man,"—few men more wonderful than the creative artist. In the early novel, Ultramarine, Lowry sketched the sea as a taskmaster offering hardship and isolation, but also growth and romance. In Under the Volcano, the author achieves a much more difficult feat. He creates a web of interlocking metaphors dealing with the ocean, with death, with alcohol, with love and the meaning of life. In this thesis I tried to show that the sea metaphor was one of the crucial themes. Against the unlikely background of Mexico, Lowry offers a plausible and fascinating panorama of the sea not merely as a place of romance, but as a realm where man comes to grips with reality— a reality that can be shockingly grim. Ultramarine and Under the Volcano belong together for a complete appreciation of Lowry's creative handling of the sea metaphor.

1Anthony Kilgallin is working on "Lowry's Art of Allusion -- A Study in Sources," Toronto. Sister Mary Rosalinda is working on "Lowry's Style," Ottawa.


The Bible.


Canadian Literature, VIII (Spring, 1961). [Special Lowry Edition.]


___________. "On Board the Matsue Maru," Canadian Poetry Magazine (September, 1947), 334.


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