**Nigel H. Foxcroft**

**Malcolm Lowry’s Modernism:
*Under the Volcano*’s Fusion of Cultures and Civilizations**

**Invited lecture to be delivered to Moscow City University on Monday 20th November 2023**

**ABSTRACT:**

Though born in New Brighton, Wirral in England, the late modernist writer, Malcolm Lowry (1909-57) followed in the footsteps of D. H. Lawrence, Graham Greene, and Evelyn Waugh to Mexico, setting his masterpiece, *Under the Volcano* (1947) on the Day of the Dead (November 1939) in Cuernavaca. With its prehispanic origins, this festival is rooted in Zapotec and Aztec traditions fused with Spanish Catholic influences, owing to the incursions of the conquistador, Hernán Cortés in 1519. A former “Garden of Eden”, Mexico is presented as a reflection of the universal “drunkenness” of humanity, torn apart by the turmoil of the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War. In his failed pursuit of the Cabbala and of Mexican souls and shamans, *Under the Volcano*’s “hero”, the ex-British Consul realizes that the only hope of saving modern-day civilization from itself is by making the ultimate sacrifice in his odyssey to achieve harmony between the Underworld and its terrestrial and celestial counterparts....

Nigel H. Foxcroft, 17th November, 2023