

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Psychological Vulnerability of Hero in Robert Lowell's *Life Studies*

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This thesis entitled "Psychological Vulnerability of Hero in Robert Lowell's *Life Studies*" submitted to the Central Department of English Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Chakra Bahadur Malla, has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* portrays the psychological vulnerability of poet himself as a hero. His main object in it is to catch himself in the process of becoming himself. During his age, everywhere there was decadence, degeneration, corruption, social injustice, loss of morale and faith. American society fails to come out from such things. The societal failure results into the personal failure. As a hero he wants to come out from such situation and restoring peace, harmony and its old values in society. But no great change could be brought in society by himself. The society remains as it is. The concept of social betterment remains within his wishing and longing only. It is so because he could not understand the need of matching human psyche with its surrounding atmosphere. Instead of restoring civilized society by great heroic effort, he by means of confessional mannerism brings his private sufferings, psychological problems and failures into humiliating light. He further plunges himself into sexual guilt, alcoholism, drug addiction, frustration and depression to get relief from heavy burden and anxieties. These vulnerable experiences are often reflected in most of his poems where the speaking subject is a vulnerable heroic figure.

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CHAPTER – I

Introduction

Robert Lowell as poet

The inability of hero to understand the relation between human psyche and its surrounding atmosphere makes him psychologically vulnerable. Here poet himself is a hero in terms of his role in his poems and prose. He was a member of a distinguished and intellectual family. Some of his family members were poet and critic. In his student life he left Harvard and went to Kenyon College in order to study poetry, criticism and classics. Before leaving Harvard he had been studying literature there. In 1937 his discovery of William Carlos Williams's work unsettled his conviction about the necessity for exotic meters, intricate style and elaborated diction of J.C. Ransom. He was influenced by Tate and William Baudelaire. He also read the poetry of John Berryman, Ginsberg, Elizabeth Bishop and so on. In 1947-48, he was consultant in poetry at the library of congress.

By achieving a lot valuable experiences from the different poet scholars he had contributed a lot in the field of American literature. A deep interest aroused in him for poetry. He worked very hard in the field of poetry to be noted as an American poet. His poetry was entangled with the social, political, and ideological movements in the US during post World War II decades. He is stylistic innovator and a voice for conscience. He later strongly influenced American poetry and culture. His poetry ranged from the complex verbal structures and just for redemption that mark his early poetry through the personal memory and secularized despair of his landmark volume. Some political and historical issues can be seen in his poem. He brought new mode in American poetry in

terms of context and style.

In the poetry his major works are: "Land of unlikeness" (1944), "Lord Weary's Castle" (1959) that won the Pulitzer prize, "For the union dead", "*Life Studies*" (1959) which won the National book award, "Near the Ocean", "Note Book", "Dolphin" and so many other minor poems. Lowell changed American poetry by expanding its capacity to address both axis of personal life and public sphere. Due to his powerful texts and his political intervention he helped poetry to be at the center of American and international culture.

We see there were some internal tensions in his family life. He himself was a heavy drinker. In 1940 his conversion to Roman Catholicism was seen clearly. During the years of late 40s and early 50s decades, he was suffering from a number of mental breakdowns. After his mother's death in 1954 he was hospitalized at mental hospital.

Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* depicts the psychological vulnerability of poet himself as a hero. The poet's main object in this volume is to catch himself in the process of becoming himself. He wants to come out from the decadence and degeneration of American society but remains failure. He neither can perform any great effort to challenge such things nor does he give any valuable suggestions to solve the problems. He wishes only to come out. Only wishing and longing does not work. He rather pushes himself into the well of sexual guilt, humiliations, failures, frustrations and depression, alcoholism and drug addictions to get relief from old anxieties. And finally he goes near to meet manic depression. So he justifies that he is psychologically vulnerable one.

Different critics have expressed different views about the works of Lowell.

Yenser says:

Lowell is the leading poet of this generation, a generation that was born in the decade of World War I, achieved maturity during World War Second and is none moving into its grizzled sixties. He is the leading poet of his generation largely because of his concern of the moral condition of America both past and present and psychological earthquakes of his personal life seems to reflect similar states and stresses in the public life and the history of nation. (37)

Here Lowell may be taken as a poet obsessed with particular theme and feeling. The particular theme is failure in deed and responsibility and feeling is of guilt. Such failure and guilt leads some one towards humiliation, frustration and taking oneself as weaker one. The speaker of his poem feels so due to atmosphere of his surrounding.

Yenser further writes:

. . . the black soldier is the man fallen victim to the disordered and disordering world. His alienation is witness not only by his confinement following World War II, and not only by his color, but also and most poignantly by the drubbing given to him by two other black American inmates. The insanity in the nature of his environment as well as the state of his mind is indicated by his claim that he receives attention only from those with whom he was supposed to be at war. In isolation, madness, and tendency to violence he foreshows the poet speaker in later poems in *Life Studies*, even love is not pure. Love has hardened in sex alone. (41)

Eberhart saw the poetic result of his young friend's psychological and spiritual tensions:

Early had began the wrestling with the soul . . . the harsh struggle with the inner spirit against the outer world, the confrontation of intolerable opposites, the irresolvable realization which are the crude and terrific fires that lead almost to madness in the mind, dancing with visions of poetic reality, the reality luring all sacrifice, all devotion, and the only power worth having. (48)

Eberhart talked about physical, psychological and spiritual tensions. He says that Lowell's life at home was tortured with the difficulties that he would later describe in prose and verse in *Life Studies*.

Abraham says that confessional poetry designates a type of narrative and lyric verse given impetus by Lowell's *Life Studies* which deals with the facts and intimate mental and physical experiences of the poet's own life.

Another critic, Rosenthal concerning *Life Studies* comments:

Some of the poems of Lowell in *Life Studies* projects the crisis of self which led to the mental derangement and hospitalisation. His private humiliations, sufferings and psychological problems can be seen easily in *Life Studies*. There are sexual guilt, alcoholism and repeated confinement in the mental hospital. (26)

Rosenthal clarifies that apologists for confessional poetry sometimes fail to distinguish between the idea expressed by Alvarez that the psychological disorder of the poet is that of society internalized and the idea that the poet risks psychological disruption because of his heroic attempt to encounter repressed with in himself there by

realizing impulses that society has taught us to hold as irrational, destructive or immoral. Confessional poetry provides the most obvious instances of the working of psychological pressure, perhaps we should have taken up confessional sequences.

Rosenthal further elaborates: "it is hard not to think of *Life Studies* as a series of personal confidences, rather shameful, that one is humor bound not to reveal" and concludes that "it is also a beautifully articulated poetic sequence" (60).

Similarly, Steven Gould Axelrod agrees that this was poetry of existence in 'history' grappling with his anxiety of the entrepreneurial spirit in American life:

Lowell's sensibility is marked by despair, dread, pessimism, disillusion and a sense of human limitation reflect. Lowell is the black swan of American letters, truly cosmopolitan writer who does not feel impelled to reject his American roots. Lowell combined both European and American tradition, translating European poem and creating new poems on American themes. (258)

Throughout the *Life Studies* Lowell remains aware of the tension between the flux of temporal experience and the stasis of literary form. He constantly calls attention to the dangers of turning 'life' experiences into poetic 'studies'. Lowell's critics, arguing the book's coherence by naming its political, religious and familial theme, have imagined a unity that is static, as if *Life Studies* were suicidal. By the time we reach the end of *Life Studies* we come to see its opening poem as an account of cultural collapse that gives Lowell's personal breakdown and historical context, but we have also come to see that in "Beyond the Alps" the poet has projected his own disorders outward than carefully dissociated himself from them. Inner life has been changed to landscape. In this way

Lowell exempts himself for at least his poetic imaginations from the process of disintegration that his poem proposes as fate.

The two sections of *Life Studies* contain a double narrative: a series of past losses through death are accepted and resolved through present acts of poetic and psychological ordering. The two movements close in the brilliant "Skunk Hour" at the end of which Lowell enters an ambiguous present, at once decaying and vital. Earlier poems in the sequencely dying generations, stale traditions, 'fore bound solitudes and marital 'woe' but the Skunks affirm a basic instinct for survival that persists. Section first of *Life Studies* records of series of psychic jolt that and breakdown in elegiac poems about grand-parents, father and mother, the poets life is radically condensed, epitomized in experiences of loss and separation, which the poet as in my last affirmed struggle to manage. The 'Home After Three Month Away' describes mental collapse and recovery, they define a crisis in which the alternative of madness and sanity both ultimately in issue is helplessness dread.

Concerning *Life Studies*, a prominent critic Unger comments:

Lowell reined his tendency toward generalization and accusation and developed single mindedly his talent for complex plots, conversational ease, and vivid characters. While his verse shows a marked decreases in religious favour it correspondingly increases in sensuous objection, interest in sexual passion; preoccupation with individual yearning and frustrations, and emphasis on particularized character. (542)

He assumed that every thing about himself, such as the manic-bouts leading to frequent hospitalization, expressed modern America and its crisis. He moved towards the language

of urbanity, where the strain exists in the sensibility and consists in the attempt to conceal the strain which periodically leaps through the conversation surface

Jonathan Robert comments on the poetry of Robert Lowell:

It is immediately apparent that Robert Lowell's poetry does not make for easy reading the images are so congested, the allusions so complex that the uninitiated reader is likely to be confused. But it is also apparent that this is poetry of deep passion and fierce tension: the impact is violent, the intensity of a traditional protestant turned catholic. Beneath the surface formalism of the verse, there is a deep protest against what New England has become against the society. His is a tortured out cry against the corruption of the time, a grim to find a faith in a world torn between frivolity and failure. (693)

Another famous critic, Jarell comments:

Mr. Lowell has a completely unscientific but thoroughly historical mind. It is literacy and tradition as well, he can use the past so efficiently because he thinks so much as it did. He seems to be condemned both to read history and to repeat it. His present contains the past especially Rome, the late middle ages, and couple of centuries of New England as operative skeleton just under the skin. (192).

Jarell in the above lines tries to clarify that Lowell does not present themes or generalizations but a world, the differences and similarities between it and ours bring

home to us themes, generalization and the poet himself.

Jarrell further comments:

Poems understand the world as a sort of conflict of opposites. One force is the Inertia of the complacent self, the satisfied persistence in evil that is damnation . . . The opposing force is the realm of freedom, of the grace that has replaced the law, of the perfect liberator the poems normally move into liberation and in some cases even death is seen as liberation.

(1481)

Lowell continually dwells upon the scenes of death and burial. For him, man is clearly evil and a descendant of Cain and Abel. He is the eternally forgotten victim, hustled away from right and consciousness.

Rosenthal comments on Robert Lowell :

Lowell is still the wonderful poet of "The quakes graveyard in Nantucket" the poet of power and passion whose striving aesthetic of anguish belies the frizzled, stale, and small condition he attributes to himself. He may be wrong in believing that what has happened to New England's elite is necessarily an embodiment of the state of American culture the whole maggot character of which he feels he carries about in his won person. But he is not wrong in looking at the culture through the wisdom of psychological breakdown. (154)

On the poetic feature of Lowell, Ms. Perloff argues:

Lowell's confessionalism is one in fact rooted in a "realistic" feeling for poetry that is more fully attached to conditions of setting and circumstances, themselves cantering as the poet's person as may be, than it is to lyrical or other subjective experience in its own right. Lowell's repeated concern is with scenic implication contemporary to and closely felt by himself. (415)

Ellman Puts forward his ideas as follows:

Life Studies, by and large records his ambivalence towards the New England where he resettled after the war, on Boston's "Hardly passionate Marlborough Street". Revising his stance toward New England and family history, he no longer denounces the city of his fathers as if he were a privileged outsider. In complicated psychological portraits of his childhood, his relation to his parents and lives, he assumes a portion of the weakness and vulnerability for himself. (2524)

Although more controlled and severe than Beat writers, he was stimulated by Ginsberg's self revelations to write more openly than he had about his parents and grandparents about the mental breakdowns he suffered in the 1950s, and about the difficulties of Marriage.

George and Barbara see Lowell in such way. The poet transformed his youthful embarrassment at family tradition into a literary resource: "he developed a psychological interest in family situations which infuses a number of his best poems, and he allowed his tragic sense and his comic spirit to rummage in his own family attics" (665).

The critic Robert Burstein stated that "Mr. Lowell feels the part working in his very bones. And it is his subtle achievement not only to have evoked this past, but also to have superimposed the present on it" (1482)

The very proposed title justifies the outline of the thesis itself. The inability of hero to understand the relation between human psyche and its surrounding atmosphere does not let him live healthily and successfully even if he tries his best. Finally situation makes him psychologically vulnerable.

CHAPTER - II

Theoretical Framework of Psychoanalysis

Introduction

Sigmund is such a giant person who studied different factors and developed a very new and important area of knowledge of human experiences. He asserts that the study of human psychology can provide a strong support for understanding personal and social relationships. Human beings are with in the cultural and social web. It is very difficult to understand human psyche in general. But through the means of psychoanalysis we become able to understand the inner human sentiments and feelings. The structure of human mind is very complex due to the different relations of human beings with the human beings themselves and with the whole world.

Freud puts forward the ideas of conscious, subconscious and unconscious aspects of human psyche. Human actions are motivated by psychological forces over which we have very limited control. His repression theory states that much of what lies in the unconscious mind has been put there by consciousness. Infantile sexual desires and other censored materials are repressed to an unconscious state. Such repressed desires emerge only in disguised form in dreams, language, tongue slip, creative activities and neurotic behaviors. According to Freud, all human beings have repressed wishes. They also have dreams in which repressed feeling and neurosis emerge disguised. He talks about the conscious and unconscious mental activities. In 'the Anatomy of the mental personality; he makes the distinction between conscious and unconscious mental activity:

The oldest a best meaning of the word "Conscious" is the,

descriptive one, we call unconscious any mental process the

existence of which we are obligated to assume because
 should modify the statement by saying that we call a process
 "unconscious" then he when we have to assume that it was active
 at a certain time we knew nothing about it. (Guerin 128)

Freud says that like an iceberg, human mind is so structured that its great weight and density lie beneath the surface. The unconscious plays role in creativity. He focuses more on the ways in which author's creative worth appeals to reader's repressed wishes and fancies. Most conscious processes are conscious for only a short period quite soon they become latent. Though they can easily become conscious again. Man suffers from agitation, frustration and inner mental conflicts, which is a great challenge of modern conflicts, which is a great challenge of modern civilization. Psychological problems of human beings are immensely increasing in the modern world.

When we enter on the topic psychoanalysis we can feel newness in the field of English literature. Concerning it, Frank. R. Kegan elaborates:

Psychoanalysis is a technique of psychological studies of the psychosexual development of human personality, the unconscious mental activities and means of treatment for neurotic patient. Psychology is the science which studies and attempts to explain observable behavior and its relationship to the unseen mental processes that go on inside the organism and to external events in the environment. (13)

Freud's *Interpretation of Dream (1900)* became a great landmark in the history of psychoanalytical method. The reputed scholar R.S. Woodworth notes:

... Sexual difficulties and conflicts in the causation of any neurosis

Hostility motives and ambivalence (love and hate for the same person)

also came to light but

Were regarded as arising from frustration of sex desires. (65)

He says that neurosis is caused of because of the sexual difficulties and conflicts. All human behaviors are motivated ultimately by what we would call sexuality. Freud's major premise is that most of the individual's mental processes are unconscious. He designates the prime psychic force as libido or sexual energy. He further says that because of the powerful social taboos attached to certain sexual impulses, many of our desires and memories are repressed.

There is a notion that a work of literature is co-related with its author's distinctive mental and emotional traits table describes: "Poetry is the indirect expression . . . of some overpowering emotion, or ruling taste, feeling, the direct indulgence which is somehow repressed" (54). Such impression is imposed by the author's feelings and sentiments. The conflict between the need for expression and the compulsion to repress self revelation is resolved by the poet's ability to give healing relief to secret mental emotion.

Similarly Eagleton says:

Literature and the other arts consist of the imagined, fantasized, fulfilment of wishes that are either denied by reality or are prohibited by the social standards of morality and propriety. Very one of us has to experience such repression. This repression is pleasure principle. (152)

But he says that if we repress our desire too much that might cause neurosis. It is an element of creation as well as a cause of our unhappiness. So to keep our civilization on, to keep ourselves happy, we have to express those desires through socially acceptable means and only then our society moves on. According to Eagleton those unfulfilled and suppressed desires, feelings and emotions are transferred into place of our mind, which we call unconscious. The repressed desires come out through slips of tongue, mistakes, jokes, dream sand literary works. To support the Freudian ideas I have also included Jungian and Lacanian concepts as supporting ideas

Structure of Mind in terms of Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud as the psychoanalyst divides mind into three levels: "conscious, preconscious (Sub conscious) and unconscious" (69). The conscious part provides immediate awareness, perceptions, thoughts or feelings of the mental events and memories. "It is also a sequence of events normal and abnormal" (7). Consciousness constitutes the relationship to the environment. Preconscious is the storehouse of memories and wishes, which can be recalled into consciousness. The unconscious mind is the reservoir of buried thoughts, emotions, feelings, wishes and impulses that can't be brought into consciousness by any ordinary means."It is characterized by a tremendous and morphs vitality. It is obscure inaccessible part of our personality" (Guerin 129).

On the other sides Carl Gustev Jung talks about conscious, unconscious and collective unconscious in a different way. His unconscious is a forgotten and repressed experiences sometimes formed into complexes. "The collective unconscious containing the cumulative experiences of previous generations, including animal heritage. It forms the basis of personality and is the most powerful influence" (R.J. Corsoni 86). It is a

storehouse of universal evolutionary and latent memory traces inherited from mans ancestral past. It is also the source of very powerful images, which are common to many societies, many times and many places.

Jung says that libido is more than sexual matters. Freud's talk on neurotic is negative for Jung rather than healthy aspects of the psyche.

"Jung's unconscious is different form Freud's because Jung regarded libido as life energy" (64). Like Freud's he used self analysis through dream interpretation to resolve his emotional distress. It is time of creativity and growth. He appreciated the myths and symbols to human kind throughout the centuries. He says that personality can change later in life and is shaped by future goals and aspirations.

Freud says: "id is the source of all desires and aggression. It is lawless, asocial and amoral. Its function is to gratify our instincts. The ego is rational governing agent of the psyche. It regulates the instinctual drives of the id so that they may be released in non-destructive behaviour patterns" (130). Id stands for the untamed passion whereas the ego is for reason and circumspection. Ego is reality principle. Ego creates a balance between the world with and the world without. Super ego is regulating agent, primary function is to protect society.

The work of literature is the result of writer's repressed and suppressed ideas. It is id that is overpowered. It has both positive and negative aspect. It positively makes the violence in the society, makes awareness and negatively it goes to deteriorate but there is also the conscious and super ego the morality. Every literary output is the result of the unconscious. Frauds says that every people have all those repressed and suppressed ides

and guilt, they outlet in different ways like dream, literature, slip of tongue etc. so literature is one of the ways of that device. Sometimes even the superego can't block the id. Superego is the moral censoring agency, the repository of conscious and pride. Acting either directly or through the ego, the superego serves to repress the drives of the id, to block off and thrust back into the unconscious those impulses toward pleasure that society regards as unacceptable, such as overt aggression sexual passions, and the oedipal instinct. Superego is dominated by the morality principle. It is the superego which prohibits id and ego to operate wish fulfillment and sometimes it is with both id and ego.

Concept of Dream Interpretation

Freud did the systematic study and analysis of dreams which helps the reader to achieve the pleasures from the literature. According to him, "the core feature of dreams and of insanity lies in their eccentric trains of thought and their weakness of judgment" (Freud 123). Freud in his book, the *Interpretation of Dream*, explored the dynamic role of the unconscious mind and he described dreams as the royal road to the unconscious. To Freud, dream represents disguised desires, wish fulfilling expressions of unconscious and unacceptable thoughts. Dream is also a mental process. It is meaningful, purposeful and symbolic.

In his early stage of dream analysis, he believed that dream is simply wish fulfillment of these wishes of id and superego which could not be gratified in real life and they are fulfilled in sleeping stage when the ego is in relax. All dreams represent rejected and repressed wishes. Freud says:

Most of the artificial dreams constructed by imaginative writers are designed for a symbolic interpretation of this sort: they reproduce the

writer's thoughts under a disguise which is regarded as harmonizing . . . with the recognized characteristics of dreams. (129)

Those dreams are attempted wish fulfillment dreams which create violent inner conflict for the gratification of unconscious Id which is a threat to the ego. Those unacceptable thoughts and wishes appear in symbolic form in dreams. Those symbols have universal meanings.

But Haynm clarifies Jung's idea: ". . . the enigmatic aspect of dream is viewed not as the product of censoring by the ego, but rather as a function of our lack of conversance with the primal language combined with the essential mystery of the never completely knowable" (28). He says that dreams from the level of personal unconscious use to know people and places as vehicle of experiences are conveyed through archetypal images which reach into all those world mythologies which have symbolized the evolution of human psyche. Within the individual psyche this archetypal imagery represents configuration of psychic energy.

Jung called archetypes to the components of the collective unconscious. There are numerous archetypes including energy, the hero, the earth mother, death, birth and rebirth, god and demon. Some archetypes are identified as separate systems with the personality, the person or public personality, the anima or bisexual characteristics, the shadow or animal like part of human nature. Jung in *Man and His Symbols*, has explained his use of dream analysis and theories of universal symbolic representation of man's deeper nature.

Freudian Concept about Literature

Literature is means to be saved man form disorder and madness. Most of sinful and guilty aspects of human beings are expressed through literature. So literature is a kind of means for men to control their irrational and shrugged ideas. Every literature is out put of Id-unconscious. The day to day affair which we in reality, can't face, so we do that through literature. This has great contribution in the world of human life of civilization to run it properly. Robert Lowell's works are also the result of that.

We can see only Freudian psychology is the systematic account of the human mind .He stands almost alone among the large number of psychologists in the field of psychoanalysis. If the irrational in human nature is not controlled by the rational there would be all sorts of abnormalities and aberrations. Man would be little better than savage and brutes.

"Dreams and illusions of neurotic are in the nature of escape from this harsh reality. Art is an escape, a dream of the artist translated into a work of art. But art and neurotic illusion are vastly different in nature" (Freud 125). The influences of Freud on Modern literature is so varied that no small selection from his work can begin to represent that influence. In the title, 'Creative Writers and Day Dreaming', Freud does suggest something of the range of his interest in the relationship between the author and his work. He draws an analogy between the artists' creation and dreams or fantasy. He is interested in literary works as expressions of the authors. He sees a piece of creative writing as a continuation for the play of childhood. To Freud the hero of the romance is merely another manifestation.

Jungian Perspective of Psychoanalysis

Jung extends psychology beyond the limits of the individual ego-bound psyche and beyond the idea of the unconscious as strictly a trash barrel for what was once conscious but now avoided, Jung refers to the unconscious as the personal unconscious, and refers to the archetypal based unconscious as the collective unconscious, rooted in the collective nature of the fundamental forms of human experience.

Jung defined the psyche as the totality of all mental processes. First he excluded the unconscious from the concept of psyche confining the concept strictly to that which is conscious. But he later suggested that the unconscious, and possibly even the physical world, could also include as an aspect of the human psyche.

Jung talks about self and psyche. The self for Jung is a concept of the whole personality, the whole psyche both conscious and unconscious. The self is felt empirically not as subject but as object and this by reason of its unconscious component, which can only come to consciousness indirectly by the way of projection. Because of its unconscious components the self is so far removed from the conscious mind that can be expressed in dreams, fantasy and creative productions by human figures. Jung as a scientist works with the phenomenological data in regard to the self as structure. This theoretical influences about those entities and processes posited to underly the experience of psychic imagery such as archetype, ego, self, symbol and the functions of transcendence and individuation (Self realization), refer to structural and dynamic elements of the psyche. It is explained or given in the 5th volume of the *Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*. Brookes elaborates Jung's definition of 'will' as follows:

I regard the will as the amount of psychic energy at the disposal of consciousness volition would be an energetic process that is related by conscious motivation. A psychic process that is conditioned by unconscious motivation. I would not include under the concept of will.

The will is a psychological phenomenon that owes its existence to culture and moral education, but is largely lacking in the primitive mentality. (8)

Psychoanalysis from its very beginning relied on the idea that the ego can observe not only external events "but also intra psychic events within its own realm" (39)

Kuhn also comments on Jung's ideas as: "Psychology is beginning to embrace phenomenological principles. The phenomenological frame of reference, on the other hand is felt by many to provide a necessary paradigm shift for the fuller exploration of human experience and of the human psyche which is essence of the concept of self as structure" (3).

From all the above concepts we can assume that ego is related to the self as part to whole. And the psyche strives toward movements from unconscious to consciousness. Will or volition is a functional of the psychic energy available to the conscious state. Many literary critics put forward their ideas about the Jungian psychology on their own ways.

Carl Gustav Jung's concept is the recognition of conscious and unconscious mind. The conscious portion of mind Jung calls persona which is the function of the ego. He says that the child's infantile action of sucking breast can't be related with pre-sexual function because it is essential for self preservation.

Jung's primary contribution to myth criticism is his theory of racial memory and archetypes. He expanded Freud's theories of the personal unconscious asserting that beneath this is a primeval, collective unconscious shared in the psychic inheritance of all members of the human family. Such ideas are explained by him in *The Structure and*

Dynamic of Psyche as follows: "If it were possible to personify the unconscious, we might think of it as collective human being . . . and it would possess living sense of the rhythm of growth, flowering, and decay" (Guerin 178).

Jung saw the close relation between psychology and mythology. He was indebted to Hindu religious philosophy as well as other eastern traditions, for providing ideas and images of a uniting principle for the psyche (8). In this context, and in the light of Jung's western heritage, his concept of psyche (SELF) moves in the direction of a needed integration of eastern and western psychologies. He says that psychology tends to be experimental and diagnostic, it is closely related to biological, its affinities are with religion, anthropology, and cultural history. Mythology seems to be wider than psychology in its scope. Psychoanalysis attempts to disclose about the individual personality, the study of myths reveal about the mind and the characters of people. Myths are the symbolic projection of people's values, hopes, fears, sentiments and aspirations. Myth expresses factual reality; it is the dramatic representation of the deepest instinctual life, and demonstration of the inner meanings of the universe and of human life.

In Importance of Dreams, Jung says that the language we speak is full of symbols. There are different kinds of symbols. Among them religious symbol gives the meaning to life. Religious myth can be interpreted as a sort of mental therapy for the sufferings and anxieties of man kind. Through the means of dream we can investigate the man's

symbolizing faculty. Dream symbols have much greater variety than the physical symptoms of neurosis. Dream contains messages other than sexual allegory. Dreams are also untrue Jung says: "The dream is the short summary of my life, more specifically of the development of my mind" (Jung 43).

Jung says that myths are derived from external factors but are the projections of innate psychic phenomena. The archetypes as inherited forms and social phenomena passed down from one generation to the next through various sacred rites rather than through the structure of the psyche. All the mythological process of nature such as :

Summer and winter . . .

They are symbolic expression of inner unconscious drama of the

Psyche which becomes . . . mirrored

In the events of nature. (Guerin 179)

There is the interrelation between myth and archetypes. Archetypes become manifest and articulate to the conscious mind through myths. He indicated that archetypes reveal themselves in dreams of individuals, we might say dreams are "personalized myths" and myths are "depersonalized dreams". There is an intimate relationship between dreams, myths and art in that all of them serve as media through which archetypes become accessible to consciousness. Jung has his own idea of the mythical hero. He is best known with the world wide heroic myth, the heroic myths or myths of hero have universal pattern, even though they might have been developed or constructed by groups or singles without any direct cultural contact with each other. Time and again, the pattern of hero's life follows like this: hero's tale describing a heroic

miracles, humble birth, early proof of super human strength, rapid rise to prominence from power, triumphant struggle with the forces of evil, fallibility to the sin of pride and his fall through betrayal or heroic sacrifice that ends in this death. These God like figures are in fact symbolic representation of psyche.

Jung is dissatisfied with the Lackean psychology: "mind is not born as a Tabula Rasa. Like the body, it has its pre-established individual definiteness, namely forms of behaviours. They become manifest in the ever recurring patterns of psychic functioning" (178).

Principal Archetypes and its Psychological Function

The term "Archetype" occurs as early as Philo Judaeus (*De opificio mundi*) with reference to the *Imago Dei* (God image) in man. Especially different "Motifs" and "Primordial images" are the archetypes. For Freud, the unconscious is of an exclusively personal nature, although he was aware of its archaic and mythological thought forms. But Jung says that a more or less superficial layer of the unconscious is undoubtedly personal. He calls it the personal unconscious. But this personal unconscious rests upon a deeper layer, which does not derive from personal experience and is not a personal acquisition but is inborn. This deeper layer which he calls the collective unconscious. He has chosen the term "Collective" because this part of the unconscious is not individual but universal, in contrast to the personal psyche, it has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psychic substrate of a super personal nature which is present in every one of us. The contents of the personal unconscious are chiefly the feeling toned complexes, as they are called.

They constitute the personal and private side of psychic life. The contents of the collective unconscious are also known as archetypes. The archetype is essentially an unconscious content that is altered by becoming conscious which it happens to appear. There are different well-known expressions of the archetypes. They are myth, fairytales and the form of esoteric teaching. Many separate investigations make clear that the psychopathology of the neuroses and of many psychoses can't dispense with the hypothesis of a dark side of the psyche, i.e., the unconscious. It is the same with the psychology of dreams, which is really the terra inter-media between normal and pathological psychology. In the dream, as in the products of psychoses, there are numberless interconnections to which one can find parallels only in mythological associations of ideas. Or perhaps in certain poetic creations which are often characterized by a borrowing, not always conscious, from myths. The production of mythological components which can be called 'motifs' and 'primordial' 'images' have their own role in the field of literature. He can see the child archetype which is an excellent example. We can make formula that the archetypes appear in myths and fairytales just as they do in dreams and in the products of psychotic fantasy. In the individual, the archetypes appear as involuntary manifestations of unconscious processes whose existence and meanings can only be inferred, where as the myth deals with traditional forms of incalculable age. They hark back to prehistoric world whose spiritual preconceptions and general conditions we can still observe today among existing traditions. Myths on this level are as a rule tribal history handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. Primitive mentality differs from the civilized chiefly in that the conscious mind is far less developed in scope and intensity. Functions such as thinking, willing etc are not yet

differentiated, they are preconscious, and in the case of thinking this shows itself in the circumstance that the primitive does not think consciously, but that thoughts appear.

The primitive mentality does not invent myths, it experiences them. Myths have the vital meaning. Not merely do they represent, they are the psychic life of the primitive tribe, which immediately falls to pieces when it loses its mythological heritage, like a man who has lost his soul. A tribe's mythology is its living religion, whose loss is always and everywhere, even among the civilized, a moral catastrophe. But religion has a vital link with psychic processes independent of and beyond consciousness in the dark hinterland of the psyche.

Modern psychology treats the products of unconscious fantasy-activity as self portraits of what is going on in the unconscious, or as statements of the unconscious psyche about itself. The methodological principle in accordance with which psychology treats the products of the unconscious is this: contents of an archetypal character are manifestations of the processes in the collective unconscious.

Archetypes were and are still living psychic forces that demand to be taken seriously, and they have a strange way of making sure of their effect. Always they are the bringers of protection and salvation, and their violation has as its consequence the "perils of the soul" known to us from the psychology of primitives. More over, they are the unailing causes of neurotic and even psychotic disorders, behaving exactly like neglected or maltreated physical organs or organic functional systems. And archetypal content expresses itself in metaphors.

"In reality we can never legitimately cut loose from our archetypal foundations unless we are prepared to pay the price of a neurosis any more we can rid ourselves of

our body and its organs without committing suicide. It is necessary to point out that archetypes are not determined as regards their content, but only as regards their form, and them only to a very limited degree" (Jung 647).

The archetype in itself is empty and purely formal, nothing but a *facultas praeformandi*, a possibility of representation which is given a priori. The representations themselves are not inherited only the forms, and in that respect they correspond in every way to the instincts can no more be proved than the existence of the archetypes. So long as they do not manifest themselves concretely.

The principal archetypes are mainly shadow, the anima and the animus. Among them in mythology, the primordial images as hero, death, festival, birth, marriage rivers and resurrection are those which reveal our common psychological roots. About such matter Campbell says:

.. . . there is but one archetypal mythic
 whose life has been replicated in many lands by many people . . .
 a germinal idea that will have the potentiality of bringing forth that new
 thing. The founders of all religions have gone on quests like that. (36)

The study of myths reveals about the mind and character of people. And just as dreams reflect the unconscious desires and anxieties of the individuals, so myths are the symbolic projections of peoples hope, values, fears, humiliations, frustrations and aspirations. The common themes or archetypes in our sacred stories and images transcended the variations or cultural manifestations.

"Myths take their specific shapes from the cultural environments in which they

It is universal" (160). The heroic myths teach us about how to overcome our faults, how to be brave one as its name, how to be true to our self, and to cherish life. Myths play vital role to build the psychology of the hero. Myth is such a tool through which one can shape his mind for the future. The archetype of the hero who sets out in search of the unknown place is the story of each of us. Our daily lives are represented in that journey. Through the hero's separation, initiation and transformation the individual experiences, learns and transforms. Yet we may often lose thought of modern society of what is really important in the daily struggle we see and face.

Campbell depicts that the hero has thousand faces. He can be gentle, warrior, redeemer, saint, tyrant, child, lover, deceptive one in its appearance and so on. He has so many duties, for the sake of nation and for the sake of himself. He has to cross several trials and specific stages. Several ups and downs should be faced by him. people think that hero solves the riddle, though he dies but he becomes famous and put his name in the page of nations' history as immortal.

Heroic Concept and Role of Myth

The word 'hero' itself is very weighty in the concept of the people. People expect so many things from the hero. In the basic meaning hero is one who born to serve. There is no constant thought about the hero because time, situation, circumstances and culture are such facts which determine the place of the hero. The concept of hero is not determined by hero himself. The dynamic quality of time and situation creates the place or concept of hero. Different types of hero have emerged in this world in the long period of English history. Some of them appeared as kind one and the others appeared as cruel or tyrant one. Tyrants of one period may appear as hero in the other period. Hardship, danger,

obstacle are the minor things for hero. The hero thinks that facing war and danger and serving the people is their ideal. Hero is sometimes like odyssey, cunning and wise and he is the man of action rather than of thought. He accepts challenges and courts disaster.

Time and situation brings change in the attitudes of the people about the nature of hero. In Elizabethan period the people thought that there should be extraordinary man in his rank and reputation to be hero. National dignity and prestige is their heart. They should become ready to sacrifice their life in the name of nation. The heroes of that time thought that to strengthen the integrity of nation is one of the means by which they could become able to collect the people's sympathy towards them.

In the romantic period, there came a change in that earlier notion of heroes and heroes were taken as the men of single living. They come from the hut of mind, leading rustic life and playing with nature. They were radical in their ideas; they did not have traits and loopholes. The course of time brought another change in the people's mentality about the nature of hero in Victorian period. The Victorian hero hardly cared what people said. He transcended the boundary of rank, level and status. He could do what he liked to strengthen the tie of love. There was not such a boundary for them not to be crossed if they wanted.

In modern era the great change comes in the heroic nature. There is the vast difference between the nature of modern and ancient heroes but we can get some similarities too. The modern heroes are realistic and they keep themselves engaged in the discussion of day to day realities and try to give certain vistas and ways to the society. Time creates such a situation that even simple and simple man can be a hero. In the general concept hero lives a glorious life and he takes his life and death both for the sake

of nation and people. He has some will to power. So he can be a superman. He can sacrifice himself for power, wealth and pleasure. He thinks that there should be the combination of both negative and positive qualities.

Along with time and situation, myth is another element which plays vital role for creating a concept about the hero. Myth has its own history from the very beginning of the human society. There was the myth creation. Mythological heroes were seen very brave and powerful. They might have linkage with the gods. They had such a power through which they could challenge the gods also.

We want to see the hero from the mythological point of view; one should be powerful and superhuman to be hero. Mythological heroes take great journey. There is a link between archetypes and mythology: the archetype of the hero is a classic myth reflecting on important aspects of society. About this Jung says that the hero archetype is always seen in the struggle. There is the notion that an understanding of archetype and myth is a way towards the evolution of the individual and of humanity seems to be well established on the works of authorities.

In modern trend, the hero seems more to represent the mankind rather than the supernatural elements. He is judged not in terms of his link with god or other supernatural elements but in terms of his creative skill and participation in many fields of individual and social life. He is the central character with many important qualities and traits.

Most of the heroes have their quests. To fulfill their quest, they leave the world and go everywhere. They may face the problem and return with what they have achieved. Each individual can experience, learn and transform with help of early heroes' initiation, separation and transformation. The hero can quench his quest by his heroic deed. At the

same time creates such a situation for him that he becomes 'the old wise man', which is another archetype and in turn becomes the mentor for other heroes. This is the form of the heroes in our myth teaching us being are mentor and father figure. As time passes, the attitudes of the people also change. The dynamic nature of the human sentiment and feeling follows the course of time. The global concept has both positive and negative capabilities. In some cases it brings integration and in other it brings disintegration. The modern civilization has largely lost touch with the value and purpose of myth. The archetype of the hero who sets out in search of the unknown is really the story of each of us. Our daily lives are represented in that journey.

The hero which is represented in Lowell's *Life Studies* can't face hardship, danger and obstacle. There is not glorious life of hero shown boldly being ready to sacrifice for the sake of nation and its people. Instead of being creative and participant in every crisis, he takes the help of alcohol, nostalgia, drug and sex to get relief from over ridden anxieties

Lacanian view of Psychoanalysis

Lacan as a psychoanalyst puts forward the theory of psychoanalysis as the revival of Freudian theory in the light of language. He explains that language and its structure exists in human mind even at the infant stage, but the form is chaotic. To make it clear, Lacan divides human development into three stages: the mirror stage in which the infant makes an imaginary identification with its reflection in a mirror. The infant's experience before this stage is a jumble which he puns and calls "L' Hommlet" little man, omelet, shapeless mass of an egg oval stage. At the mirror stages infant looks in the mirror and is delighted by several qualities of its own image simultaneously. In imagery a pre-oedipal

stage in which the child has not yet differentiated him or herself from the mother and has accordingly not yet learned language" (Guerin 204).

The oedipal crisis marks the entrance of the child into a world of symbolic order in which everything is separate, including conscious and unconscious self and other, words and actions. Language is the mixture of fixed meanings and metaphors. In imagery stage the first being is the mother with whom it has interaction. There is the desire for the mother but in the symbolic stage there is the gap between subject and object. Like wise in it the presence of language (father) disturbs and creates the gap. Language imposes a chain of words along which the ego moves while the unconscious remains in search of the object it has lost.

According to Lacan dream is more like a language than the symptoms of repressed desires. He asserts that the unconscious is more than the source of primal instincts linked at random to ideas and images. Conscious and unconscious are asymmetrically co-presented in the inner structure and is governed by linguistic experience. There is little dispute between the ideas of Lacan and Freud. Freud puts mind in the brackets, which Lacan removes, revealing the sources of mentality as alien fixed and permanently subjective. The child can no longer be in symbiotic relationship with his mother. With the entry of his father, the child has to undergo separation individuation process. He has to realize the broad social and familial networks of symbolic order.

CHAPTER – III

Textual Analysis

Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* is a volume consisting of two sections. The first and second are poetry and prose section respectively. The main aim of Lowell's *Life Studies* is to find "himself". In most of the poems of the first section, he himself and his family members are at the center. And his main object is to catch himself in process of becoming himself. In *Life Studies* he depicts his private failure, humiliations, sufferings and psychological problems including other experiences of frustration, separation, spiritual tension and negative effect of war and violence. Alcoholism, sexual guilt and repeated confinement in a mental hospital are the related and repeated themes of this volume.

The major two sections of this volume can be divided into five sub sections. In the first subsection of poems, there are three poems. These poems deal with psychoneurotic tendency of family, hysteric and nostalgic pain at the loss of the past, the betrayal feeling about the real father, child's relation to his grandparents and the lamentation for the young uncle. The second subsection of the poem section consists of six poems. It deals with Lowell's parents, especially with their deaths. There we can see the glimpse of failure, neurosis and shame. Here Lowell is a victim of a universally sinister principle. In the third subsection of poems, there are four poems. Chaucerian irony and use of quoted speech is comparatively different style of this volume. In the thematical point of view, it deals with mental disorder, psychological imprint, nostalgia for war and faith. The fourth subsection of poem section consists of at least

fifteen poems. This section places the ideas of madness, confinement and the negligence of government towards the poor life of the people. Moral decadence, sexual violence, loss of faith, lovelessness and degenerated scenario of the age are explained in them. The final subsection's poems shift our attention from the madness of society to its embodiment in one man.

The prose section of *Life Studies* is the '91 Revere Street'. It transfers the spotlight to the poet himself in the setting of his early family life. Through an ambivalent figure of Mordecai Myers it shows the image of family humiliation and the failure of the father of Lowell himself. There is also given the details of motif of madness and subversion, social maladjustment and private sufferings. The main purpose of Lowell of this prose section is psychological. Here we see Lowell's constellation of ambiguous loyalties, shocked memories and humiliations.

All the above ideas which have been explained in both sections are confessed by Lowell through his writing. Writing is one kind of creation. Lowell takes help of literature to get relief from the intolerable burdens of his past life. The works of art help him to save his life from getting the great disaster in his life. He accepts the past activities of his family and degradation of that era. He confesses all the sins which he and his family members have done.

Time and again Lowell becomes unable to understand the need of matching of human psyche with its surrounding atmosphere. It means that he does not like to care the trend of his age. He only wants to transcend himself from decadence neglecting the whole society. When he tries to do so alone in the society, he fails due to the lack of support from the society. At last he thinks that the bitter

ugliness of the past can be maintained by confessing and expressing through his writing. Instead of facing the challenge of the degenerated society, he turns himself towards the artistic world. The artistic world becomes more pleasant than the real world for him. He can get deeper pleasure through the means of his artistic creation than facing the real problems of that age. This experience is similar to Freud's *Interpretation of Dream* in which Freud says that we over power our feelings and we express them through creation, dream and slip of tongue. He further says that we have repressed and suppressed desires and that there need to have an outlet. In the case of Lowell the outlet for such feelings and experiences is only through confession and giving them the shape of artistic creation. The one who accepts those ugly experiences of the past time can be taken as a hero in modern sense. Here we see him lamenting on the loss of past values, norms and customs. And he jumps into the well of depression, humiliation, frustration, alcoholism and into the unhealthy sexuality.

There are different concepts developed in the societies about hero. One of the ideas about hero is that he has to uplift the degenerated society from the filthy condition and put it on the pious foundation for its betterment. The hero should be free from temptation. He should not indulge in alcoholism, depression, frustration and moral corruption forgetting his duty. Lowell only wishes about the good societies but can't face the obstacles to create such societies. He can't take stand for it. Instead of taking the stand, he plunges into bad habits. These bad habits do not help him to be a brave hero. Only confession is not a sufficient quality for the traditional hero. But it is only an element to show the heroic nature in modern sense.

This is an act of vulnerable hero. That is especially a psychological vulnerability of hero. Confession is also one of the faces that a modern hero possesses. So this face or nature of hero is amongst the thousand faces or natures of hero as discussed by Campbell in *The Hero with Thousand Faces*.

Robert Lowell's *Life Studies* presents Lowell himself as but his writing enables him to transcend the humiliating condition. The different aspect of hero can in this volume. The heroic confinement within his limit experience is one the aspect.

The next aspect is that the hero takes himself as being without personal history. He is thrown into the world being unfathomable and meaningless. He does not accept the need of catching human sentiment with its surrounding atmosphere. He neither develops himself through contact with that world nor is formed by it. He indulges in to finds his own world, i.e. the world of lamentation, alcoholism and neurosis. This shows his weak mentality. Slowly and gradually he inclines towards the positive aspects of life. The positive aspect of his artistic creation is the gradual development of human consciousness.

Lowell's heroic nature and psychological vulnerability is presented by the setting and the atmosphere of his '*Life Studies*'. Some of the poems from poem section and last prose section are: "Dunbarton", "Grandparents" "Commander Lowell 1887-1950", "Home after three month away", "Memories of West street and Lepke", "Man and wife" "To speak of Woe That Is in Marriage", "Words for Hart Crane", "A Mad Negro Solider Confined at Munich", "Walking in the Blue" and "Skunk Hour" from the selected poems and "91 Reverse Street" from prose section.

Here I am going to make an attempt to show how Lowell is psychologically

vulnerable even if he is called a hero. It will be clarified by selecting the poems and prose pieces from the *Life Studies*.

Poem Section

"Commander Lowell 1887 -1950"

The poem 'Commander Lowell 1887-1950' plunges us at once into the atmosphere of failure, neurosis, and shame remembered from the child's seventh year:

There were no undesirables or girls in my set,
 When I was a boy at Mattapoissett
 Only mother, still her fathers daughter
 Her voice was still electric
 With a hysterical, unmarried panic (1-5)

This poem deals with Lowell's father and his attempts at heroism. But instead of performing heroic deeds he fails in every action that he performs. So the poem is about personal failure, neurosis and shame of commander Lowell. The poem begins with Robert Lowell remembering his young days. He says that when he was a boy at Mattapoissett, there were no other girls except his mother who had suffered a lot. Yet she did not feel that life was hopeless. The poet says that she is a courageous father's daughter. Her voice reflects electric hysterical pain because of her unsuccessful married life. The poet's father had abandoned his mother in the pretext of working in the ship. Not disheartened by this his mother used to read and narrate Napoleon Bonaparte's heroic triumphs of performing challenging deeds. But by doing this she

has reversed the role and has emerged as a heroic lady. This is why Lowell compliments her as being a daughter of a courageous man. He says that his mother read poems and stories about Napoleon to explain heroic qualities. And this description or definition taught him to understand the heroic qualities in a better manner.

The poet says that his mother is in great pain. To ease her pain she sometimes takes drug to go to sleep. The poet's father is naval officer because of his duties he can't take care of his mother and family. More over he is not serious about his moral responsibilities. He used to go to play golf in the time of war. The poet's friend advises his father to take care of the family and to fulfill his naval duties in a more responsible manner than playing golf. Though academically his father had excelled in his naval studies he was neither a good officer nor a satisfactory husband. The poet says that his father lived extravagantly. He spent six thousand dollars within three years. Though once he was happy successful person in Boston because of his habits he soon fell into bad times. "The disintegration of personality matches the disintegration of outer world. The identification of abstract and concrete human potentiality rests on the modern writer's assumption that the objective world's is inherently inexplicable. However, impossibility of understanding this reality is the point of departure in Lowell's poem rather than the exaltation of subjectivity" (Lukacs 163).

The poet narrates the paradox of situation. His father had set out to be a hero by fighting wars instead the mother who stayed back home was the heroic figure in the poet's life. The father volunteered to go to war but as he had no knowledge ultimately lost his mind and was put in asylum. Because of his vulnerable psychology he could not

control himself in that situation. He was a bad husband, a bad father and a bad naval officer. Lowell considers his mother as the real modern heroine. He gets relief from the traumatic situation that existed in his family. This is the reflection of what happens or occurs in many other families during war. The bad effect of war builds the weak psychology of the people.

Man and Wife

This poem seems to be about Lowell's second marriage which presents a tormented wife, talking about her 'hopped up', 'screwball' husband. Hardwick's marriage could not become so much successful and happy. There always remains the lack of loving night. There is overlapping of sleepless hours of arguments, hysteria and anxiety. The gross reality and hopelessness prevails on the man who is alcoholic, manic and depressed one. This state of anxiety is a representation of a large American dilemma.

For the first time the speaker falls in love with Hardwick in Green which village. They love each other very dearly. There is shy in their first love. They change their love in mirage. In the beginning days of their married life there is a little bit happiness and was calm but later on there is no happy life and no happy hours of love. In this poem the man who is a speaker becomes manic, alcoholic and becomes unable to walk properly. At the same time the vehement speech of his wife at bed makes the speaker think that the old fashioned Harangue breaks like the Atlantic on his head. The wife's hackneyed speech and homicidal eyes refers to the dangerous expression. The speaker used to hold her hands in every night and he thought as if she had fourth time faced the kingdom of the mad. Though her eyes and her expression are not affectionate but he takes

her the loveliest one of all god's creature and says, "oh my petite, clearest of all god's creatures" (L 12-13).

Due to the age factor there comes misunderstanding between them. There is vast difference of age between them. She is younger than him. Here the speaker regrets for being old and being married to a young girl. In such situation the old people cannot satisfy the desires of the young girl. She feels that she is good at anything than her husband. At that time the man thinks that though his wife is cruel yet she is beautiful and there is shyness in her. The man confesses such things saying:

. . . Oh my petite,
 Clearest of all god's creatures, still all air and nerve:
 you were in your twenties, and I,
 Once hand on glass
 and heart in mouth,
 Out drank the Rahvs in the heat
 of green which village, fainting at your feet
 Too boiled and shy
 And poker faced to make a pass,
 While the shrill verve
 of your invective scorched the traditional south. (12-22)

Her expressionless face makes him go in sad mood while he comes home from outside. He also complains that it is twelve years later she is turning her back. Pillow is her friend which she holds on. Her speech is rapid and merciless but loving for him.

This poem reflects the state of anxiety in Milltown, USA. Though Americans are

materialistically successful but they have no peace. They have no satisfaction in their life. Frustration is their main problem that is the output of multiple marriages in their life.

Man's bad and drunken habit torments woman or wife. The man becomes the regular customer of going outside without consulting with his wife. Because of the such habits of her husband the woman has faced much problems. So many times woman has saved her husband from many dangers. The role of woman or wife becomes the role of mother. Instead of husband taking care of wife, wife acts as a guide. She has to drag him alive from outside. But here the poet feels alienated. There is the speaker's isolation from this world and he encounters problems of living in that world. Protagonist is in dilemma of failure and success. The speaker confesses all the experiences and incidents of the life as a protagonist.

But the notion is different, the speaker is weak because only plunging on alcoholism and frustration is not a final solution of coming out from the problem. There are other ways of solution of problems of life which would be applied by the bold or brave and clever hero. But he is haunted by the sexual guilt and so on. Due to such guilty thinking, he hands over his life on the mouth of humiliation and alienation. Humiliation, alienation and frustration do not help him to be a good heroic person.

Words for Hart Crane

In this poem Lowell himself is not a speaker, yet it is his strongest personal statement in the poem. Hart crane speaks but of course the 'words' referred to in the title are supplied by Lowell and they used to underline his identification with crane. This poem refers to the time of Hart crane. Hart crane in one sense was a great poet but he could not receive any recognition or any honour. The time did not help him. He had to struggle to

survive in terms of writing. Here through the means of writing Lowell represents the inner psyche of Hart crane. Crane is depressed and falls into the habit of smoking dope. He adopts bad company. The speaker of the poem says that Hart crane used to rob the people's valuable goods and used to be homosexual. Such activities which are bad in themselves did not help him. Instead he was left with a hole in the pocket. For this the speaker says:

When the Pulitzers showered as some dope
 or screw who flushed on dry mouths art with soap,
 few people would consider why I took
 to stalking sailors, and scattered uncle Sam's
 Phony gold plated laurels to the birds
 . . . my profit man a pocket with a hole
 . . . must lay his heart act for my bed and board. (1-14)

There is nobody to ask for him or is bothered about him. This poem in some ways is a plea for recognition for these Shelley like poets of America who were ignored and pushed aside by the society.

In this poem Lowell represents the human condition of a heroic figure like Hart Crane. Lowell represents Hart Crane with the means of his own experiences. By representing Hart Crane's experiences, Lowell wants to show the condition of him self.

There is the confession from the side of Hart crane. In this poem, by representing Hart Crane, Lowell shows the condition of a hero like Hart Crane. The works of Hart Crane could not make him a famous hero. He could not get any humour. Hart Crane takes the help of homosexuality to come out from the depression. In some sense such

confession is a heroic nature that is one kind of challenge for the society which pushed him aside but that is the indirect and unapproved way to show the heroic bravery. We can say this is the weakness of hero to follow the wrong path.

Robbing, killing, plunging in the homosexuality are not the positive aspect of the society which would be done by hero. He has done so for his own sake to get relief from current pain. So, he shows his vulnerability.

Memories of West Street and Lepke

This poem is an important transitional poem in which Lowell is still forty years old, and so the time is presumably shortly before he was committed to the mental hospital. But the period about which the poem is mainly concerned is a decade and a half earlier, when he was sent to prison as a conscientious objector. There is a curiously ambiguous effect in these shifting relationships of time. They suggest a simultaneity and interchangeability of events.

There is satire on the government policies concerning different people. He goes against government. One day while he going back home from his work, he saw a scavenger looking for food. This scavenger had the problem of looking after his two children. So the speaker is annoyed and distressed by that scene and files a complaint against the government to look after these people. But the life of speaker was happy with his daughter at Marlborough street. He had a nice steady job of teaching. The speaker says:

only teaching on Tuesdays, book worming
 in pajamas fresh from the washer each morning,
 I hog a whole house as Boston's

"hardly passionate Marlborough street".
 where even the man
 scavenging filth is the black alley trash cans,
 has two children, a beach wagon, a helpmate,
 and is a "Young Republican".
 I have a nine months' daughter, . . .
 flame- flamingo infants' wear. (1-11)

The speaker says such ups and downs occurred during the fifties and at that time he was around forty years old. His statement was considered to be mad and hence he was sent in West Street jail along with a Negro boy who was accused unjustly of taking drugs. There was discrimination in the name of color and religion. The Negro boy was sentenced due to his religion and he spoke the truth of injustice. Even in the prison they were segregated and denied the basic human needs, for instance, "a portable radio, dresses, two toy American flags tied together with a ribbon of eater palm" (46-47). The only electric chair was provided them which jarred their concentration and forced them to hang "like an oasis in his air of lost connections" (12-13).

In this situation the speaker himself is in motion while the examined reality becomes static. He confesses the injustice done upon the man and he also understands his revelation of the human condition which is not going to make much difference. In one sense the speaker represents the human condition which is confined with the limits of his own experience. Here the speaker only reveals the facts of injustice. But there remains the lack of determined will power to overthrow such government which helps to survive injustice in the nation. We can say the speaker lacks the will power.

The inner psyche of the speaker is not activated properly. If the inner psyche of the hero becomes active, he can challenge and do something against the injustice which exists in society.

Inauguration Day: January 1953

The poem shows the self-suffering of cold war anxiety and the political awareness in the context of social situation of that era. Dwight Eisenhower was a war hero who was elected as 34th president of USA and he was inaugurated on January 20, 1953. Many people participated on that occasion. From this scenario Robert Lowell presents the situation of the war.

Lowell shows how Eisenhower became the president. And in the eyes of the society and in the eyes of himself Eisenhower was a cruel fellow: "the Eisenhower's green girders charge on Third" (3). He was responsible for the cold war. He has such an attitude that he always wants to dominate the innocent and poor countries. It is the speaker who reflects the cruelties and selfishness of the American presidents because of whose desire and competition of nuclear weapons the world is going to end and the people are spending sleepless hours even today.

Lowell wants to show how the leaders are elected and they throw the beam of timber on the poor and weak countries. Weak and bad heroes could not handle the situation properly. They lack the intelligence for understanding the social environment. In the poem there is also the description of such heroes who became the cause of great destruction in the past. That is one who was responsible for vast destruction of people in civil war. In such an auspicious occasion Lowell shows the vital satirizing on the policies of nations and leaders. One area could not remain out of victim even the slummed area. There we could

see destruction and disorder everywhere. There are so many dead bodies of the soldiers in the war. One after another loses their lives. After horseman's death the sword is thrown into groove "Horseman; your sword is in the groove" (9). It is reference to the civil war in which Grant himself interred the dead bodies of soldiers. Ironically he might be called brave and immortal hero. He was the god of Armies "God of our Armies, who interred cold Harbor's blue immortal, Grant!" (27-28).

Lowell further says that he can't go ahead because of inconvenient way that Republic is going to celebrate the inauguration day. In such occasion it remembers the war heroes. Those heroes faced the crisis courageously. But now their status is dilapidated/covered with snow dirty materials, and not clean. They are forgotten. Leaders forget the past history and war's effects. They are careless towards its bad effect and they are cunning for themselves. They have dangerous ideology and through it the innocent people are sent to war. The innocent people show their bravery but in return they get nothing but only lose their lives. There is poignant taunt to the nation and to presidents not only Eisenhower but others also. Such political leaders of power holders are responsible for the casualties in battle. So there is the question in the dignity of inauguration.

The speaker says that the world will end in ice. Here ice stands for death. This means the dead bodies lying on the snow and there is fear of nuclear weapons. Here is irony on serious political concern. There is Lowell's effort to magnify the political loss suffered by intellectual Democrats and there is complain on a wrong man who has got elected.

Lowell says that everywhere there is ice and the wheels can no longer move. "Ice, ice. Our wheels no longer move" (10). He recalls the tragic condition of the soldiers. The

fixed stars are navigational marks which in winter lose their power and diplomacy of war heroes who become presidents and the great leaders. But unlike these Lowell's use of mental reflecting exposes the situations of falsity, cruelties of nations, leaders and their false ideology brought the public through the writing which is a modern heroic act. In this poem Lowell exposes his lack of patient and hope in the war. Because of the war psyche he sees only the dark side of the war. So he is weak in the name of hero. There is neither any strong opposition towards the war nor any hope on the good results of war. The dualism of hero refers of his weak psychology.

Grandparents

This poem is terrifying and painful only in the ultimate sense of any sharp realization of loss. In this poem there is recovery of crucial family experience in the mind of hero. Intensity and poignancy are cradled within the gentleness, and the recovery of the past is suddenly converted into a stricken sense of the present instant. In the closing stanza, the lines grow generally shorter and include a number of exclamations, culminating in a cry of childish longing for Grand-pa's return and in a reproachful self-characterization. Lowell further accepts risking sentimentality that is essential to the self discovery.

The sharp realization of loss of hero makes him weak. Hero can't forget his childhood environment and his surroundings because his love for his family members always strikes him. In this poem the death of grandparents represents the loss of an era. The speaker says that his grandparents are no more. There they are in another world "They're altogether other worldly now." They were champions in their days for performing and fulfilling their ritual tasks. They were leading very happy and contented

life because they practiced and followed traditional norms, customs and values. Lowell remembers that his grandfather was like a policeman. He always waved a stick while walking. It was his weapon to drive the dogs away. Whereas his grand mother was like a Mohammedan. She wore thick lavender and touring veil to cover and protect her face. The poet presents the habit of his grandparents who were living their life happily in their ripe span of life. But from the very first lines of the poem we find the nostalgic honour which evokes a time in the 1930's when the speaker's grandparents were still alive and dominating his world. Their old fashioned attitude toward the automobile is remembered with loving irony darkened by the sadness of the first line. The final four lines of the stanza become consistently, though gently serious. Their overtones suggest the death of an era as well as of two specific people make themselves feel without calling special attention to the symbolism of white dust, fatigued elm leaves, or even the guilt of the young their sense that the elders died to punish them deservedly. Here, Lowell himself is a speaker whose grandfather always held the stick while walking. This was his habit. He felt safe while walking if he took the stick with him. We see more energy in his grandparents due to their upholding moral values and their belief which was something worth while to live for.

Now thinking about grandparents, he realizes about something lost which he tries to point out. Now his grandparents are dead who was the piece of heart for him in term of love. They also loved the speaker (him) very lovingly. They taught him good qualities of life. Their blessing was upon him. During the time they lived, the life was good and moral. Their age did not allow any decadence to seep in. Now he feels nostalgic for that age and tries to maintain it through his work. It means their death has made him sad

and serious. Due to the sadness and nostalgia he becomes vulnerable in his psyche. His attempt is how to come out from such nostalgia by the means of his writing. To prove oneself as a hero one has to act and behave based on earlier moral conduct. The poet says that life in the nineteenth century was good and very fruitful. But twentieth century people began to lose interest and the moral values lost. The people of twentieth century feel that there are no such values left in the world, there is nothing worthwhile to live for.

In the poem there is a childish cry longing for the Grandpa's return. Lowell's childhood summers on the farm were happy and exciting. When the poet remembers these memories he feels a moment of joy but this joy is short lived for his grandfather is dead and there will be no more billard games. Lowell evokes his grandpa to come and love him like in the by gone days. At the same time he talks about the peaceful world of his grand parents and compares his world which is decaying and degenerating. He feels that the young are responsible to bring about this decadence into the world. This is the guilt of the young people in the age. He feels that grandparents died to punish the young. It means he is haunted inside due to the fear of dead one.

Lowell says that the life of nineteenth century was full of energy and enthusiasm. There was positive outlook on the life but the life of twentieth century becomes vacant. There is no hope, belief and no motivation to feel about the energetic life. It is so due to the decadence which prevails in every sector of life. Lowell is trying to energize people of his age to feel life intensely by shaving his grandparent's enthusiasm towards life and their moral conduct. Through this poem he tries to evoke and revive the heroic attitude towards life to face the present and to overcome it. Lowell had been taught by his

grandparents to live life intensely and honestly. He wants to spend life as he was being taught by them but fails because of his weak psyche. It becomes clear through his confession that the whole surrounding makes him so weak and he feels that the lesson of grandparents does not work in his real life but works only on the theory. He is pleading to all to come out of their degenerate situations and live and face life heroically. He feels that he himself is not out of such situation. He is also embroiled in the same situation but does not excuse himself. He confesses such things and wants to face life heroically as his elders taught him but he is unable to do so in practical life. He wants to be moral hero but can't be so because of his different psychology. Here he is making imaginative castle hoping that one drasting change would come in his life and help him spend life like his grandparents. But that is impossible in the absence of great heroic effort. He lacks great heroic effort.

This means hero should face each and every worldly challenge being constant in his duty. But here he did laments only on his grandpa's separation. These activities are guided by his weak psychology.

Home After Three Months Away

This poem shows the poet's returning home again after three months' confinement. He is forty-one now. Among others: the nurse attending his baby daughter, a lioness who made the mother cry is gone now; the tulips planted a time while he simply marked time. But something like reassurance comes from the daughter's not having forgotten him:

.. . . after thirteen weeks
 my child still dabs her cheeks
 to start me shaving when

we dress her in sky-blue corduroy.
 She changes to a bay,
 And floats my shaving brush
 And washcloth in the flush . . .
 Dearest, I can't not loiter here
 in lather like a polar bear. (17-28)

Lowell says that the continent has been needed for the restoration from the psychological state. In this poem 'blue' is associated with a metallic coldness, bleakness, and emptiness, and in which the patient each used 'a locked razor'.

In this poem when the manic phase of the speaker. is ended and he is grateful in the tender, loving and humorous fashion that we have seen for the physical support with his little daughter though his condition has dwindled into a just supportable depression:

I keep no rank nor station cured,
 I am frizzled, stale and small. (40-41)

The speaker is returning home after confinement. Though he was in confinement he ultimately returns to his home for his love towards his child, his wife, his parents. The speaker who is forty one has no rank or station. While he was in confinement he becomes mentally ill. At present he is frizzled, stale and small. He has returned home because he is cured. On his return he notices that the tulips he had planted a year ago have withered along with the season. The speaker is Lowell himself and this poem is his confession about his jail life. The poem describes Lowell's love for his daughter Harriet. He is always haunted by the love of this child when he is in prison. The love of his daughter pulls him through the most difficult time of his life. The little Magnolia that the speaker

refers to is his daughter. The speaker remembers the dimple on his daughter's cheeks which is the symbol of beauty. As he is in confinement and can't see his daughter he feels shattered because he is far away from her.

After his coming out of hospital being cured he still feels helpless. There is great fear, uneasiness inside himself. He feels himself as a weak creature. He is worried about her because there is nobody to take care of her. He also comes to know that the nurse who is a maid has left his daughter. But this nurse was like a lioness. She used to hang suet bones for the starlings. When that nurse has left her there is no one to take care of his little child who he loves very much. By showing the love of a father towards his child he has universalised this abstract emotion and relates it to many more fathers like him who have been torn away from the loved one. Due to war many fathers have to leave their families for the sake of the nations but at the same time they are sacrificing everything that they hold sacred, pure and true. This poem is a reminder of how war ravages the simple everyday life of a common man. But this man is no hero just a simple man who desires to be near his loved ones. But by sacrificing all this and going to the site of war remembering the loved ones only through memory is a heroic act. By putting such feelings and emotions Lowell has shown that each common modern man is hero in a sense it may be tiny and small but still a hero.

Here Lowell himself is a hero who confesses feelings and emotions. He presents the cruelties of that time forces him to be mad. And he demonstrates why he goes to the mental hospital. How he is confined up to three months and how that pinches him. Lowell has to overpower these things through writing to present the real condition of the period. He takes the help of writing as a means of relief and the means of bringing

awareness is society. This is the heroic act of Lowell in modern era. He frankly and openly shows the helpless condition. Such helpless condition remains there due to his vulnerable psyche. There is one of the concept that each individual can experience, learn and transform with the help of early hero's initiation, separation and transformation. Lowell justifies that he is psychologically weak because he can't endure the separation. Separation between him and his daughter makes him handicapped.

Dunbarton

In this poem, the title takes up the theme of the boy's special relationship with his grandfather. The speaker says he was my father I was his son: the feeling of betrayal of the real father dramatized in the opening lines of the poem "My Last Afternoon with uncle Devereux Winslowin" in which the child says "I will not go with you. I want to stay with grandpa". It means the same feeling is sustained in this poem. What would ordinarily seem to be delightful and normal relationship is given, if only whimsically a pathological coloration:

I saw myself as a young newt

neurasthenic, scarlet

And wild in the wild coffee colored water.

In the morning a cuddled like a paramour

grandfather's bed,

While he scouted about the chattering green good stove. (55-60)

This poem reflects the pain due to the feelings of past. Here Lowell remembers the past. That is Wilslow's burial at Dunbarton. The speaker loves his grandfather very much and feels that this grandfather was a source of inspiration for him to do all activities. Speaker

declares that "He was father. I was his son" (10). He says that in grandfather's eyes his fogbound solitude was sweeter than living in human society because of the terrible, and degenerated society.

The speaker says that the family members had a plan to visit family graveyard at Dunbarton. They wanted to visit their ancestors' burial place or grave yard. Along with other members the members who went there were: grandfather, grandmother, Lowell himself, chauffer and the farmer. They took their travel from Boston to Dunbarton to reach that place. Because of the fast driving on Hill by his grandfather, the travel became very sweet. They saw and visited different places and things and they drank beer also at Nashua. All the members paid homage by remembering their ancestors while they reached there. The speaker says that a good Venetian Christ put some stones on his grandfathers mother. At the same time they saw the portrait of Edward Winslow wearing a black coat was also carved or the stone over his grave. He was also paid homage by them.

The speaker got a chance to capture the rats which were around the graves by the means of grandpa's cane. The speaker used to play with cane while other members were paying homage. They also cleaned that place and the weather was cold at that time.

All the past memories through this poem make the speaker nostalgic and this illustrates his closeness with his grandfather who is dead. There is child's preferences for his grand father than his own father. These we can see the psycho neurotic tendency in the family.

Due to feeling of the betrayal of the real father the speaker is sad. The speaker thinks that he lost the lovely things like family member, his young days and other happier moments of life. The speaker used to feel happy and comfortable while staying with

father. He realized that there was peace at the time when his grandfather was alive. But after the death of his grand father he finds that the value of peace has changed in the world. Thus the speaker feels bored and uneasy to spend life in such a world of today. He does not feel calm and happy. His grandfather represents the stability and security which reassured the young boy. The speaker even as a boy suffered a sense of the miniscule of defenceless nature of man. At this situation the got relief and moral and psychological comfort through his grandfather.

But now there is no harmony in the world. This grandfather was well fitted in everything. The grandfather was brave. Now there is only nostalgic clutch of memory. The speaker feels defenceless. The speaker remembers his neurasthenic feeling and sees himself as a young newt. He further says that his best friend was his grandfather who used to share solitude and sadness with him equally. Lowell says that the old values, norms, spirit are lost and now there is deterioration, mechanism, heartlessness, spiritless, guilt, decadence and degeneration. He does not like 'such' situation. He wants to live in alienation instead of living in such society. He wants to escape from such situation which is not a bold act of hero. The bold hero likes to challenge bad ideas of the society living with in the same society. But he did not do so because he is vulnerable in his inner psyche. But he wants to revive old values, peace but he does not like to face such deterioration face to face. Only longing does not work. To perform or to fulfill the motives there lies a need of bold act or brave psyche of the hero. But we do not find the bold psyche of hero or speaker in this poem.

A Mad Negro Soldier Confined at Munich

This poem depicts how the marginalized are discriminated and victimized. Those

people who are great contributors for the nation now are confined and alienated from the main stream society. This poem especially describes the bad effect of wars on the Negro soldiers. There Negro people were made the victim of the disordered world. They do not get any return of the great contribution they did for the nation. Only pain and suffering lies in their hands.

In this poem there is the sense of isolation in the side of Negro soldiers. The Negro soldiers themselves have some dignity for their contribution for the nation. They are the great fighter of war for the sake of nation and its people. In the war they have been captured and confined. Due to the torture they are nearly going to be mad. They are made incapable to state or to show any human dignity. Black Americans are the members of the victimized society. The mad Negro soldier thinks that his condition is equal to that of animals. That Negro soldier prays and questions god why they are being treated in a subhuman manner if all men are equal and there is no difference in the eyes of god. There is vast demarcation line between Black and White people till today. There is not equal opportunity among them.

Due to the inequality in every sector of the society, there comes depression on the people. The same condition happens here. The mad Negro soldier shows the depressed tone. He was being confined at Munich. Due to the bad effect of war and surrounding environment he is going mad slowly and gradually. Lowell puts his idea that a man who dares to live in this kind of crisis and suffering is a heroic act in one sense. The mad soldier has split mentality. He sometimes becomes mad and at the same time he shows his hope toward the ordered world. But society is the main cause of such condition of Negro soldier. The soldier expresses his view that the only Negro soldiers are sent at war

to fight in the name of nation without caring their life. But the nation does not do any better work for the black one. It means there is negligence of nation towards the black people. The white people think that the blacks were born only to serve the white. Seeing such condition the Negro soldier says:

We're all Americans except the Doc,
 a Kraut DP, who kneels and bathes my eye.
 The boys who floored me, two black maniacs, try
 to pat my hands. Round, round' why punch the clock?
 In Munich the zoo's rubble fumes with cats;
 hoydens with air guns prowl the Koenigsplatz,
 and pink the pigeons on the mustard spire.
 Who but any girl friend set the town on fire? (1-8)

The blacks have been taken as prisoners of war. Negro Soldiers were facing difficult situation. Not only were they facing the critical situation of the war but also the ill-treatment from the Whites. They are being abused. They are treated like animals in dirty places in prison hospitals. The German police are guarding the prison. Nurses are being assigned there to care and serve the prisoners of hospitals. A nurse is stitching the torn shirt. People are wounded, and they are crying out to the nurses to help them. The prisoners used to rape the nurse because of the jungle like scenario of that place (I chartered on aluminium canoe/ I had her six times in the English garden 15/16). Such case happens because of the bad situation at Munich confinement. Extreme torture and abuse makes them mad like.

At the time of crisis when the country needs to defend itself from the ravages of war it

sends the blacks to wage war. The blacks are not regarded as human beings but they are taken as dispensable commodities. All the leaders want to save the nation and the life of white community in at the cost of the lives of black ones. By giving the different slogans and promising the good future the government used to send the blacks to fight in the name of country. This is the way of the white leader to send the black soldiers in risky wars like the II World War and Vietnam War where the blacks were either confined or killed. There is no recognition for blacks as they had wished. This is the time of racial and ethnic discrimination in America. But here the voice of the man who speaks to the mass about these marginalized people is a white man. Here we can assume that to expose the follies of the government towards the black is one of the heroic natures.

The blacks are sent to the risky area but the nation does not care about the future of the blacks. They suffer mentally and physically. They had to suffer not only the fear of death in the war and the bad treatment of the Whites but also confinement and alienation in prison.

Lowell states that Negro is embodiments of courage and heroism because they face the situation courageously as much as possible. On the one side he seems to be courageous and on the other side the Negro soldiers are equally so. But many Blacks went mad. So going to be mad is one of aspect that is the aspect of psychological vulnerability.

To speak of woe that is in Marriage

This poem presents a tormented wife talking about her hopped up and screwball husband. The speaker says that this is the sunny season so they leave window open. The hot night is calm and peaceful. It is a time for flowers to blossom. Life begins at night but

the situation is a little bit different because the husband of that speaker woman is drunkard. She says that her husband comes home drunk and his drinking brings violence in the house.

Their married age life has become a painful affair instead of being the example of harmony and peace. There is no natural relationship between them. His drunken habit always creates the environment of confrontation between husband and wife. Conflict and dispute are the daily activities in their life. The husband used to beat her up and he always hits the streets like animal for prostitution to satisfy his lust. We can't say such activities of husband towards wife results in goodness. Surely it is a bad thing so it is not the good idea to dominate the wife in the name of males being. It is beastly quality. The speaker in the poem says:

The hot night makes us keep our bedroom windows open.

Our Magnolia blossoms. Life begins to happen.

My hopped up husband drops his home disputes,

and hits the street to cruise for prostitutes,

free lancing act along the razor's edge

This screwball might kill his wife, then take the pledge.

Oh the monotonous meanness of his lust . . .

It's the injustice . . . he is so unjust-

whiskey blind, swaggering home at five.

My only thought is how to keep alive.

What makes him tick? Each night now I tie

ten dollars and his car key to my thigh . . .

Gored by the climacteric of his want,
 he stalls above me like an elephant. (1-14)

Above lines present the terrifying scenario of the house. The regular visit to prostitution by her husbands, removes the happy and calm environment of the house because when the husband returns home from the brothel he terrorizes the wife and tries to again mount her like an elephant. He seems to be disgusting. The speaker expresses her real condition at the house by saying that her life is hovering over a razor's edge. He feels that she is spending her whole life with a razor's at her throat. Here Lowell himself confesses the bad habits of his father which is very unusual. So, we can say the way of confessing such things is the modern heroic nature. But the dominant character of this poem is his father who is morally and psychologically down because his behavior and the way of life do not give positive meaning to the society. If his father is morally and psychologically bold he can control his habit and establish the harmonious and peaceful environment in his house.

Skunk Hour

This stands out independently from the sequence of other poems of *Life Studies*. This poem provides self loathing close up for the speaker and with it a dominating image both for his own psychological state and prospects and for the poetic process.

In this poem the speaker describes the degenerate scenario of the Queen Victoria's era. The speaker wants to bring out peoples awareness to exist in society. The description of nature is given in such way that it has grown old sinister and is covered with stain. The hermit heiress longs for Queen Victoria's century which reflects her decadent, degenerate and senile mind. Her social successor, the summer Millionaire has been presented as one

who has auctioned off his 'nine –knot yawls'. This reflects how people have lost faith for old values and pursues only materialistic ends. There is degradation in culture and economy of New England.

The season of human habitation on earth is ill, decadent and debased. The mentality of the people of that era sets very strangely. The fairy decorator who is in the economic problem for surviving his life even he keeps desires to marry. The world is shown as a monstrous one where there is the feeling of loveless ness and balked lust. Decadence is overlapping every where. The picture of Skunk is depicted in the poem. Due to the decadent world Lowell's soul becomes sick.

Poet observes the mother Skunk with her kittens who swill the garbage pail. In front of the human habitation the Skunk is swilling. It has shown no sign of being frightened. It implies or shows the skunk's keen passion to live. Playing in the filthy environment the skunk nurtures the family and survives herself. The poet sees the same condition of the modern man. He equates the Skunk's situation to modern human situation.

The seasons' ill we've lost our summer millionaire who seemed to leap from an L.L. Bean catalogue. His nine – knot yawl was auctioned off to lobster men. red fox stain covers Blue Hill. . . . the only skunks, that search in the moonlight for a bite to eat . . .I stand on top of our back steps and breathe the rich air, mother Skunk with her column of kittens swills he garbage pail. She jobs her wedge-head in a cup of sour cream, drops her ostrich tail, and will not scare. (43-48)

These lines express the scenario of that era and the keen passion of the skunk to live ignoring the filthy matters. Open sexuality and decadence is the other aspects of this

poem. The world is totally corrupted. So nobody wants to live but there is only Skunk that dares to live. Lowell does not feel humiliation to live in such world but dares to live like skunks. He dares to live because he wants to be unique to prove his different identity. He thinks that to do different work is to be hero in one sense. He thinks that every human should learn from the skunk how to survive. He feels that playing with obstacles, suffering and violence for the sake of life is one of the heroic acts.

The poet observes the scenario of the contemporary time. He encounters the love cars. Everyone lying together falling in false love and having sexual affairs. He says about the scenario:

I watched for love cars. Lights turned down,
 they lay together, hull to hull,
 where the graveyard selves on the town . . .
 my minds' not right (27-30)

He takes that era as one of the difficult times where people do not maintain traditional values. He feels that there should be privacy and secrecy in sexuality. Sexuality becomes mechanical and subject of buying and selling like a commodity. Lowell concludes that each human has to find materials in the garbage world or degenerated world to survive just like the skunk does. We readers come to realize that the modern man has a capacity to adjust with such decadent world. To adjust in such a world is a kind of skill or ability without being mad and depressed or alienated. So he shows his modern heroic nature by becoming ready to live in such world. In this poem there is only the depiction of negative scenario. Even in that decadent scenario, Lowell suggests people to exist by learning from the skunk. But there is no strong challenge to change the

decadent scenario into calm and pious environment which would be possible only from the great contribution of the brave hero. To accept things as usual is not the act of real or courageous hero. Such thing can be accepted only by the vulnerable one who has no strong desire or passion to change the face of the world.

The prose-section

'91 Revere Street'

'91 Revere street' also presents Lowell's family background in a manner at once nostalgic, bitter and psychologically knowledgeable. It is the mixture of love and loathing, honour and horror.

In this section Lowell especially focuses on the failure of his father. Here, Lowell's own interpretation asserts that there are the motifs of madness and subversion, social maladjustment and private suffering which goes with Jewish strain focusing an account of Mordecai Myers of New York state, Lowell's grandfather. It refers that Mordecai Myers is child Lowell's' grandfather who is an ambivalent figure and the first image of the family humiliation. From all this we can assume that the purpose of Lowell is psychological not a political one. That's why Lowell feels the need of his prose-section to present himself in degraded or humiliating light.

This prose section is helpful to Lowell to show his ancestral figure but that one fixed symbol among many in Lowell's constellation of ambiguous loyalties, shocked memories and humiliation. There are other minor symbolic and dramatic centers also at the same time. Shame and affection shown at the same time by Lowell's family heritage clarifies the ambivalent purpose.

In the case of dramatic centers there is the house itself which furnishes the title. The family moved to this address in Boston when Lowell was seven. In that year his father was appointed third in command at the naval yard in Charlestown, Massachusetts, under admiral de Stahl. And the Boston house was purchased as convenient for both his professional and his social life. Its ambivalence as a home consisted in the fact that de Stahl insisted on Lowell senior's spending every night in a house assigned to him at the naval yard. It lacked decisive commitment; look out as an unbuttoned part of Beacon Hill bounded by the North end slums' that were inhabited by Italian immigrant families. Its section of Hill had been regained by Yankee families-'from the vanguards of the lace curtain Irish'. ' "we are barely," said Lowell's mother, "Perched on the outer rim of the hub of decency", Lowell's family lived in this house for three years, until his father left the Navy for a position with Lever Brothers that is an unsuccessful attempt to carve out a civilian career. So the house is a symbol of father's inability to realize himself as a man, either professionally or domestically . On the other hand Lowell's mother is seen as 'insecure, somewhat hysterical and unsympathetic to her husband's nature being a dominant household figure. Lowell says that his memory of the 'things, in the house unchangeably clear, is presented by that motherly care that are either ignored or resented in his youth. Here the relation of masculine and feminine identities is a confused one in the associations of the house.

In this prose section Lowell presents himself as a small boy but a central figure. He is the observer throughout a generation older. We see him also doing unpleasant things or experiencing them. Lowell is cheating another little boy and being cruel to one who had been his friend. He wants to enjoy making other's nose bloody and rejoicing in

the disgrace of a charming little girl. In his excitement and guilt he used to take the shopping chair left empty when the girl fled.

The school where this event took place, he is carefree to note, was female dominated as his home, for the upper eight grades were limited to girls. He states that "I wished I were an older girl". To be a boy at Brimmer was to be small, denied and weak. The note written by Lowell shows the woman's world. That woman's world is very overwhelming one that comes from his father's old friend commander Billy 'Battleship Bilge' Harkness, who 'despite his rowdiness breathed the power that would make him a vice-admiral and hero in World War II. This figure stands out in too crude opposition to that of his father to have offered the boy any reassurance; instead he aroused his resentment on behalf of his father, whose uncertainties and desire for his friend's approval made the son cringe. Due to the habits of his father, he rejects father's life style to some extent. The protagonist must revise his father's life, but that is something that all sons just do to a greater or lesser extent. Various emotional dimensions can give conviction to his attitudes. By representing himself as unintellectual child he makes his sensitivity clear. The emotional difficulties of the adults around him, their passions and failures, their exciting habits of speech are the meat upon which his inwardness feeds.

The prose section provides a Matrix of psychological reality of the child. The gradual recovery of the childish consciousness is shown here. In the early time of his life he had the depressed feeling that men between the age of sex and sixty did nothing but meet new challenges, take on heavier responsibilities, and lose all freedom to explode. The phrases which are given below within brackets have their own significant meanings. The first of these phases (Meet new challenges) is an ironic repetition of his mother's rationalizing

explanation of Lowell senior's frequent loss of positions with various firms. The second phases (take on heavier responsibilities') is of the same order, but adds the boy's own feeling of the cheerless weight of adult life to the irony of the echoed cliché. The third phrase (lose all freedom to explode') brings into the open the boy's stifled feeling and driving need for liberation. The quoted sentence presents not only fact of the boy's mental state but also mimics it. The self-deception and despair of the atmosphere are evoked through phrasing that reconstructs actual speech and potentially explosive repression. The echoing of the actual speech of his family and their friends is an essential ingredient of *'Life Studies'*.

Lowell's great deal of quoting plays the vital role in this prose section. He remembers his mother, urging his father to make the move out of the navy that resulted in a pointless existence for him there after: "man must make up his own mind. Oh Bob, if you are going to resign, do it now so I can at least plan for your son's survival and education as a single continent". Or his father is trying to win his friends' approval for the move:

"I think I will put my blues in mothballs and become a cit just to prove, I still belong to the country. The directors of Lever Brothers soap in Cambridge . . . I guess they want me on their team." And Commander Harkness, the Billy thus addressed, is heard on the subject of the family's famous literacy relative, Amy Lowell:

.. . He would point a stinking baby stogie at mother.

" 'Ave a Peteeto Cigareeto, charlotte', he would crow.

.. . Remember any Lowell, that Cigar – chawing, guffawing senseless

And meterless, multimillion heirness,
 Heavy weight 'mascot an a floating
 fortress Damn the patterns! Full
 peed ahead on a Cigarleeto!". In the next portion of the prose section
 there is mature speaking sensibility that carries it into a different world of
 statement: Each morning at eight thirty, . . . I feel awful! (42)

Here, Robert Lowell seems to be not out of the illusion of superiority deriving from his family background, but he gives it a special twist of by associating it with susceptibility to corruption, degeneration and hypersensitivity. He starts to pay little attention to the lives of ordinary men and women. It means the identification of private suffering with public and same are the problem of the age.

The songs and doggerel humour of commander Billy Harkness and Lowell's self indulgent boisterous metaphor refer the condition of his past. As the protagonist's embarrassment and shame, as his father's behalf, come more and more into the foreground, there forays of caption Billy's are more and more in evidence. Lowell senior's deeper and unrealized sensitivity as a man is add up by his successful friend who himself is at the same time deriding the life of sensibility. Lowell makes a terrifying recovery of his past and with it of the lost realities of his parents and grand parent's existence and of their surrounding life.

In the prose section also at first Lowell spends his time and youth indulging into the well of bitter family experiences and his own childish habits. His habit of thinking only on the failure of the family places him in such a situation that he loses his courage or interest which are the qualities of brave hero. At first he becomes unable to understand

the need of matching his sentiment or feelings with the running society. He takes the world his in own way. But he, as a member of society, can't cross its trends. He sees his condition similar to the condition of that degenerated age. So, he feels weak inside himself and pulsing only on the humiliation of his ancestors. He thinks he is unable to face the hindrances for the better future. But he does not leave to wish about the bright future. To create bright future by confessing the past things only in the wish is not the act of brave hero. But it is the act of psychologically vulnerable hero. It is so because of his only confession.

CHAPTER – IV

Conclusion

Life Studies is one of Lowell's mixed volumes both of poems and prose. In this volume the poet finds at last "himself". The poet himself and his family members are at the center of this volume. In this volume his object is to catch himself in the process of becoming "himself". Robert Lowell is as a confessional poet. He produces this volume to bring his private humiliations, sufferings and psychological problems into the light. Besides these major problems, the other problems in this volume are: his sexual guilt, alcoholism, repeated confinement and the bitter exposition of his family's failures.

The confessional poets have their own trends of dealing with psychological conditions. From the very beginning history of confessionalism they have been making psychology as subject matters of their common literary discussion. Robert Lowell makes the subjects of his creation as follows: the psychoneurotic tendencies of his family, an almost hysterically nostalgic pain at the loss of the past, lament for other members of the family, the confinements at hospitals, sexual guilt, depression, frustrations, anguish and humiliations at the failure of his family. But it is one of the realities that such subject matters can't be gossiped exactly in front of all in the oral form. So Lowell also creates his own literary self for fulfilling this purpose. We see his poems give us the naked psyche of a suffering man in the hostile world. One heightened sensibility to such human predicament has led to a sharp sense of the pain of existence under even normal condition. The mental breakdown and paranoia are the frequent subjects of his volume *Life Studies*. It refers that the unconscious psyche (self) of the poet is really less hopeful and rather it is vulnerable one.

The exposition of his own life under stress of psychological crisis points to the symbolic embodiment of national and cultural crisis. Through the means of this volume *Life Studies* he attempts to unlock his repressed ideas. The deepest sentiments or the inner feelings of the poet can only be understood within the context of the poet's life. Lowell here consciously or unconsciously discusses his secret, a crime, faults, the failures and his way of taking this world from his open heart.

The poet is forced to present his psychological vulnerability and shame as an embodiment of his civilization. The poet as a speaker is psychologically disordered due to the society. He is presented as suffering from a sickness of will and spirit that makes him so vulnerable as lower as the skunks in the moral sense. He is shown equal to the skunk who likes to live even in degenerated and corrupted world. It means he is ready to live there without any strong challenge. The relation between human psyche and surrounding atmosphere could not be understood by him at first. That's why he could not stand him in front of the society as a example of good hero. Only depiction is there but no clear cut way out of the problems or obstacles. He does not know or recognize the main cause of his mental, physical and emotional suffering. He takes himself as a different entity of that existing society. The condition of the age is very poor. Every where there is corruption, degeneration, fear of war and deception. All the old values are in the state of decline. In such situation one should be unique who can catch the clutch of spirits or trends of his age and fight against such forces with holding the same clutch. But the poet hero becomes failure to do so. He wants to be out of such deteriorated situation but it is impossible for him to do so because whole society is following in the same sort of canon. As a member of that society he should follow the same rules, regulation, traditions and

the customs what the others follow, otherwise he is taken as odd one but as not a member of the same society. He forgets the main spirit of his age and indulges only in the wishes of getting better society. Only wish and longing is not enough to create such situation as one likes. For this there remains the need of will power. That will power makes the man able who can cross any problems which comes in front of him.

When the poet sees the disintegration, degeneration, social injustice and corruption every where in the society, he feels that he can't face and remove such situations out from his society. Instead of challenging and fighting against it, he plunges on nostalgia, family humiliations and guilt and goes to be mad. Plunging or lamenting on the by gone days is not the positive aspect for the betterment of the coming generations or societies.

There is one notion that hero can sacrifice himself for the welfare of the nation and its people. But Lowell can't put himself in such notion. He is psychologically weak. Those persons who are psychologically weak or vulnerable, they want to take the indirect ways of getting relief from the existing anxieties. For the vulnerable, the indirect ways of getting relief from pain, humiliations and anxieties are alcoholism, sexuality, drug addiction and lamenting on the lost one. All above given things are not the positive means of solution of the problems. The real heroes do not take the help of such things but fight against the problems more courageously and very cunningly.

Lowell encounters the repressed within himself because he has such impulses which are condemned by the society as irrational, destructive and immoral one. At the same time he is trapped within the painful experiences of familial conflicts and deaths. And finally he nearly meets the break down of mind and spirit. It shows that he can't

control his psyche or self. He is very vulnerable both by his mind and psychology. At such time Lowell uses the confessional technique to express his poignant experiences. One needs to express his or her suppressed or repressed ideas through different means like jokes, slip of tongue, creativity and dreams in order to relieve him/her self from the deepest anxieties and pains. Lowell takes the help of art to evoke awareness in American society in one hand and on the other hand he crates the myth of America and a contemporary civilization generally whose history and present predicament are embodied in those of his own family and epitomized in his own psychological experience. He takes the writings as the means of confessing the bitter experiences of ups and downs of his era and at the same time he takes writings as such a means which brings the social injustice and decadence of American society into the light.

Lowell wants to live the life of intensity and bring the values back in the American society by removing the decadence. But he remains failure in this case because of his inability to understand the relation between the human psyche and its surrounding environment. Whole American society has lost its values and code of conduct due to political and social injustice. There is uncertainty in the human psyche due to the fear of war and deception. Different wars become the cause of split human personality. In such condition most of the people fall in the dirty ditches of the society. Same thing happens to Lowell. He has wished to come out from such ditches but lacks the will power and key idea of the solution. He does not show his bold and brave heroic nature but shows only feeble hope of probability of coming out from such ditch and restore the lost history by performing the heroic duty. He becomes unable to do so and to give the leadership to the people to bring the drastic change in the society as a hero. Here we see his inability to

control the corrupted and disordered situation and his bad habits. He is not hero in traditional sense because psychologically vulnerable, he can't face the reality he rather indulges into bad habits. Yet he at the same time shows his guts to confess his bad deeds. So, he is a different kind of hero- confessional hero. All the people can not confess but he can. He is a hero because he has courage to confess publicly through writing. But he can't maintain the real spirit of hero. Hero can sacrifice his life for the welfare of nation, power, pleasure and wealth. He should create hopeful and better condition. He has to think about the nation's wide identity. Thinking about the victory on war, taking adventures and dangerous journey and facing great challenge are the profession of hero. Such characterises can't be found on the hero of *Life Studies*. He rather becomes the intimate fellow of humiliations, depression, frustration, alcoholism, unhealthy sexuality and so on. He takes the help of such things to get relief from the over ridden anxiety. So it makes clear that he is psychologically vulnerable hero.

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