STATEMENT

This work is a comparative study of war poetry by English poets of the First World War, the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War.

The poetry written during each war has been covered separately in detail by critics and scholars, particularly that of the First World War, while this work brings out the distinctive features of the poetry of each group of poets, as well as differences between the groups arising out of the political situations and attitudes prevalent at that time.

Each of the wars has been dealt with in two chapters.

The original works used for the chapters on the poetry of the First World War are the collected poems of Owen, Rosenberg, Sassoon and an anthology on First World War poetry. Using these original sources this work in the first place classifies the poetry of the First World War into three distinctive groups such as the early poetry, the transitional poetry and the later poetry. Secondly it brings out the distinctive features of the poetry of each period as well as of the war as a whole. The idea of a transitional period has not to the researcher's knowledge been highlighted before.
For the poetry on the Spanish Civil War poems by British poets, combatants and non-combatants, have been selected from anthologies of the thirties period. To highlight the distinguishing features of the poetry of this war, translated poems by Spanish poets have also been analysed. The work brings out the differences in the nature of expression in the poetry by Spanish as well as the British poets.

Apart from this what distinguishes the poetry of the Spanish Civil War from the other wars is also brought out in this work.

Critical discussion of the poems pertaining to the Spanish war is usually incidentally included in critical studies of the thirties. Here the poems have been studied as a group. Besides, they have been compared to poems by Spanish poets. Originality may thus be claimed for this aspect of the thesis.

On the poetry of the Second World War reference has been made to the three poets namely Keith Douglas, Sidney Keyes and Alun Lewis. The researcher has used these poets as well as poems by other soldier poets from an anthology on Air Force Poetry by John Pudney and Henry Treece and an anthology The Terrible Rain by Brian Gardner. Putting all this material together, this work brings out
how the Second World War was a total war, in the sense of involving civilians, as well as being fought in the air, on land, at sea, in the desert and jungle terrain. This work is original in its treatment of the poetry of the Second World War in sections such as 'The New Learning', the 'Home Front', the experience at the front, the treatment of the enemy, the alien land, and the poems on the aftermath. From the analysis of this poetry the distinctive features of the poetry of this war are brought out.

A background chapter to the poetry of each of these wars has also been included here. For this the sources that have been used are histories, novels, memoirs, autobiographies and letters. The intention is to examine how far the full range of experiences undergone by the soldiers have been dealt with in the poetry and how the poetic treatment has been carried out.

A student of English literature may only be fairly familiar with the events that led to the First World War and the Second World War. But they will have only vague ideas of a heroic cause and how people all over the world rallied around it in the belief that on the fate of Spain hinged the fate of humanity all over. Hence the researcher has taken the help of books on the Spanish Civil War and rendered a complete picture of the political background preceding the war. This background will give a better insight into the
poetry written during the Spanish Civil War.

Another original aspect of this work is the personal interviews that have been held with a person involved in the Spanish War and with civilians in a war zone during the Second World War.

And in conclusion this work compares the poetry of each of the wars and proceeds to highlight what distinguishes the poetry of each war.

S L Kudchadkar

(Dr. Mrs. S.L. Kudchadkar)
GUIDE

S. Vijayalakshmi

(Vijayalakshmi Seshadri)
Candidate