C. Day Lewis (1904 - 1972) claims a place of unique significance among the radical liberals of the thirties. Like W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender, he also felt so deeply outraged at the enormous stretch of social injustices and inequalities that he was intuitively driven to repudiate the traditional approach of evasive mechanism and cynical disgust. His fresh response to the immediate issues and his faith in the programmatic action to resolve the contemporary tensions give us an idea of the specific nature of his social commitment. Underlining the topical importance of his poetry, Francis Scarfe observes that Lewis came forward at the right time with a concrete enthusiasm and with an overwhelming desire to create and defend something constructive.1

Even at an early stage, C. Day Lewis felt a growing consciousness of the decaying bourgeois culture and the disintegrating traditional faiths and values despite perfect security of his personal upbringing in a democratic setup. He states that he was always haunted by the idea of accelerating social change through a change of heart and the idea of a new social order developing a new man and the conflict between
individual freedom and mass economic conditionment. He strongly wished to integrate his personal emotions with deeper social and political realities of the times. In his poems of the period under consideration, he advocated the cultivation of social virtues and initiated a course of action which could possibly resolve the prevailing predicament. His recognition of his existence as an individual in an everchanging society, it may be emphasised, gave a sharper edge to his poetic vision and added to his consciousness of public issues instead of diminishing the strength of his poetry of social commitment.

Unlike W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender who, inspite of their Icelandic and Anglo Jewish slants respectively, simultaneously dealt with the issues on international front, C. Day Lewis emerges out to be essentially a poet of English sensibility and a man of deeper national moorings. He felt an acute sense of social responsibility for the troubled England and expressed direct concern with the national issues. Despite his flirtations with romantic rebellion, Lewis may always, as his son Sean Day Lewis points out, be taken as the man who longed to come to terms with society or wanted a society with which he could be reconciled.

Like the other radical liberals, C. Day Lewis, too, saw in communism a solution to the existing social evils that were
harrying the common masses. C. Day Lewis was a member of communist
party like Stephen Spender but they showed divergent reactions
to the party, its activities and ideology. C. Day Lewis did not
go to Spain like Stephen Spender nor did he participate in the
party activities in the way Spender took part in them in England
or in Spain. He, infact, believed in dilectical materialism which
he considered much nearer the truth than any other philosophy.
Like W.H. Auden, he was sympathetic to the proletariates but
quite unlike him, he kept himself at a distance from the practical
cause of revolution. He believed that communism could awaken
interest, kindle indignation that might spread wild fire and
flicker out in private. But he had no illusions about communist
faith as he knew that the use of communism as a stimulus and as
a kind of relief from tension cannot be a lasting one. As Lewis
himself remarks:

It is not... correct... correct to think of us as a lot
of starry eyed suckers joyously leaping down into
political arena. On the contrary, we tended to feel
political action and the writing of verse with a social
content, as temporary necessities; and we treated the
slogans and rigid ideology of the extreme left with
considerable levity and scepticism.

Samuel Hynes appears to underline Lewis's position when he
observes:
Of all his poetic generation, Day Lewis was the one who most wanted to believe in the communist faith. But he was an honest, intelligent man, and a self-consciously dedicated poet and his doubts and criticisms creep in. C. Day Lewis makes an important observation when he states that communism appears to him to be proclaiming 'revolution for life's sake'. He finds in it a whole hearted attempt ever made to raise the individual to his environment. Yet, here too, he confronts the bully and the spy, and becomes sceptical about the feasibility of any system which can expel and survive that poison and resolve the crisis. So Lewis's doubts and criticisms become inseparable part of his approach to communist ideology.

It is significant that C. Day Lewis adopted new technical forms to express new public consciousness. He made consistent use of imagery taken from the contemporary scenario, though, one may not come across the kind of perfection achieved by Auden and Spender in the field of industrial imagery. His poetry, thus, becomes a mirror to the contemporary life in all its entirety and clearly shows Lewis's adaptability to the new poetic situation.

His efforts to identify his poetic self with the emerging social values display C. Day Lewis's consciousness of the prevailing crisis. Collins suggests that this passionate integrity
must be sought not in isolation but in the midst of common life, not abstractly but concretely. Dyment Clifford crystallises the situation in his following comments:

It puts before us the dilemma of a man hesitating between two contended allegiances - one allegiance he already feels - an allegiance to the familiar, his family, friends, class, to traditional ways of thought and behaviour, the other is an allegiance he wishes to assume - an allegiance to philosophy of social thought and action that will inevitably make necessary some degree of betrayal. For a man with a conscience this is a cruel dilemma to be in. He might wish a solution that will be kind to both the parties but this is impossible. The voice of loyalty to one side must be disloyalty to the other.

C. Day Lewis does make constant efforts to come out of the unpleasant state of perplexity. He seems to be aware that this conflict can be resolved through a rational and healthy outlook. His poems reflect his hopeful optimism in finding "a radical solution to political and social evils of the society." In *Transitional Poem* (1929), the poet is fully conscious of the all pervading chaos as the following lines aptly reveal:

'Behold man's droll appearance
Faith wriggling upon his hooks
Chin-deep in Eternal Flux
Angling for reassurance.'
The poet expresses his full faith in the reconstruction of society through the development of individual personality. He intends to bring home the urgency of overcoming the internal disaster which if developed into a disease, may devitalise the strength of the mind too. He, therefore, emphasises upon the need to overcome the muddled and self-defeating attitude to life through cultivation of rational outlook. Whereas Auden gives a call for urgent direct action to resolve the crisis, C. Day Lewis seeks the solution of the inner as well as outer chaos in 'the pure symmetry of brain' (POC p.6). Rational outlook, C. Day Lewis believes, can become instrumental in initiating a direct social action to overcome the weltering confusion. He underlines the importance of intellectual discipline when he remarks that those who are indecisive will be scattered like squadrons of clouds even by a mild current of wind but a fragile paper kite can face stormy winds because it has hands 'to keep the cable tense' (POC p.7) and eyes to detect the flaw.

In part II of the sequence in poem No.17, the poet seems to contradict his own stance of cultivation of rational outlook by expressing a longing to learn through 'pores':

Let logic analyse the hive,
Wisdom's content to have the honey:
So I'll go bite the crust of things and thrive
While hedgerows still are sunny.

(POC P.18)
Unlike W.H. Auden, C.Day Lewis, it is obvious, does not ignore emotions in favour of intellect.

In his programme of social reconstruction, C.Day Lewis emphasises upon the instrumental role of love in resolving the crisis:

In the Chaotic age  
This was enough for me -  
Her beauty walked the page  
And it was poetry.

(POC P.32)

C.Day Lewis like Spender and Auden, does believe in the regenerative force of love, but unlike Spender who believes in the magical power of love to transform society, C.Day Lewis seeks its fulfilment on this material earth only. He believes that the fulfilment of love will offer a point of reference in a world of flux and discord by providing an outlet to repressed emotions. This process will, further, help in developing healthy personalities stable enough to reconstruct society. The poet's persistent emphasis on love, not only as a potential means of personal regeneration but also as an escape-mechanism from the pressures of the unpleasant outside realities is, of course, a
reflection on the limitations of his perspective.

Lewis's pronounced emphasis on development of human personality and adoption of healthy attitude to life revolves round his belief in life of contentment. He condemns the capitalist system which breeds the perverted notion of ambition:

There's nothing but to recant
Ambition, and be content
Like the poor child at play
To find a holiday
In the sticks and mud
Of a familiar road.

(POC P.13)

Thus, the poet offers individualistic solutions to the social problems. His suggestion of altering the social reality by means of inculcation of rational outlook, reliance on love and certitude may sound idealistic and his course of action may seem abstract but the thrust towards the required changes to reinforce the rebuilding of existing social setup is, indeed, sharp. His awareness and struggle to fulfil his social dream may be taken as a big positive achievement in the process of social change. His attempt to give a public dimension to his private vision by his recognition of social disorder, his confident tone, his systematic programme for social reorientation—all together suggest that he is intent on something constructive and positive.
From Feathers To Iron (1931) is a step forward in C. Day Lewis's efforts to integrate his deeply personal emotions with deeper social and political realities of the contemporary society. Though the poem centres round the approaching birth of the child - a purely personal subject, it has very pronounced social overtones. The poet's own remarks reproduced below would give us an indication of the poem's larger meaning:

When I was writing "From Feathers To Iron"....I found that my own experiments and apprehensions linked up quite spontaneously with a larger issue- The struggle and joy in which our new world should be born and derived strength from it.12

C. Day Lewis further implements his programme of social reconstruction through his reflections on the nature of love, the outlook on life, the tensions and anxieties of the thirties emerging out of personal metaphor, the threat of the impending mishap, the concept of struggle, the existing social set up and the one intended. The hope of a new life emerging out of the debris of the old order is constantly maintained.

The regenerating power of love to resolve the broader issues, for instance, is reflected in the following lines:

Nor fear we now to live who in the valley
Of the shadow of life have found a cause away:
For love restores the nerve and love is under
Our feet resilient. Shall we be weary?

(POC P.36)
The poet is equally adept at the depiction of passionate and intense relationship between man and woman:

Now pain will come for you,
Take you into desert without dew,
Labouring through the unshadowed day
To blast the sharp scarps, open up a way
There for the future line.
But I shall wait afar off and alone.

(POC P.42)

Despite the apparently despairing tone of romantic love, the poet finally ends up with an affirmative stance:

And like the luminous night around her
She has at heart a certain dawn.

(POC P.39)

Lewis's love poetry does not have any abstract and metaphysical ring around it like the poetry of Stephen Spender. It is realistic. On the physical plane, Lewis has no inhibitions in acknowledging the satisfying pleasures of love. But it is finally the recouperative power of love that binds the personal with the social and is eventually made instrumental in generating greater harmony on social plane. For C. Day Lewis, love may not
be eternal but it is born in the heart and is valuable in its creation. Haunted by an apprehension of a sudden mishap, the celebration of creative urge symbolised in love is always accompanied by the tension of impending peril as is seen in the very beginning of the poem:

Suppose that we, tomorrow or the next day,  
Came to an end- in storm the shafting broken,  
Or a mistaken signal, the flange lifting  
Would that be premature, a text for sorrow?

(POC P.36)

The apprehensions are expressed in an effective manner through the images of storm, broken shafting, mistaken signal and flange lifting. The existence of tension on the personal plane is metaphorically related to the tensions in the social milieu but it, however, is not allowed to overpower the poet's firm belief that old life may die but the new possibilities always exist for the replenishment of what has become outworn.

C. Day Lewis adopts a very practical and realistic approach on the issue of life and death. He is of the opinion that man can move towards regeneration by helping the forces of life to grow. Unlike his predecessors T.S. Eliot and Yeats, who deal with the issue of impermanence from religious point of view, C.Day Lewis's approach is to see life in terms of its availability to
human beings on this earth only. He does not mystify life and
death but looks at them from materialistic point of view. Maxwell
sums up Day Lewis's thesis about life when he remarks:

The moment is to be seized as a passage to the future,
valuable because it has existed, not regretted because
it is transient.\textsuperscript{13}

The following lines clearly reflect this:

Over dark wood rises one dawn felicitous,
Bright through awakened shadows fall her crystal
Cadenzas, and once for all the wood is quickened
So our days visit us, and it suffices.

(POC P.36)

C.Day Lewis, therefore, moves optimistically forward with
the creative forces of life towards a confident future. He has
sanguine faith in the new possibilities:

Speaking from the snow
The crocus lets me know
That there is life to come, and go

(POC P.38)

Crocus, thus, becomes a symbol of rejuvenating forces of
social life. Unlike Auden who sometimes somersaults in defeatism
and cynicism, C.Day Lewis is unalteringly enthusiastic in his
optimistic faith in life and its prospects. His approach differs from that of even Stephen Spender who in his poem "The Uncreating Chaos"14 harps on nihilistic philosophy.

C. Day Lewis, in fact, emphasises upon the role of effort and courage to maintain optimism. Like Auden, he, in poem No.3, exhorts his companions to 'fasten on the harsh habit of toil'. He visualises the field as an athlete, baring his flowery vest for a wrestling bout—a metaphor for struggle and fight, 'Rain and sleet' (POC P.37) represent the chilling forces of winter. The poem positively asserts the need of struggle in its condemnation of those who seek escape routes like swallows. It is also implicit in poet's appreciation of the poor labourer who stays behind in the winter season, knowing well enough that it is a bitter affair and it will be slow to pass, but facing it boldly and calmly.

Though, as Maxwell points out, "From Feathers to Iron", "is primarily about the anxieties and hopes of the prospective father and mother"15 yet undeniably it underlines C. Day Lewis's social preoccupations. The poet, as the poem illustrates, has clear recognition of the frustrations and miseries that await the newborn in the existing social system:

.... born to essential dark,
To an age that toes the line
And never oversteps the mark.
Take off your coat: grow lean:
Suffer humiliation:
Patrol the passes alone,
And eat your iron-ration
Else, wag as the world wags
One more mechanical Jane
Or gentleman in wax.

Under such hostile and inimical conditions, it is imperative that the child remains ready to fight the evil forces operating in the existing society. The poet regards the task of reconstruction of society as an individual burden and not a collective responsibility. But the following lines express poet's recurrent doubts about the ability of ordinary individual to share this burden of social responsibility:

What were we at, the moment when we kissed
Extending the franchise
To an indifferent class, would we enlist
Fresh power who know not how to be so great?
Beget and breed a life—what's this
But to perpetuate
Man's labour, to enlarge a rank estate?

Such apprehensions might emanate from the poet's petty bourgeois mentality. But the constant realisation that something
could be done to save the present society is, nevertheless, there. He is conscious of the 'dead follies' too. If only somehow follies were amended:

Here too fountains will soon be flowing  
Empty the Hills where love was lying late, was playing.  
Shall spring to life; we shall find there  
Milk and honey for love's heir,  
Shadow from sun also, deep ground for growing.

(POC P.46)

The poet is optimistic that his efforts will bear fruit though a state of conflict lingers on. Like Spender, C.Day Lewis, too is radical at one time wishing to bring about revolutionary changes and at the other time he is:

The watcher in the window looking out  
At the eleventh hour on sun and shadow,  
On fixed abodes and the bright air between,  
Knows for the first time what he stands to lose.

(POC P.50)

This conflict between the social and the personal brings out sharply the limitations of the perspective shared by Lewis with other poets of the thirties. The achievements as well as failures owe their special character, once again, to radical liberal concerns of C.Day Lewis.
The Magnetic Mountain (1933) is another sequence of poems which is a clear manifestation of the poet's representative critique on the capitalist system and its supporting bourgeoisie. It stands out as a dominant plea for ushering in of a better social order. Apart from pleading against social injustice, various related themes like mother fixation, the public school tradition, the orthodox religion, the church, the politicians and the press also find sharp focus.

Critics recognise this poem sequence as one of his most socially-committed poems. Unlike From Feathers to Iron, where though social issues are central, the poet uses private metaphor as a nucleus which suppresses the social overtones of the poem, The Magnetic Mountain is manifestly politically-oriented. The poet adopts a clearly progressive stance and attempts to pierce through the exterior facade of the decadent middle class. He tries to diagnose the maladies of the present times - emotional vacuum and abuse of technology. He unbares the situation of an ordinary man in the present society in the following lines:

By hunger sapped, trapped by stealthy tide,
Brave for so long but whimpering in the end.

(POC P.55)
Boredom, frustration and inner sense of insecurity define the mindscape of ordinary individuals:

Turning over old follies in ante-room,
For first born waiting or for late reprieve,
Watching the safety valve, the slackening loom,
Abed, abroad, at every turn and tomb
A shadow starts, a hand is on your sleeve.

(POC P.55)

The poet feels, under the circumstances, the dire necessity of an escape to a utopian world as a relief from the intolerable situation. He painfully underlines that "our bitter cordial, our daily bread" shadow us everywhere "And will not let us be till we are dead"

(POC P.55)

The poet highlights the inconsistencies of the existing capitalist system to underline the need for change. He is grieved to point out the pathetically apathetic attitude of the middle class to the existing crisis. He introduces four defendants of the system who in turn display their resentment against the programme of social change envisaged by the poet and wish to maintain the status quo. The mother who is introduced as the first defendant is averse to his son's assertion of individuality and urge to cross the frontiers:
Warm in my walled garden the flower grew first,
Transplanted it ran wild on the estate.
Why should it ever need a new sun?

(POC PP.58-59)

The son's urge represents the poet's irresistible urge to break with tradition and see new horizons. Another defendant is a school master. Through his apparently eulogistic speech about public school ethos, the poet, in fact, satirizes the public school system of education, which is a variation on the negatives of bureaucracy and, hence, curtails individual freedom and initiative. The poet obviously means to deprecate the school master's servile attitude to the institutional authorities and admire the critic's warning against self-abuse. The poet satirizes the non-human approach in their methods of teaching in churning out insensitive administrators:

Here we inoculate with dead ideas
Against blood-epidemics, against
The infection of faith and the excess of life.
Our methods are up to date; we teach
Through head and not by heart,
Language with gramophones and sex with charts.

(POC P. 60)

The apprehensions of the mystic, the third defendant regarding losing his influence considerably in an age of
advancement of science and technology obliquely suggest that he wishes to continue befooling the people by advocating adoption of spiritual means to resolve the socio-economic crisis: "Promising the bread of heaven to the hungry of earth" (POC P.61). Again the fourth defendant, a housewife's possessive temperament suggests curtailment of individual freedom which is a prerequisite for developing healthy man and woman relationships, which may further create a better environment for social change.

All these defendants for different reasons show inadequate responses to the situation and hence impede the revolutionary forces. The poet rejects the position taken by each one of them because their stance helps only in maintaining the status quo. The poet seems to suggest that we shall have to liberate ourselves from the strangleholds of values and attitudes which, however, attractive they might look, enable us merely to seek an adjustment with the existing system. These four defendants represent British middle class of the thirties. C.Day Lewis trenchantly lashes at this class for offering a strong and determined defence of the established order. He exposes the dominant bourgeoisie for its ineffectiveness and its practice of deception:

Born barren, a freak growth, root in rubble,
Fruitlessly blossoming, whose foliage suffocates,
Their sap is sluggish, they reject the Sun.

(POC P.69)
Again:

These drowned the farms to form a pleasure lake, 
In time of drought they drain the reservoir 
Through private pipes for baths and sprinklers

Getters not begetters; gainers not beginners; 
Whiners, no winners; no triers, betrayers, 
Who steer by no star, whose moon means nothing.

(POC P.70)

In poem no. 25 of *The Magnetic Mountain*, C. Day Lewis gives a warning to the exploiters not to go too far in hurling atrocities at the weaker sections of the society:

They that take the bribe shall perish by the bribe, 
Dying of dry rot, ending in asylums, 
A curse to children, a charge on the state, 
But still their fears and frenzies infect us; 
Drug nor isolation will cure this cancer: 
It is now or never, the hour of the knife 
The break with the past, the major operation.

(POC P.70)

Thus, the sole motive of the ruling middle class, the poet emphasises, in maintaining the existing system is their overriding self-interest.
C. Day Lewis tries to provide a new hope for disarrayed society and tries to overcome the fears for change in the following lines:

..... I must wring
A living from despair
And out of steel a song.

(POC P.68)

But the poet, we discern, cannot resist the tendency to assuage his bitterness by means of a flight into a utopian world where the victims of the system shall be "wielders of power and welders of a new world" (POC P.77). He sings optimistically:

The siren in the morning
That gives the worker warning
The whisper from the loam
Promising life to come.

Manifesto of Peace
Read in an altered face
Who have heard and believe it true
That new life must break through

(POC P.75)

However, the extent of the poet's radicalism has to be viewed against his hypothetical assertion that his own magnetic mountain, which is an imaginary phenomenon will provide a solution
to the crisis-ridden situation. The imaginative and individualistic escape into the magnetic mountain from the social and political realities may give the impression that the poet is opting for evasion of reality rather than devising some tangible means to confront the reality. Nevertheless, his revolutionary sentiments are filled more with romantic humanism than mere intellectual doctrinarianism. Magnetic mountain is symbolic of his idea of communism which will wipe out all the economic ills of the society. C.Day Lewis's attempt, however, suggests a strong desire for change and emphasises upon the rejection of the decadent society. This reflects a kind of action. Through this critique on the system, the poet does seek the fullness of human personality which will definitely pave the way to the emergence of a regenerated and better society.

C.Day Lewis's next work *A Time to Dance* (1935) came to limelight when economic misery was at its height and England and Europe were painfully tense with the threats of war looming large over the horizon. C.Day Lewis, with his poetic sensibility purposefully awake to the threats of the times, moved away from writing poetry out of personal relationships and wrote a more public kind of poetry in which he sought to give expression to the aspirations of the young left-wing writers and thinkers with whom he had much sympathy. His poem "The conflict" reflects
the conflict in the contemporary mind between world of past values and the emerging social order. The poet seems to encourage men to keep up spirits in the face of horrible challenges ahead:

As storm-cocks sing,
Flinging their natural answer in the wind's teeth,
And care not if it is waste of breath
or birth carol of spring.

(POC P.85)

He exhorts them to sing optimistically and maintain the gusto of fortitude: "For sorrow finds a swift release in song,
/ And pride its poise" (POC P.85). The poet also uses expressions like 'the blood red dawn' and 'the red advances of life' which are indicative of the ardent fervour of the poet for the establishment of a better social order. But like Stephen Spender, he feels that he is one "who on a tilting deck sings. / To keep men's courage up..." (POC P.85). The concluding lines of the poem, however, suggest that the poet has finally resolved to come out of the impasse:

Move then with new desires,
For where we used to build and love
Is no man's land and only ghosts can live
Between two fires.

(POC P.86)
In his poem "In Me Two worlds" also the poet refers to the conflict in his mind but his wish for a change from inherited conditions of living predominates the conflict. He realises that evil prevails everywhere producing blood lust in men like Hitler, Mussolini and Franco. He visualises that:

The armies of the dead
Are trench'd within my bones,
My blood's their semaphore, their wings
Are watchers overhead.

(POC P.87)

There could be no sadder realization that wars are inherent in the minds of men:

Conscious of power and pride
Imperially they move
To pacify an unsettled Zone
The life for which they died.

But see, from vision's height
March down the men to come,
And in my body rebel cells
Look forward to the fight.

(POC P.88)

Again, in "Losers" the poet raises the issue of war and its consequent miseries. In this poem he expresses his intense
grief over the complacent apathy of the people to the threats to peaceful existence. He is moved to see the people who were victims of the first world war:

Whose flighted hopes fell down short of satisfaction;  
The killed in action, the blasted in beauty, all choosers  
Of the wrong channel for love's seasonal spate:

Cheerless some amid rock or rank forest life-long  
Laboured to hew an estate, but they died childless:

(POC P.86)

The poet pities the victims in a poignant manner:

What can we say of these, from the womb wasted,  
Whose nerve was never tested in act, who fell at start,  
Who had no beauty to lose, born out of season?

(POC P.87)

C.Day Lewis also expresses his concern for the next generation whose existence is threatened by an impending war. He ironically brings out the complacency of the ruling middle class and their indifference to the agonies of the unprivileged ones emphasising simultaneously on the glaring social and economic inequalities:
Frightened we stop our ears to the truth they are telling who toil to remain alive, whose children start from sleep Weeping into a world worse than nightmares.

(POC P.37)

The poet hints at the wide gulf that has been created in the lives of the people. Inspite of material development and industrial advance, the British society could not solve the miseries of the masses.

He vividly points out:

Splendour of cities they built cannot ennoble
The barely living, ambitious for bread alone. Pity,
Trails not her robe for these and their despairs.

(POC P.87)

In another of his poems "Two songs" the first song refers to the changed scenario after the ravages of war. The following lines crystallize the situation:

There was laughter and in the lanes at evening;
Handsome were the boys then, and girls were gay.
But lost in Flanders by meddalled commanders
The lads of the village are vanished away.

(POC P.89)
The economic crash and slump came as the aftermath of the first world war. Unemployment and poverty ensued as a consequence of its evil impact. The poet points out the miserable plight of the unemployed masses:

They fight against hunger but still it is stronger -
The Prime of our land grows cold as the clay.

(POC P.89)

The poet refers to the women of the town as rotting "flowers" and in this way unveils the pathetic existing conditions. The second song through the love song of the unemployed lovers underlines once again the desperation that has set in the social and personal life of the people. The lover will extend his love to his beloved only if she is prepared to suffer with him the hardships of labour and then enjoy fruits of union.

Like Stephen Spender who felt grieved to confront a society where the unemployed "stare through with such hungry eyes"17, C. Day Lewis too experienced a painful British society of the thirties and offered us an equally heart-rending glimpse into the existing deficient socio-economic system by laying bare its excesses, injustices and problems of unemployment and poverty. "A carol", for example, brings before our eyes the terrible spectacle of an
unprivileged baby who lies cold and forlorn in the cradle. Even Nature is apathetic to the boundless misery of the child who is asleep in a slum.

Thus taken together the poems in the sequence are highly expressive of C.Day Lewis's social awareness. Ian Parsons has appropriately observed that "The Conflict", "Losers" and "In Me Two worlds" poignantly convey the plight of the underdog in a stratified society, and reflect not only Day Lewis's growing concern for humanity, but also, more important of his poetry, his increasing sense of the tug and tension between the past he had inherited and the future he so passionately hoped to see come out. C.Day Lewis recognises the intricate socio-economic and political crisis of the thirties and, like other contemporary poets, is held back by the limitations of his radical liberal perspective from giving a call for total revolution through collective action.

This understanding of his perspective leads us to another of C.Day Lewis's poem sequences Noah And Waters (1936). The sequence deals with the issue of the choice that Noah makes between clinging to his old life and making an effort to come out of its grip by taking recourse to the path of revolution symbolized in the flood. The sequence shows a sharper tone, surer vision and firmer approach to the issues taken for treatment.
In this sequence, as Sean Day Lewis also suggests "the ruling class is represented by three burgesses who argue realistically for the status quo and incidently forecast the splitting of the atom in defence of capitalism. The revolutionary class is the choral flood. Noah is a divided bourgeois intellectual of two voices - the first fearful of change and the second favouring commitment to the Flood. He is recognisably a self analysis of C. Day Lewis himself.19

The sequence essentially deals with the hypocrite middle classes leading directionless lives, seeking false entertainment in empty club parties and weekend picnics and threatened with eventual destruction. The alternate vision provided by communism is implicit in the critique of ruling middle classes. The poet makes an appeal to the cultured burgesses to cast off prejudices and make common cause with the oncoming revolution of the working class. Lewis sees communism in terms of a collapse of the kind of life to which he and other cultured middle class persons have been accustomed. It does not merely signify fulfilment of the material needs of the common masses. There was an underlying psychological fear, no doubt, but the poet did feel biting anger and genuine pity at witnessing the pathetic consequences of the last great war and visualizing the horror of the impending war. The passionate appeals, the ironical tone, logical arguments and
sentiments of hope and pity encompassed in the sequence are pointers to a sharp urgency which is much more pronounced in this poem than in any other poem.

C. Day Lewis's last poetic sequence of the thirties *Overtures To Death* (1938) was composed during the chaotic period of Europe in 1938, when the Spanish civil war brought in its end victory for Franco and defeat for the republican forces. At this juncture the miseries of human existence had surpassed all economic and political tensions taking a very pronounced direction - an organized march towards death through war. This sequence, therefore, deals with the question of death and it encompasses the fear of the people haunted with fighting aircrafts with booming shells chasing them. Sean Day Lewis aptly remarks that this fifth and last of Cecil's 1930s volume of verse is, indeed, dark with silhouettes of bombers and fighters, and the acrid smoke of guns curls from its pages.20

C. Day Lewis is of the opinion that death and destruction through war is no solution to the existing crisis. Now the overriding need is to devise some means to widen the span of life. In the first poem of *Overtures to Death*, "Maple and Sumach" the poet sadly reflects over the consequences of war which can give only transient fame or glorious death:
... but no such blaze
Briefly can cheer man's ashen, harsh decline;
His fall is short of pride, he bleeds within
And paler creeps to the dead end of his days.

(POC P.104)

Another poem of this sequence "February 1936" marks a change in the sense that political militant in C.Day Lewis appears to have retired. The poem portrays the overpowering sense of fear in the opening lines:

Infirm and grey
This leaden-hearted day
Drags its lank hours, wishing itself away.

(POC P.104)

The poet projects the excessive stress of fear on the children in the following lines:

We cannot meet
Our children's mirth, at night
Who dream their blood upon a darkening streat.

(POC P.105)

The depression mounts and the poet cries out in despair:
Stay away, spring!
Since death is on the wing,
To blast our seed and poison everything.

(POC P.105)

In his poem "The Newsreel" the poet castigates newspaper journalism for its obsessive engagements with the superficial activities of the ruling groups. The other side of this dreamland whose innumerous people are exploited hardly receives any notice in the degenerated capitalist press. The middle class people are lost in their illusory dreams without bothering about the horror of impending calamity:

Oh, look at the war planes! Screaming hysterical treble -
In the long power dive, like gannets they fall asleep
But what are they to trouble -
These silver shadows to trouble your watery womb-deep sleep?

(POC P.106)

The poet visualises that behind the facade of respectability the members of the ruling middle class are busy in malpractices, manufacturing guns and armaments to kill thousands of innocent women and children. The poet warns the middle class, who profess correct ethics but in practice who are perverts, to mend their ways before it is too late. The warning is explicit in the following lines:
Grow nearer home - and out of the dream-house stumbling
One night into a strangling air and the flung
Rags of children and thunder of stone niagaras tumbling
You'll know you slept too long.

(POC P.106)

His next poetic ventures compiled in "The Nabara" unfold
C.Day Lewis's gradual drift from social consciousness to a larger
canvas of human situation from where immediate conflicts and
their ready solutions were receding. The poem presents the battle
between four government armed trawlers and the rebel cruisers in
heroic terms. In this poem, the purpose is to establish the
actuality of the occasion and to locate the abstract significance
of heroism. The struggle of good and evil, resolution withstanding
physical defeat. The poem succeeds because it synthesises the
straight forward narrative sense and the poet's positive attitude
to events.

The poetry of C.Day Lewis admirably synthesised his
individual integrity, social preoccupations and human concern in
a period of nightmarish existence. His own remarks are quite
pertinent here:

This was a period when it seemed possible to hope, to
choose, to act as individuals but for a common end;
possible for us as writers, to bridge the old romantic
chasm between the artist and the man of action. The poet
and the ordinary.
C. Day Lewis's poems are an effective reflection on his ardent enthusiasm for change, his mood of anger against the present day society and his passionate longing for a better social order. He emphasises upon the regenerative power of love which alone can save humanity from going to dogs. His initial work *Transitional Poem* is a trial effort in the direction of fulfilment of his social commitment and emphasises upon the need for inculcation of a rational outlook. His identification of the crisis and his confident tone contribute in a big way to the radical gestures manifest in his poetry. These features mark the beginning of his social consciousness which gains maturer footing and added dimension in *From Feathers To Iron*. His treatment of love, beauty, life and death and tensions and anxieties reveal a practical approach. He throws a bold challenge to the existence of death and sides with the creative forces towards a confident future. The poems bring out his optimistic contention that man can progress towards regeneration by helping the forces of life to grow. In *The Magnetic Mountain* he invokes the vision of a regenerated and dynamic society. His approach may be individualistic but his attack on middle classes is sharp and emphatic. Like Stephen Spender, he indicates what is repellent in the existing social order but his limitations are clearly visible in the alternative he offers to the existing system.
Unlike Spender who highlights the filth and squalor prevalent in the lives of unprivileged multitudes, C.Day Lewis's main thrust is pointed towards the exposure of excesses of middle classes.

His poems also show C.Day Lewis's sharp awareness of the emerging phenomenon of science and technology which, he believes, is inevitable part of the process of sociological change. He, however, is troubled with the thought of the adverse impact of growing technology through its misapplication by the custodians of the existing system. C.Day Lewis also deals with the issues of war and peace in *Overtures To Death* sequence.

The indepth analysis of his poems makes him out to be a radical liberal who takes note of the injustices and inequalities prevalent in the system but stops short of preparing the proletariates for a revolutionary action. He seeks justice for them by removing the anomalies of the existing system. 'The poems of C.Day Lewis', Ian Parsons suggests, were still inescapably works of promise, rather than achievement, works in which the poet's intellectual aplomb and technical virtuosity, were to some extent developed at the expense of emotional extent.22

After the thirties, C.Day Lewis contented himself with the life of a poet writing about traditional theories. He withdrew from his radical stance of the thirties into a world of pastoral beauty. In this context his own remarks seem self-evident:
It was not that I was disillusioned in communism, or even that my initial enthusiasm had, like so many of my enthusiasms in the past, too rapidly burnt itself out, but that I was giving far more time and energy than I could afford to political work... If my poetry had gained by the enlargement of interests, it was now losing because of many distractions this broader life had brought with it.23

We may, thus, conclude that C.Day Lewis, like the other radical liberals of the thirties, is a socially conscious poet who projected in his poetry with a confidence and vigour, a social vision of a better social order. With his rational outlook he made an objective survey of the social milieu and made a daring attempt to recapitulate the radiant music of humanity.
The poet is primarily a spokesman, making statements or incantations on behalf of himself or others - usually for both, for it is difficult to speak for oneself without speaking for others or speak for others without speaking for oneself. The poet, therefore, in a sense is man at his most self-conscious, but this means consciousness of himself as man, not consciousness of himself as a poet.

Louis MacNeice