CHAPTER IV
PHASE - II

The second phase of Edith Sitwell's poetry, as it is generally spoken of, consists of poems written between 1929 and 1940: Gold Coast Customs (1929), The Collected Poems (1930), Epithalamium (1932), Five Variations on a Theme (1934) which includes 'Metamorphosis', Selected Poems (1936) and Poems New and Old (1940).

Lehmann (1970, 20) notices that there is a marked change in the poetry of the first phase and 'Gold Coast Customs'. He compared says, for instance, that the latter poem has 'strong rhythms' with those found in 'Facade' poems, and that in effect it is far removed from the wit and gaiety of the 'Facade' sequence. Lehmann thinks that 'Gold Coast Customs' is the outcome of 'a crucial moment of Edith Sitwell's development'. Pinto (1967, 172) notices in 'Gold Coast Customs' "a tragic vision of the contemporary world comparable with 'The Waste Land' and 'Sweeney Agonistes'". What is important is that most critics have found a striking change in the poetry written after 1929, though of course, as literary critics, they notice the change primarily in terms of thematic concerns.

The second phase is, according to me, a very complex and apparently confused phase, since the poems written during the period are of various types: (a) short lyrics of the
'Facade' type (viz. Ondines, The Cat, The Nectarine Tree, Jodelling Song, The Greengage Tree, and Miss Nettybun and the Satyr's Child.) (b) experimentation in terms of language and themes: (viz. Five Songs: Daphne, The Sylph's Song, The Peech Tree and The Greengage Tree; Metropolitan: Stopping Place, The Spider, The Drunkard and Mazurka; Scotch Rhapsody, Waltz; (c) long poems: Elegy on Dead Fashions - 104 stanzas of 4 lines; The Madness of Soul, Romance - 157 lines; The Heart and the Hambone - 160 lines; Prelude - 101 lines; Prelude to a Fairy Tale - 182 lines.

I have chosen two of the most significant poems which have in them some clear pointers towards the direction of the third phase. Edith Sitwell appears to have exerted serious concentrated efforts in the writing of these long poems, and I thought if one looked closely at these poems, it would be possible to gain an insight into the various co-existing 'movements' underlying this complex phase. After choosing the poems and studying them, the difficulty that I encountered was about how to analyse 288 lines of 'Metamorphosis' and 543 lines of 'Gold Coast Customs'. The only strategy I could think of was choosing 'chunks' from each poem in proportion to its total length. On the basis of my study of the poem, I have chosen 3 chunks from 'Metamorphosis' and 5 from 'Gold Coast Customs'. Stylistic analysis, which is eminently suited to the examination of short poems, is not very suitable to that
of long poems. But if it has to be used, there is no other way but to follow the method that I have chosen. Acknowledging the inadequacy of such a procedure, we can, I think, work out certain basic features of the poem if we maintain a certain awareness of the relation between the whole and the parts.
Syllabic Structure

1. THE Coral-cold snow seemed the Parthenon,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

2. Huge peristyle of temples that are gone,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

3. And dark as Asia, now, is Beauty's daughter,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

4. The rose once clear as music O'er deep water,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

5. Now the full moon her fire and light doth spill,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

6. On turkey-plumaged leaves and window-sill,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

7. On leaves that seem the necks and plumes of urban,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

8. Turkeys, each a Sultan in a turban,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

9. And strawberries among the beavers' wool,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

10. (So grass seemed where that ruined temple's cool,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

11. Shade fell). When first the dew with light above,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

12. Makes tremble every leaf and strawberry root,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

13. The rainbow gives those berries light above,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

14. The dark rose gives them all her secret love,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

15. Until those coral tears of the rich light,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

16. Hold roses, rubies, rainbows for the sight,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

17. My ancient shadow nods a turbaned head;
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

18. One candle through thick leaves throws a gold thread;
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

19. The dark green country temple of the snows,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

20. Hides porphyry bones of nymphs whence grew the rose,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

21. And dark green dog-haired leaves of strawberries,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

22. All marked with maps of unknown lands and seas,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

23. And that small negro page, the cross dark quail,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

24. Chasing the ghosts of dairymaids that fail,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

25. In butter-yellow dew by Georgian stables,
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

26. (The snow, dark green as strawberry leaves, has gables).
cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv cv

Syllabic Structure
METAMORPHOSIS I

1 ³oe kaʊəral kauld snaʊ sɪːmd  pəθeɪnən,
2 hjuːdʒ pərɪstɔɪl əv ˈtɛmpərlz ʰæt ə ɡun,
3 ənd daːk əz ˈʃɪə nɔː iz bjuːtɪz ðəːtə
4 rauz wəns kliː əz mjuːzɪk əuvə ˈdɪːp ˈwɔːtə
5 nɔː ˈʃəfʊl muːn hoː ˈfeɪə ənd laɪt dəʊ spɪl
6 ən tɔːki-ˈplʊməɪd əlvəz ənd wɪndəʊ-sɪl
7 ən ˈlɪːvəz ʰæt sɪːm ˈʃænəks ənd pluːms əv ˈəːbən
8 tɔːkɪz ɪːtʃ ə ˈsʊltən ɪn ə ˈtəːbən
9 ənd ˈstrəbərɪz əməɭ ˈhə biːvəz wʊl
10 səʊ ˈɡrɑːs sɪːmd wəʃət ˈrʊɪnd ˈtɛmpərlz kʊːl
11 ˈʃeɪd fəl. ˈwɛn ˈfeɪst ə ˈdjuː ˈwɪʃ ˈɡaʊldən fuːt
12 miːks ˈtrembəl ˈeɪri ˈlɪːvən ənd ˈstrəbərɪ ruːt
13 ³ə ˈrɪnbəʊu ˈɡɪvəz ˈhəuz berɪz laɪt əbəv
14 ³ə daːk rauz ˈɡɪvəz tʃem ɔːl haː ˈsiːkɾɛt ɭɛv
15 antil rauz kʊəral tɪəz əv ³ə ˈrɪtʃ laɪt
16 hould rauzɪz ˈrʌbɪz ˈrɪnbəʊuʃ fəːkəsait
17 mai ənˈʃænt ˈʃʌu ˈnədz ə təːbən həd
18 ˈwən ˈkwændl ˈθruː ˈθɪk ˈlɪːvəz ˈθraʊz ə ˈɡaʊld ˈθrɛd
19 ³ə daːk ˈɡriːn ˈkæntrɪ ˈtɛmpl əv ³ə snaʊz
20 ˈhæɪdəz ˈpəʃəri ˈbʊnəz əv ˈnɪms əv ˈwɛns ˈɡrjuː ³ə ˈrəʊʊz
21 ənd daːk ˈɡriːn dəɡ-ˈhɹd ˈlɪːvəz əv ˈstrəbərɪz
22 ɔːl ˈmɑːkt ˈwɪ ˈmæps əv ˈənən ˈlændz ənd ˈsɪːz
23 ənd ˈhæt ˈsmaʊl ˈnɪgrəu pɛɪdʒ ³ə kros daːk ˈkwɛil
24 tʃeɪsɪŋ tʃəˈgɔːsts əv ˈdərɪmɛɪdz ʰæt ˈfeɪl
25 ɪn ˈbætə ˈjeɪləu djuː bai ˈdʒədʒɪən ˈʃteɪbalz
26 ³ə snaʊ daːk ˈɡriːn əz ˈstrəbərɪ ˈlɪːvəz ˈhæz ˈɡeɪbalz.

Phonetic Structure
METAMORPHOSIS I

1 THE Coral-cold snow seemed the Parthenon,

22 Huge peristyle of temples that are gone,

3 And dark as Asia, now, is Beauty's daughter

4 The rose once clear as music over deep water.

5 Now the full moon her fire and light doth spill

6 On turkey-plumaged leaves and window-sill,

7 On leaves that seem the necks and plumes of urban

8 Turkeys, each a Sultan in a turban,

9 And strawberries among the beavers' wool,

10 (So grass seemed where that ruined temple's cool

11 Shade fell) when first the dew with light above,

12 Makes tremble every leaf and strawberry root

13 The rainbow gives those berries light above,

14 The dark rose gives them all her secret love,

15 Until those coral tears of the rich light

16 Hold roses, rubies, rainbows for the sight.

17 My ancient shadow nods a turbaned head;

18 One candle through thick leaves throws a gold thread;

19 The dark green country temple of the snows

20 Hides porphyry bones of nymphs whence grew the rose,

21 And dark green dog-haired leaves of strawberries,

22 All marked with maps of unknown lands and seas,

23 And that small negro page, the cross dark quail,

24 Chasing the ghosts of dairymaids that fail

25 In butter-yellow dew by Georgian stables,

26 (The snow, dark green as strawberry leaves, has gables).

Metrical Structure
The country temple looks dark green and hides the bones of nymphs under the rose. The leaves create various shapes of maps of unknown lands and seas. A black bird flies in the dark. The poet nods; the candle light falls on the leaves. The full moon spills her light on the leaves. The leaves look like the plumes of turkeys which look like a Sultan in a turban. Grass near the temple looked like 'j strawberries. The dew is seen on the leaf and the strawberries shine in the rainbow and the rose in the shade gives them love until morning when everything shines.

The snow looks like the ancient temple of Parthenon. The rose appears dark.
### METAMORPNOSIS - II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Syllabic Structure</th>
<th>Syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>123</td>
<td>Death is the Sun's heat making all men black;</td>
<td>cvc vc cv cv ccvc cvc cvccvc vc cv ccvc</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124</td>
<td>Of Death, the splendours die in the leaves' track:</td>
<td>cvc vc cv ccvcvcvc cv cv vc cv cvc ccvc</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>125</td>
<td>All men are Ethiopian shades of thee:</td>
<td>cvc vc v cvccvcvc vc cvcc cvcvcvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>126</td>
<td>The wild and glittering fleece Parthenope</td>
<td>cvc vc cv ccvcvcvc cvcvcv cvcvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>127</td>
<td>Loosened, more rich than feathers of bright birds,</td>
<td>cvcvc cv cvc cvc cvcvc cccvc cccvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>128</td>
<td>Though rich and thick as Ethiopian herds</td>
<td>cvcvc v cvcvcvcvc vc cvccvcvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>129</td>
<td>Died like the wave, or early light that grew</td>
<td>cvcvc cv cv ccvcvcvc vc cvccvcvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>In eastern quarries ripening precious dew.</td>
<td>cvcvcvcv cccvcvcvcvcvcv cvcvcv</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131</td>
<td>Though lovely are the tombs of the dead nymphs</td>
<td>cvcvcvcv v cv ccvcvcvc vc cv ccvcvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>On the heroic shore, the glittering plinths</td>
<td>cvcvcvcv cv cv ccvcvcvcv ccvcvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>Of jacynth, hyacinthine waves profound</td>
<td>cvcvcvcv cvcvcvcvc cvcvcvcv</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>134</td>
<td>Sign of the beauty out of sight and sound,</td>
<td>cvcvc vc cv ccvcvcv vc cv ccvcvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>135</td>
<td>And many a golden foot that pressed the sand,</td>
<td>cvcvcv v cvccvcvcvc cv cccvcvcv cv cvccvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>The panoply of suns on distant strand;</td>
<td>cvcvcvcv v cv ccvcvcvcvc cv ccvcvcv ccvcvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137</td>
<td>Panope walking like the pomp of waves</td>
<td>cvcvcvcv cvcvcvcv cv cv ccvcvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>138</td>
<td>With plumaged helmet near the fountain caves</td>
<td>cvcvcvcvcv cvcvcvcv cv cc cv cvccvcvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139</td>
<td>Is only now an arena for the worm;</td>
<td>vccvcv cv cv cv cvcv cv cv ccvcvcv</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Her golden flesh lies in the dust's frail storm,</td>
<td>cvcvcvcv ccvc cv ccvcvcv ccvc cccvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>141</td>
<td>And beauty water-bright for long is laid</td>
<td>cvcvcv cv cv ccvcvcv ccvc cv ccvcvcv ccvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>142</td>
<td>Deep in the empire of eternal shades;</td>
<td>cvcvc vc vc vc cv ccvcvcv cccvcv</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>143</td>
<td>Only the sighing waves know now the plinth</td>
<td>vccvcv cv cv ccvcvcv ccvc cv cv ccvcvcv</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>Of those deep tombs that were of hyacinth.</td>
<td>cv cvcvcv ccvcvcv ccvc cv ccvcvcv</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
METAMORPHOSIS - II

123 deθ iz ə sanz hi:t meikij ɔ:l men blæk:
124 au deθ ə splendə:z dai in ɔli:və trək:
125 ɔ:l men a:r eθi:pən ʃeitəz əv ʃi:
126 Ʉə waild ənd glitəriŋ fli:s paθənpi
127 lu:zənd mə: riy ʃən fəˈza:z əv brait bɑ:dz
128 θəu riy ənd θi:k əz eθi:pən hə:dz
129 daid laik Ʉə weiv ɔ:r əli lait hæt grju:
130 in i:stə:n kwəriz raipəniŋ prəʃəs dʒju:
131 θəu Ʉvli a: ʃi tuːməz əv tæded nɪmfs
132 ɔn θə hərəik ʃə; Ʉə glitəriŋ plaiəs
133 əv dʒesinə heisinəniŋ weivz prəuʃənd
134 sai əv ʃə bjui:tə aut əv sait ənd səund,
135 ənd meniə ɡəuldə fu:t ʃət prəst ɡə sənd
136 Ʉə ʌnəplai əv sanz ən distant strənd
137 ʌnəpə wə:kəŋ laik Ʉə pəmpə əv weivz
138 wɪə plu:meidʒd helmet niː Ʉə fauntn keivz
139 iz ʒənli nau ən erinə fə: ɛə wə:m
140 hə: ɡəuldən flə Ʉəz ən ɫəst ʃrəl stə:m
141 ənd bjui:tə wə:ʃə brait fə: lɔŋ iz leid
142 di:p in ʃəempaiŋ əv itənəl ʃeit
143 ʒənli Ʉəsaiəŋ weivz nau nau ʃəpləniŋ
144 əv ʃəuz di:p təmz ʃət wə: əv heisinə.

Phonetic Structure
METAMORPHOSIS - II

123 Death is the Sun's heat marking all men black;
124 O Death, the splendours die in the leaves' track:
125 All men are Ethiopian shades of thee:
126 The wild and glittering fleece Parthenope
127 Loosened, more rich than feathers of bright birds,
128 Though rich and thick as Ethiopian herds
129 Died like the wave, or early light that grew
130 In eastern quarries ripening precious dew.
131 Though lovely are the tombs of the dead nymphs
132 On the heroic shore, the glittering plinths
133 Of jacinth, hyacinthine waves profound
134 Sign of the beauty out of sight and sound,
135 And many a golden foot that pressed the sand,
136 The panoply of suns on distant strand;
137 Panope walking like the pomp of waves
138 With plumaged helmet near the fountain caves
139 Is only now an arena for the worm;
140 Her golden flesh lies in the dust's frail storm,
141 And beauty water-bright for long is laid
142 Deep in the empire of eternal shade;
143 Only the sighing waves know now the plinth
144 Of those deep tombs that were of hyacinth.

Metrical Structure
Only the singing waves have noticed this. The beauty is lying in the entire shade. Her beautiful flesh is lying in the dust. Now the arena for the worm is near the fountain caves. Her golden fleece died like the wave. The poet imagines the sign of the beauty which is out of sight. She also imagines the golden foot of nymphs. The tombs of the nymphs are lovely on the shore. The boughs of the dead nymphs, the glistering plinths of jacinth, the priestly helmet of suns, only now an arena for the worm, her golden fleece lies in the dust's frail storm, and beauty water-bright for long is laid. Deep in the empire of eternal shades. Of those deep tombs that were of jacinth.
I too from ruined walls hung upside down

And, bat-like, only saw Death's ruined town

And mumbling crumbling dust...I saw the people

Mouthing blindly for the earth's blind nipple.

Their thick sleep dreams not of the infinite

Wild strength the grass must have to find the light

With all the bulk of earth across its eyes

And strength, and the huge weight of centuries.

Hate-hidden by a monk's cowl of ape's pelf,

Bear-clumsy and appalling, mine own self

Devouring, blinded by the earth's thick hood

I crouched, Atridae-like devoured my blood

And knew the anguish of the skeleton

Deserted by the flesh, with Death alone,

Then my immortal Sun rose, Heavenly Love,

To rouse my carrion to life, and move

The polar night, the boulder that rolled this,

My heart, my Sisyphus, in the abyss.

Come then, my Sun, to melt the eternal ice

Of Death, and crumble the thick centuries,

Nor shrink, my soul, as dull wax owlish eyes

In the sun's light, before my sad eternities.
METAMORPHOSIS S III

267 ai tu: fr'm ruind w:lz hay apesaid daun
268 and bxt-laik aunli so: de0s ruind taun
269 and mambling krambling dast...ai so: z' z' pi:pel
270 mau'ing blaindli fo: z z' z' blaind nipel
271 z'ge shik sli:p dri:zm not z' z' infinit
272 waild stregz' z's gra:s mast hzw to faind z'z lait
273 wiz: z: lam b:lk av z: z' kros its aiz
274 and stregz' and hju:z' weit zv sentjariz
275 heit hiden bai z'mazks kaul zv eips pelf
276 bza-klamzi and yplig main z'un self
277 divauriz' blaindid bai z z' z' shik hud
278 ai krautj' straid-laik divaund mai blad
279 and nju: egrwiz' zv s'eskela'tan
280 dis:tid bai z' flz' wiz' de@ akan
281 z'en mai imc:tel san rauz hevanli aw
282 to rauz mai kri:an to laif and mu:v
283 z' poul ait z'auld zat rauld zis
284 mai hat mai sisif: in z'bas:is
285 kam z'en mai san to melt z' it:z:nel ais
286 zv de@ and krambl z' shik sentjariz
287 no: rink mai sau:ul az dals wks aulij aiz
288 in z'maz lait bifc: mai z: z' it:nitiz

Phonetic Structure
METAMORPHOSIS -III

267 I too from ruined walls hung upside down

268 And, bat-like, only saw Death's ruined town

269 And muddling crumbling dust I saw the people

270 Mouthing blindly for the earth's blind nipple.

271 Their thick sleep dreams not of the infinite

272 Wild strength the grass must have to find the light

273 With all the bulk of earth across its eyes

274 And strength and the huge weight of centuries

275 Hate-hidden by a monk's cowl of ape's pelf,

276 Bear-clumsy and appalling, mine own self

277 Devouring, blinded by the earth's thick hood

278 I crouched Atridae-like devoured my blood

279 And knew the anguish of the skeleton

280 Deserted by the flesh, with Death alone,

281 Then my immortal Sun rose, Heavenly Love,

282 To rouse my carrion to life, and move

283 The polar night, the boulder that rolled this,

284 My heart, my Sisyphus, in the abyss.

285 Come then, my Sun, to melt the eternal ice

286 O Death, and crumble the thick centuries.

287 Nor shrink, my soul, as dull wax owlish eyes

288 In the sun's light, before my sad eternities.

Metrical Structure
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<tbody>
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<td>And mumbling crumbling dust...I saw the people</td>
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<tr>
<td>271</td>
<td>With all the bulk of earth across its eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>272</td>
<td>And strength and the hag's weight of centuries,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>273</td>
<td>Then my immortal Sun rose, Heavenly Love,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274</td>
<td>To rouse my carrion to life, and move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>The polar night, the boulder that rolled this,</td>
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<tr>
<td>276</td>
<td>And knew the anguish of the skeleton</td>
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<td>283</td>
<td>Of death, and crumble the thick centuries,</td>
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<td>284</td>
<td>Nor shrive, my soul, as dull wax owlish eyes</td>
</tr>
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<td>285</td>
<td>In the Sun's light, before my sad eternities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Formal and Phonological Structure**

The poet's persona says: I saw from the ruined walls, I saw the ruined town of Death, pathetically. I saw the plight of the people for survival (so much) to see. They had thick dreams (so much) to see. The grass has to find the light with difficulty.

Blinded, I crouched, devouring my own self and blood like Atrides;
The title of the poem denotes 'the change of form or character by natural growth or development' (Hornby:1971).

Edith Sitwell has taken the title from Ovid's Metamorphoses which purports to tell of miraculous transformations. Ovid's work is a collection of the principal myths and legends of Greece and Rome. 'It begins with the transformation of Chaos into the ordered universe, and after a succession of tales drawn from Greek mythology passes to Aeneas and Dido, Numa and Egeria, the doctrines of Pythagoras, and recent times, ending with the death and deification of Julius Caesar. Ovid goes beyond the range of Graeco-Roman legend in the tale of Pyramus and Thisbe, the lovers of Babylon. The episodes are scantily connected; there is no guiding thought, no moral or religious lesson'. (Harvey:1974, 267).

Instead of the inductive method used in the analysis of short poems of the first phase, here I am taking recourse to a slightly modified method. Since the passages chosen for analysis are parts of a unified whole, it is profitable, I thought, to have a fairly clear idea of the whole for the fuller comprehension of the passages.

In 'Metamorphosis', Edith Sitwell starts with the eternal truths about life which Heraclitus describes as "flux", that is continuous change. According to Heraclitus "you cannot step into the same river; for fresh waters are ever flowing in upon you and the sun is new every day".
Edith Sitwell in this poem, contemplates this Heraclitian flux of life in terms of her poetry which itself is part of this flux. The process of change can take place only in time. Life is a continuous flux which involves the cycle of 'death' and 'life'. Man's interaction with the external world is also a process of change and poetry which is one of the manifestations of this interaction is also a kind of 'metamorphosis'. All poetry is the result of metamorphosis that external reality undergoes when it passes through the poet's consciousness - through the dynamic processes of perception, interpretation and creation, by means of faculties of imagination and intuition. She perceives various objects of the real world through her imagination which is the very basis of metamorphosis. "If my images appear strange, it is because I have senses like those of primitive people, and because I try to pierce down to the essence of a thing seen, heightening its significance by endowing it with attributes which at first seem alien, but which are actually related by producing its own quintessential colour (sharper, brighter than that seen by any eye grown stale); and by stripping it of all unessential details. The apparent strangeness comes, too, from the fact that I try to weld all expressions into an image, and not remove it into a symbol or squander it into a metaphor", says Edith Sitwell (1935, 450) about the process of her perception of the real world. This is how the reality is
always transformed through the process of perception. The poet is doing this through language and enacting the phenomenon of change even in her very creative process — perception, imagination, and linguistic embodiment. Through a series of illustrations from human life, nature, history, fairy world and mythology, she celebrates the metamorphosis — the triumph over death through change. She marries these symbols with the more ancient and universal symbols of animal, flower, corn, gold, precious metal, sea, sun and wind and manages to convey an extraordinary sense of depth in time and space. In addition to her use of such a rich variety of symbols, she is conscious of language and works out the metamorphosis linguistically — in an extremely new way of using linguistic components in poetry. She has been continually preoccupied with the concepts of Birth, Death and Time, and this preoccupation is at the very basis of the present poem. She creates the world of fantasy in the very first line of the poem:

The coral-cold snow seemed the Parthenon,
Huge peristyle of temples that are gone.

and connects her immediate external environment with the Greek mythology thereby using the technique of distancing in Time and Space when she sees the 'Parthenon' in the 'coral-cold snow'. In her process of perception, in her imagination, she transforms — metamorphoses — the snow into the 'Parthenon' — the temple of the maiden. The non-clarity of the image in the first four
lines of the poem is the result of the very process of metamorphosis. Moreover, in order to move freely into her poetic world, she demands the knowledge of history, geography and mythology on the part of the reader.

'Metamorphosis' consists of 288 lines, most of which are rhymed couplets in pentametre. These lines are end-stopped and some are run-on. There are fourteen stanzas consisting of two couplets each and the poem begins and ends with stanzas of two couplets put together. The end-rhyme of the couplets is almost regular which follows the pattern

\[ a \ a \ b \ b \ c \ c \ d \ d \ e \ e \]
and so on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chunk</th>
<th>monosyllabic words</th>
<th>polysyllabic words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It will be seen from the syllabic pattern of 'Metamorphosis' that Edith Sitwell's foregrounding of polysyllabic words is on the increase compared to her poetry of the first phase. The dense foregrounding of such words suggests that her poetry in the second phase is gradually becoming more theme-oriented.

The following statement illustrates how lexical connections between the chunks are established by her use of the device of repetition in the poem. Such lexical repetitions,
both paradigmatic and syntagmatic, emphasise and carry forward the theme of the poem. Such a device unifies underlying themes and builds up structures of meaning in the poem:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chunk I</th>
<th>chunk II</th>
<th>chunk III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>light(4)</td>
<td>light(1)</td>
<td>light(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moon(1)</td>
<td>sun(2)</td>
<td>sun(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>snow(3)</td>
<td>ice(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grass(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>grass(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ruined(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>ruined(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water(1)</td>
<td>water(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shade(1)</td>
<td>shade(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thick(1)</td>
<td>thick(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dark(6)</td>
<td>black(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parthenon(1)</td>
<td>Parthenope(1)Panope(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumes(2)</td>
<td>feathers(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nymphs(1)</td>
<td>nymphs(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plumaged(1)</td>
<td>plumaged(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dew(2)</td>
<td>dew(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leaves(5)</td>
<td>leaves(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gold(1)</td>
<td>golden(2)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rich(1)</td>
<td>rich(2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>beauty(1)</td>
<td>beauty(2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>eternal(1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>eternities(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flesh(1)</td>
<td>flesh(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dust(1)</td>
<td>dust(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>love(1)</td>
<td>love(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>death(1)</td>
<td>skeleton,carrion(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rainbow(1)</td>
<td>splendours(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wool(1)</td>
<td>fleece(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sultan(1)</td>
<td>empire(1)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When we compare the sound texture of 'Metamorphosis' to that of the earlier poems we find that she generally follows the same devices of alliteration, assonance, consonance and repetition of certain significant sounds. The significant feature is the increase in the number of sibilants (s,z), and long vowel-phonemes as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>s</th>
<th>z</th>
<th>m</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>i:</th>
<th>a:</th>
<th>:u:</th>
<th>u</th>
<th>ai</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>chunk 1</td>
<td>1-26</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chunk 2</td>
<td>123-44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chunk 3</td>
<td>267-88</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most operating phenomenon is the use of long vowels which gives the sense of amplitude which the heroic couplet requires. The principle of amplification appears to be central to the structuring of sound texture of this poem. We find this principle working in the way the iambic rhythm is used with a number of modulations which include a plethora of spondees, amphibrachs, bacchius, ionic a minore at the end of lines.

Let us look at the sound texture of the following lines:

The coral-cold snow seemed the Parthenon
And dark green dog-haired leaves of strawberries

All marked with maps of unknown lands and seas (21-22)

Sing of the beauty out of sight and sound (134)

And waves are freckled with gold ripples, these

Seem golden spangles on the strawberries (165-66)

And mumbling crumbling dust... I saw the people

Mouthing blindly for the earth's blind nipple (269-70)

Such lines where intricate meaning of sound is noticed are fewer as compared to those in the first phase which indicates that the phonetic motivation in weaving the sound texture is not as strong as in the first phase. The analysis on pages 138, 42, 46 shows that she was more interested in the principle of semantic linkage rather than in sound linkage.
Her experimentation with rhymes continues in this phase also. For instance, she uses the rhymes of the following type in the poem:

Parthenon  
that are gone (1-2)  
of urban  
turban (7-8)  
snows  
the rose (19-20)  
thick leaves  
grieves (27-28)

The principle of syllabic autonomy is followed here too:

beavers' wool  
temple's cool  
(9-10)

She goes after repetition of sounds and beyond word boundaries. She uses 'eye-rhyme' in

blood-hood (43,44), worm-storm (139-40)

hood-blood (277-78) love-move (281-82)

It appears from the examples listed below that Edith Sitwell takes liberty with rhyme:

strawberries-seas (21-22); skeleton-one (29-30);
She foregrounds her poem with these odd and imperfect rhymes.

As in other poems, she builds a structure of meaning through repetition of certain significant words at various places in the poem. Language allows for a great abundance of types of lexical and grammatical repetition. The poet uses a number of 'irregular' or 'free-repetitions' in the poem. She uses both immediate repetition and intermitant repetition. 'Repetition is a fundamental, if primitive, device of intensification. It suggests a suppressed intensity of feeling. Man needs to express himself superabundantly on matters which affect him deeply' (Leech:1969, 84). In 'Metamorphosis', she repeats the following words for a number of times as indicated in brackets:
change(8), skeleton(7), death(16), dead(10),
eternal(7), bone(11), flesh(8), Time(7),
night(8), dark(12), leaves(20), waves(9),
nymphs(11), heart(11), golden(17), light(19),
rose(9), snow(7), sun(9), strawberries(8),
love(8), years(5), ape(5).

She has her extreme ways of connecting these words which bring out the theme of TIME underlying the vicious circle of Death-Life-Death through eternity: Time. Most of the time she repeats such words in different ways and juxtaposes them with other words. Such an association lends them a desired meaning.

For instance, she perceives the concept of 'Death' as 'Death is not the skeleton(29)', 'Death strikes the hour'(30), 'Death's immobility'(63), 'Death's chasms gape'(84), 'Death is our clime'(111), 'Death is our sun'(113), 'Death is our winter cold(114), 'Death is light on the eyes'(117), 'Death-blinded eyes'(121), 'Death is the sun's heat'(123), 'Death's ruined town'(268), 'Death has never worm for heart and brain' (32). In addition to the repetition of the word 'Death' at various places in the poem as mentioned above, she uses the following words which create one of the cohesive patterns in the poem. A common semantic thread runs through the words such as 'bones'(20), 'tears'(15), 'ghosts'(24), 'groans'(27), 'grave'(33), 'worm'(32), 'devour'(34), 'blood'(43), 'black disastrous dreams'(46), 'weep'(51), 'grief'(73), 'despair'(79),
'creeping fear crumples' (80), 'cry' (97), 'our flesh we lose' (102), 'tombs' (131), 'sighing' (143), 'mournful' (228), which make the abstract concept of 'death' quite concrete in the sense we can see, hear and feel 'Death'.

The poet describes the concept of Time directly in the following expressions:

- **Time**, a heavy ghost groans (27)
- **Time** is a weary bell, ever grieves (28)
- **Time** drifts owl-dusk (223)
- **Time** conceives worm (33)
- And heavy is dark **Time** that ever moans (22)
- **Time**'s apalling night (87)

In addition to these, the following expressions used in the poem at various places cohere with the concept of **Time** indirectly:

- 'ancient' (17), 'ruined temple' (10), 'Night's creeping and ere light begins again' (31), 'empty years' (36), 'vast years' (47), 'Polar nights' (47), 'crumbling centuries' (50),
- 'eternity the skeleton' (56), 'rebirth' (70), 'age' (80), 'mouldering rage' (82), 'Age shrinks' (83), 'appalling lion-claws' (93), eyeless statues broken' (107), 'soundless wrinkles' (255), 'huge weight of centuries' (274), 'sad eternities' (288).

From the above illustrations it will be seen that the poet puts the concrete and the abstract together and the
units of concrete-abstract collocations function as the operative element of this world. For instance, Edith Sitwell's peculiar perception of reality through her unique use of language can be analysed as follows:

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Night's creeping end</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-concrete</td>
<td>+animate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>empty</strong></td>
<td><strong>years</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+concrete</td>
<td>-concrete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>eternity</strong></td>
<td><strong>the skeleton</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+abstract</td>
<td>+concrete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>soundless</strong></td>
<td><strong>wrinkles</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+abstract</td>
<td>+concrete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+auditory</td>
<td>+visual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>sad</strong></td>
<td><strong>eternities</strong></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+animate</td>
<td>-concrete</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+abstract</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A rich variety of semantic connections of the word 'light' through its repetition in the poem helps build the structure of meaning. For example, she repeats the word in some of the contexts as follows:

- full moon her fire and light (5)
- the rainbow gives those berries light above (13)
- coral tears of rich light (15)
- light begins again (31)
quench the light my Lazarus (99)
We lose the one light that could save (102)
the light scatters feathers (110)
eastern light (129)
eary light (129)
the first light of tears (189,247)
far from the light (237)
must have to find light (272)

The following examples illustrate the phenomenon of 'metamorphosis' perceived by the poet in nature:

changing the light in eyes (35)
changing the beat in heart (36)
You are changed to this vast cragy bulk (60-61)

to stone (68) no change? (71)
Am I so changed by Time's appalling night? (87)
the changing skeleton (98)
showers now change to corn acopias of flowers (151-52).

In the following examples, Edith Sitwell suggests that 'change' from one state to another is a continuous process in nature:
snow (changes) into the Parthenon (1)
leaves (change) into the necks and plumes of urban turkeys (which again change into) Sultan in Turban (6-8)
Porphry bones of nymphs (change) into the room (9-10).
Night (changes) into light (31)
the last tears freeze to gigantic polar nights of ice (48-49)
winter broke in flower (58)
light grief melts in crazy waterfalls (73)
Age shrinks our hearts to ape-like dust (83)
my soul (changes) into my Lazarus (86)
Dead (changes) into skeleton
The things we are, the things we might be (100)
Death into Sun (113)
lump of clay grows wise (113)
Death is the sun's heat making all men black (123)
All men (change) into Etheopian shades (125)
Early light that grew in eastern quarries (129)
ripening precious dew (130)
a buskined bright nymph (changes) into the rose (189-90)
the amber-dust-rose (changes into) Parthenope still grows
dew seems butter-yellow, the bright mesh
of dear and dead Panope's golden flesh (195-96)
grapes and apples (change) into emerald rain (197)
leaves seemed Turkeys (Sultan in a Turban) (239-40)
the ripples seemed deserted Georgian stables (242)
the rose is faded and its leaves are wet with
 tears beneath the shady winter (247-48)
Venus or an ape (changes) into ancient wrinkled shadow-shape (257-58)
the bright plume was once thin grass (261-62)
Skeleton deserted by the flesh (278-80)
Come my sun to melt the eternal ice of Death (285-86)
Carrion to life (282)

It will be seen from the above mentioned illustrations that Edith Sitwell has used the word 'change' in a number of lines to suggest the 'metamorphosis'. At the same time, where she has not used the word 'change' explicitly, she has used the other verbs of performative type such as 'freeze', 'break', 'melt', 'shrink', 'grow', 'ripen', 'fade', 'desert' and so on to suggest the metamorphosis that the poet's imagination perceives as such. With the help of nature imagery, which she uses in abundance, her poetic thought moves towards the concept of the elemental universal metamorphosis of Death into life and Life into Death.

The device of animation/personification that Edith Sitwell uses in respect of certain central ideas is one of the ways of lending phenomenal importance to them. She uses, for instance, the device of personification with regard to abstractions like Death, Time, Fear, Beauty, Age as shown below:

(a) And dark as Asia, now, is Beauty's daughter
The rose, once clear as music o'er deep water.
(b) TIME a heavy ghost, groans through thick leaves. (27)
   is a weary bell which ever grieves (28)
   conceives to fill his grave..(33)
   devouring the last faith, the word love
gave (34)
   drifts owl-dusk o'er the brightest eyes(223)
   that ever moans among thick leaves(227-28)

(c) DEATH strikes the hour (30)
   is our sun (113)
   (death's)chasm gape between ourself..(84-85)
   O Death..(124)

(d) creeping FEAR crumples our hearts(79-80)
(e) LIFE devours the bone (96)
(f) lion claws of AGE (93)
(g) EARTH'S blind nipple (270)
(h) the furred FIRE is barking (263)

In 'Metamorphosis', she uses the colour words dark,
golden, black, dark-green, green, fire, rainbow, porphyry
(red-white), butter-yellow, amber etc. in various contexts
as shown below:
DARK - as Asia, now, is Beauty's daughter
the rose.. (3-4)
- rose gives them all her secret love (14)
- negro page, the cross dark quail chasing
  the ghosts of dairymaids (23)
- majestic train of nymphs walked like..(153-54)
- wrinkled satyrs with long straw beards (180)
- honey from rough cups of straw to sip (181)
- And heavy is dark Time, that ever moans(227)
  our earth's dark mine (120)

GOLD(EN) - foot of the dew (11)
- thread (of candle) (244)
- flesh lies (140)
- fingers of the winds (162)
- ripples (waves are freckled with)(165)
- spangles on the strawberries (166)
- fringe bright as the weathers (166)
- mosaic'd as the wave (184)
- fingered arborist, the wind (186)
- flesh of Panope (196)
- rains of Jove
- cheek (256)
- Hector had the pomp and pride (253)

BLACK - disastrous dreams (46)
- mouldering rags about the bone(82)
- as jet(are the leaves)(109)
- Bacchantes with their panched feathers(167)
- as Ethiopia(is the Amazon)(174)
DARK-GREEN
- country-temple of the snows (19, 233)
- dog-haired leaves of strawberries (21)
- snow as strawberry leaves (26)

GREEN
- caves (187)
- as melons (188)
- heat (in the) Parthenope still grows (192)
- world (193)
- leaves (as country temples) (194)
- in the laughing (green) (205)
- baize forests (198)
- trees as laughing nymph's guitar (209–10)
- land (218)

fire (red) of the full moon (95)

rainbow gives berries light above (13, 16)

porphyry (red-white) bones of nymphs (20)

butter-yellow dew (25, 195, 236) petticoats
topaz, saphires, diamonds of the bone (119)
paler than a pearl water (163)

amber lip of a cup (182); owl-dusked leaves
emerald rain (193); roses (16, 189, 247)
cream hair (200); ruby (6)

mauve leaves (202)

blood honeyed (206, 43, 278)
Edith Sitwell exploits the grammatical-semantic relations in the use of the lexicon in her poetry. But most of these words require the context in which they occur for the full interpretation of their meaning. The effects of such words are various. The metaphorical transfer of vocabulary from one semantic field to another is a common resource of the language. Edith Sitwell in her poetry written during all the three phases, makes use of this device, the effect of which is one of complex sense impression of vitality and compression, of strain and tension. The following illustrations from the poem illustrate this point:

- Coral-tears of the rich light (15)
- dark-green dog-haired leaves of strawberries (21)
- black disastrous dreams (46)
- the long golden fingers of the winds (162, 214)
- owl-dusked leaves (221)
- candle's thick-gold thread (244)
- furred fire (266)
- gigantic polar nights of ice
- crumbling centuries (50)
- cold six-rayed eternity (72)
In the above examples, the linguistic elements are put together in such a way that the syntactic relations between these elements are semantically incompatible since they denote sensations from different sensorial fields.

The most common process of word formation is compounding. Some types of word- formations have been so common in poetry that they arouse little surprise in the reader; but Edith Sitwell's compoundings like her metaphor shock the reader. The cognitive meaning of 'turkey-plumaged leaves' could have been rendered as 'the leaves which are like the plumes of turkey'. This paraphrase reveals the degree of compression and economy which can be achieved by such compoundings. The compoundings such as 'owl-soft dusk' or 'owl-dusked leaves' have the power of 'concept making'. Most of the compoundings in this poem have the surface structure 'Noun + Adjective'.

The following examples illustrate this pattern:

\[
\text{Noun + Adjective} + \text{N} \\
\text{butter-yellow} + \text{dew (21,195)}
\]
rain-wet petals (164)
swan-soft leaves (202)
owl-soft dusk (208)
water-bright beauty (141)

The next pattern is 'Noun + Adjective (N+ed) + Noun' and the following examples illustrate this pattern:

Noun + Adjective (N+ed) + N
turkey-plumaged leaves (6)
dog-haired leaves (6)
bird-winged discoveries (122)
gold-fingered arborist (186)
owl-dusked leaves (221)
rose-shaped heart (229)
dog-furred strawberry leaves (231)

Another pattern is 'Noun + Adjective (Adj+ed) + N':
death-blinded eyes (121)

The last pattern noticed in the poem is 'Adjective+Adjective', (N+ed) + N:
dim-jewelled bones (114)
hoarse-voiced animals (264).

The potential structural ambiguities inherent in the surface structure of such compounds are linguistically exploited by the poet as in 'dog-furred strawberry leaves'. All the above co-ordinating compounds occur as adjectives modifying different nouns creating vivid images in the poem. The structural
ambiguity is thought to enrich the verbal texture and Edith Sitwell experimented this a good deal in her early poetry.

Some apparent compounds are simply collocations of 'adjective+noun' type. In all such 'adjective+noun' and 'noun+noun' compounds the first item is subordinated to the second in precisely the same way as an adjectival or adverbial clause in subordinate to the main clause. For example, in 'foam-fleece' with subordinating construction with foam as an attribute of fleece, proposing in effect that the fleece has the property of being foamy.

Compounding is part of Edith Sitwell's compression of language (elliptical style). Adjectival modifiers in the examples listed above are derived from clauses by transformational rules and embedded in premodifying positions.

Another unique thing that we notice in the above examples is her 'functional conversion of the elements' used in her compoundings. For instance

- plumage: plumaged
- hair - haired
- jewell - jewelled
- finger - fingered
- dusk - dusked
- fur - furred
- ear - eared

illustrate this functional conversion. The poet perceives a likeness between the tenor and the vehicle and the metaphoric
transference takes place when she uses them:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
X \\
\text{Tenor}
\end{array} \quad \text{is like} \quad \begin{array}{c}
Y \\
\text{vehicle}
\end{array} \quad \text{in respect of} \quad \begin{array}{c}
Z \\
\text{Ground}
\end{array}
\]

This is not explicitly stated. She uses both the metaphors - personification and synaesthetic metaphors - in her compoundings. She makes abstractions tangible by perceiving them in terms of concrete physical world. The world of nature becomes more real to us when she projects into it the qualities we know of.

As for Sitwell, a high level of obvious syntactic convolution is chiefly found; but her poetry is normally grammatical in that it can be interpreted by applying the rules of English grammar. Her syntax follows the rules of word-order, ellipsis, inversion and so on. Her heightening of language is based on intensity of two kinds; the one achieved by repetition as in spoken language, and the other by compression, which is not so characteristic of speech.

She achieves complexity at the semantic level by exploiting the phonoesthetic suggestiveness of words and by involving more than one meaning in a word. In her syntax, she is more inclined to use repetition by stringing together words of the same syntactic order:

Our sun, our love  My heart, my Sisphus
My soul, my Lazarus

Changing the light in eyes to heavy tears (35)
Changing the beat in heart to empty years (36)
The language of coordination (parataxis) is frequent in speech and in narratives whereas subordinating clause structure is frequent in logical argument or spoken prose. In the present poem, the language of coordination is used predominantly. What is important about clauses linking 'and' is the quasi-objectivity of the effect; logical temporal and attitudinal relations that the poet has in mind are apparently suppressed; and the language becomes all the more rich and suggestive for that and functions as temporal in meaning, or logically subordinating or both. About 36 clauses are linked with the conjoiner 'and' in the poem which proves the above point.

Left-branching constructions are more difficult to comprehend than the right-branching ones, partly because the adjective clauses that underlie them have undergone more deletions in the course of derivation. In the present poem there is multiple-modification within the noun phrase. A simple analysis on Transformational lines would have to postulate several sentences with various derivational rules in such pre-modifying constructions as

In this green world the melon's dogskin flowers,
Leaves green as country temples, snare the hours

(193-94)

In wooded gardens by each gardner's frame
Dark wrinkled satyrs with long straw beards came.
Rhetorical questions used in poetry are positive and are understood as if equivalent to a negative statement.

'It is a means of expressing intense conviction of a certain need' (Leech:1969, 184). It is a stock device of heightening the feeling. Edith Sitwell, in this poem, uses such questions at least at eight places such as

My soul, my Lazarus, know you not me?

Lines 1-26:

Now let us consider the first chunk of 26 lines which has been analysed graphically showing the structure of language and the structure of meaning separately. We notice her cognition-oriented use of words which give rise to imagination unlike her sound connections used in the first phase of her creativity. Such words once used gain a staying power and later on they keep on emerging in suitable places. The connections between the repeated words are shown by drawing a line linking them which enables us to understand the way they are perceived by the poet. This enactment of human perception itself is a process of metamorphosis. In the second phase to which the poem belongs, it is not merely the sound which has been given importance, but the semantic dimensions of words which have become operative and more significant. In ordinary poetry the structure of meaning arising out of linguistic items is formed almost effortlessly, but in the Sitwellian poetic world, the reader does not get an easy entry. It takes a number of readings
and also requires a continuous acquaintance with her use of language to work out her structure of meaning. After giving attention to the various linguistic items, it becomes imperative to work out certain cohesive patterns so that certain nuclei of meaning can be clearly located. In this poem (the first part) she uses the word 'dark' in the context of Asia in order to describe the 'rose' (which she perceives as the Beauty's (Venus') daughter. She uses the expression 'dark rose'(14) and later the word 'dark' appears with 'green' in the context of 'country temple'(19); once again 'dark' green' qualifies 'country dog-haired leaves'(21); she further uses 'dark' to describe 'quail'(23) and finally all the repeated words come together in the last line when the poet repeats them in the context of 'gables'. The semantic structure of the image 'dark as Asia' may be explained as follows:
In the following example, we will notice that the poet's subtle and unique perception extends the meaning of the image by using words within the same semantic dimensions:

\[
\text{turkey} - \text{plumaged leaves} \quad + \\
\text{vehicle} \quad \rightarrow \quad \text{tenor}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{turkey} & \quad \text{plumaged} \\
\text{LEAVES} & \quad \rightarrow \text{necks and plumes of urban turkeys} \\
& \quad \rightarrow \text{sultan in a turban} \\
& \quad \rightarrow \text{dog-haired} \\
\text{rose} & \quad \rightarrow \text{dark green} \\
\text{quail} & \quad \rightarrow \text{turbaned head.}
\end{align*}
\]

In the light of our study of Sitwell's techniques and devices on all the levels - phonetic, lexical, semantic and syntactic - and also in the light of her main thematic concerns that have emerged in our analysis so far, it is imperative now to look at each chunk again and construct the meaning structure in terms of both the stable propositional sense and the unstable 'dhwani' sense arising out of her linguistic manipulations.

The meaning structure of the poem - the first 26 lines - can be built with the help of the concrete lexical items. The poem, it appears, has been occasioned by the sight of the
snow through the poet's window. She speaks of the snow, the rose, the moon, the leaves, strawberries and grass which she actually sees through her window. But the way the poet responds to these in terms of her imagination and linguistic capabilities is of significance. A series of images generated by her imagination create a dream world in the poem.

The sight of the snow suggests 'the Parthenon', "a temple of the maiden", on the Acropolis at Athens" (Harvey, 307) which now no more exists. 'The temple was partially destroyed by the explosion of the gunpowder stored there by the Turkish garrison' (Harvey, 307). Edith Sitwell suggests this historical fact in her use of the words 'dark as Asia' which gives rise to 'turkey' and 'Sultan' in turban. The strawberry leaves look like 'turkey plumes'. The form and meaning of the word 'turkey' leads her to 'the necks and plumes of urban turkeys'. The sound of the word 'urban' motivates the poet to use the rhyming word 'turban' which has semantic connections with 'Sultan'. She, thus, connects 'dark Asia', 'Turkey', 'Sultan', 'Plumes and necks of urban Turkeys' and 'turban' semantically using the connotations of these words. The words 'roses, rubies and rainbows' which are bound by sounds in them also suggest the colour.

Lines 123-144

It is noticed that the poet pursues some images in the poem. For instance, the imagery of leaves, shades, feathers
Edith Sitwell begins to contemplate Death, Time, Human life and resulting phenomenon of metamorphosis from the line:

But Time, a heavy ghost, groans through thick leaves (27)

and the chunk under analysis is an extension of her contemplation. She seems to describe abstractions such as death, time and eternity in terms of concrete ideas. She weaves her imagery of death in a pattern that has semantic dimensions. For example, the concept of death can be explained as follows:

(in a limited sense the poet has written a good deal about the concept in the preceding lines.)

Similarly, she describes the concept of eternity through the repetition of the image of wave in the following manner:
Most of the earlier semantic connections are maintained in this last part of the poem. Words such as Death, dust, earth, grass, light, centuries devouring, blood, skeleton, flesh, Sun, love, night, heart, eternities repeated in a variety of contexts add to the semantic dimensions of the theme of the poem.

She uses the metaphor 'the earth's blind nipple' and repeats the word 'earth' in the following manner to build the structure of meaning:

The Sun, in the end of the poem becomes a symbol of redemption and Edith Sitwell sees in it life-giving divine principle.
She repeats the word in the following manner:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{light (life giving principle)} & \quad \text{to crumble the thick centuries} \\
\text{immortal} = \frac{\text{Sun}}{\text{rose}} \quad (\text{Heavenly Love}) & \quad \text{to rouse my carrion to life} \\
& \quad \text{to move the polar night} \\
& \quad \text{to melt the eternal ice of Death}
\end{align*}
\]

Edith Sitwell ends the poem with a kind of prayer addressed to the Sun for the eternal state of the soul.

On the basis of the stylistic analysis of 'Metamorphosis' let me make some broad and tentative observations in comparison with the poetry of the first phase. As far as the sound texture of the poetry of the second phase is concerned we notice that the phonetic motivation has become weaker than what it is in the poetry of the first phase, though she continues to use the same devices of sound linkage and rhyme linkage transcending the word boundaries. In some of the poems of the first phase we have noticed the tendency towards a greater semantic patterning. In 'Metamorphosis' we find an intensification of this tendency which indicates that Edith Sitwell has become increasingly meaning-oriented. This is also proved by the way certain concepts gradually crystalize into operating symbols.
symbols like 'light', 'dark', 'Sun', 'death', 'Time', 'eternity' and 'change'. When we look at the recurring symbols and the meaning-constructs that are associated with the symbol nuclei, we find that she is moving towards certain conceptualizations about some most fundamental aspects of human existence. So let us bear in mind these observations when we analyse another longish poem 'Gold Coast Customs' which belongs to the same phase.
ONE fantee wave
  cvc cvcv cvc

Is grave and tall
  vc cvcv vcc cvc

As brave Ashantee's
  vc cvcv vcvccv

Thick mud wall.
  cvc cvc cvc

Munza rattles his bones in the dust
  cvccv cvccvc cvc cvcc vc cv cvcc

Lurking in murk because he must.
  cvcvvc vc cvc cvcvvc cv cvcc

Striped black and white
  cvccv ccvc vcvccv cvc

Is the squalling light;
  vc cv ccvcvcc cvc

The dust brays white in the market place,
  cv cvcv ccvc cvc vc cv cvcvccv ccvc

Dead poweder spread on a black skull's face
  cvc cvcv ccvcvc vc v ccvc ccvcc cvc

Like monkey skin
  cvc cvcccv ccvc

Is the sea - one sin
  vc cv cv cv cvc cvc

Like a weasel is nailed to bleach on the rocks
  cvc v cvcvcc vc cvcvcc cv cvcc vc cv cvcc

Where the eyeless mud sreeeched fawning, mocks
  cv cv cv cccvcvc cvc

At a negro that wipes
  vc v cvccv cvc ccvc

His knife...dug there
  cvc cvc cvc cv

A bugbear bellowing
  v cvccv cvccvc

Bone dared rear
  cvc cvc cv

A bugbear bone that bellows white
  v cvccv cvc cvc cvcvcc cvc

As the ventriloquist sound of light,
  vc cv cvcccvccvccvccv ccvc vc cvc

It rears at his head-dress of falted black hair
  vc cvc vc cvc cvc ccvc vc cvcvcc cvcvcc cvc

The one humanity clinging there
  cv cv cvcccvccv ccvcccv ccv

His eyeless face whitened like black and white bones
  cvc cvcv ccvc cvc cvccvccvcc cvc cvcv ccvccv

And his beard of rusty
  vcc cvc cvc vc cvccv

Brown grass cones.
  ccvc ccvc cvcc

Hard blue and white
  cvc ccv vcc cvc

Courie shells (the light
  cvcv ccvc cv cvc
28 Grown hard outline
   ccvc cvc vccvc
29 The leopard skin musty
   cv cvccvc ccvc cvccv
30 Leaves that shine
   cvcc cvc cvc
31 With an animal small both thick and fusty
   cvc vc vcvccvc ccvc cvc cvc vcc cvccv
32 One house like a ratskin
   cvc cvc cvc v cvcccvccv
33 Mask flaps fleet
   cvcc ccvcc ccvc
34 In the sailor's tall
   vc cv cvcvc cvc
35 Ventriloquist street
   cvcccvccvccvcc cvccv
36 Where the rag houses flap
   cv cv cvc cvccv ccvc
37 Hiding a gap.
   cvccvc v cvc

Syllabic Structure
GOLD COAST CUSTOMS - 1

1 wan fanti weiv
2 iz greiv mond to:1
3 az breiv ajantiz
4 òik mad woi:l
5 manζa rxtalz hiz bounz injadast
6 la:kig in mɔ:k bikɔz hi mást
7 straip int blɔk and wait
8 iz ða skwiliŋ lait
9 ða dast breiz wait in ða ma:kit pleis
10 ded paude spred on ə blɔk skɔlζ feis
11 laik mɔγki skin
12 iz ðesí: wan sin
13 laik ə wi:zal iz neild tabli:tʃ on ɔrɛks
14 wo ða a lis mad skri:tʃt faunig moks
15 ət enigræu ət waips
16 hiz naif...dɔŋ ɔz,
17 ə bagbæ ə bilæuiŋ
18 baun dæd riə
19 ə bagbæ ə baun ãt bilæuz wait
20 ða ða ventrilokwist saund əv lai:t
21 it riz ãt hiz hed dres əv feltid blɔk hia
22 ða wan huj:maŋiti klinggiŋ ɔz
23 hiz a lis feis waitnd laik blɔk ãnd wait bounz
24 ãnd hiz biad ãv rastı
25 braun grais kanz
26 ha:id blu: ãnd wait
27 ba:ri jelz ( ɔlait
28 graun ha:d) autlain
29 ða lepa:dskin masti
30 li:vz ìz ìət ʃain
31 wi:bi:n xınıml əmel baun əik ãnd ɔstı
32 wan haus laik ə rxtskin
33 ma:sk flæps fli:t
34 in ə seilhɔz to:1
35 ventrilokwist strı:t
36 wo ə hau:ziŋ flæp -
37 haidiŋ ə ɡæp.

Phonetic Structure
GOLD COAST CUSTOMS - 1

1 One fantee wave
2 Is grave and tall
3 As brave Ashantee's
4 Thick mud wall.
5 Munza rattles his bones in the dust,
6 Lurking in murk because he must.
7 Striped black and white
8 Is the squawling light;
9 The dust brays white in the market place,
10 Dead powder spread on a black skull's face.
11 Like monkey skin
12 Is the sea - one sin
13 Like a weasel is nailed to bleach on the rocks
14 Where the eyeless mud screeched fawning mocks
15 At a negro that wipes
16 His knife dug there
17 A bugbear bellowing
18 Bone dared rear -
19 A bugbear bone that bellows white
20 As the ventriloquist sound of light,
21 It rears at his head-dress of felted black hair
22 The one humanity clinging there -
23 His eyeless face whitened like black and white bones
24 And his beard of rusty
25 Brown grass cones.
26 Hard blue and white
27 Courie shells (the light
28 Grown hard) outline
29 The leopard skin musty
30 Leaves that shine
31 With an animal smell both thick and fusty.
32 One house like a ratskin
33 Mask flaps fleet
34 In the sailor's tall
35 Ventriloquist street
36 Where the rag houses flap -
37 Hiding a gap.

Metrical Structure
One house is in the sailor's street. It is surrounded by slums.

The light is growing, bright on the leaves.

He has a musty brown beard.

The light is growing, bright on the leaves.

One house is in the sailor's street. It is surrounded by slums.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>273</td>
<td>So Lady Bamburgher's Shrunken Head</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>274</td>
<td>Slum hovel, is full of the rat-eaten bones</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>275</td>
<td>Of a fashionable god that lived not</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>276</td>
<td>Ever, but still has bones to rot;</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>277</td>
<td>A bloodless and an unborn thing</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>278</td>
<td>That cannot wake, yet cannot sleep</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>279</td>
<td>That makes no sound, that cannot weep</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280</td>
<td>That hears all, bears all, cannot move -</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>281</td>
<td>It is buried so deep</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>282</td>
<td>Like a shameful thing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>283</td>
<td>In that plague-spot heart, Death's last dust-heap</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>284</td>
<td>A tall house flaps</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>285</td>
<td>In the canvas street,</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>286</td>
<td>Down in the wineshop</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>287</td>
<td>The Amazons meet</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>288</td>
<td>With the tall abbess</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>289</td>
<td>Of the shade...</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>290</td>
<td>A ghost in a gown</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>291</td>
<td>Like a stiff brigade</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>292</td>
<td>Watches the sailor</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>293</td>
<td>With a guitar</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>294</td>
<td>Lure the wind</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>295</td>
<td>From the islands far</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>296</td>
<td>Oh far horizons and bright blue wine</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>297</td>
<td>And majesty of the seas that shine</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>298</td>
<td>Bull-bellowing waves that ever fall</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>299</td>
<td>Round the god-like feet and the goddess tall</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Gold Coast Customs II**

**No. of syllables**

**Structure**
Gold Coast Customs II

273 sau ledi bəmbəgə:z fənəkən hed
274 sləm həvel iz ful av əxərət-i:tn bənz
275 av ə fəxənəbl gəd hət livd əxt
276 evə hət stil həz bənzə tə rot
277 o blədəls and ənəməbən əhəğ
278 hət kənət wəik jət kənət əli:p
279 hət meiks nəu saund hət kənət wi:p
280 hət həz ə'l bərəvəl kənət məv
281 it iz berid sau di:p
282 laik ə feimfəl əhəğ
283 in hət pleig-spot hə:t, dəos la:st dəst-hi:p
284 o tə:1 haus fləps
285 in bəkəxəvəs stri:t
286 daun in ə wain ʃəp
287 bəxmezəns mi:t
288 wi:t əə tə:1 qəbi:
289 oə əjəid
290 o gaust inə gaun
291 laik o stif brigeid
292 wətəiz əə seilo
293 wiəə sita:
294 ləə bəwind
295 frəm bəəoiləndəz fa:
296 oə fa: həraizənəz and brait blu: wain
297 and mədəžəti oə əə si:z hət jəin
298 bəl-bəluiz wəivəz hət evə ʃəl:
299 raund əə şəgə-ləik fi:t and əə şədəs ʃəl:

Phonetic Structure
So Lady Bamburghar's Shrunken Head,
Slum novel, is full of the rat-eaten bones
Of a fashionable god that lived not
Ever, but still has bones to rot;
A bloodless and an unborn thing
That cannot wake, yet cannot sleep,
That makes no sound, that cannot weep,
That hears all, bears all, cannot move
It is buried so deep
Like a shameless thing
In that plague-spot heart, Death's last dust-heap.
A tall house flaps
In the canvas street,
Down in the wineshop
The Amazons meet
With the tall abbess
Of the shade...
A ghost in a gown
Like a stiff brigade
Watches the sailor
With a guitar
Lure the wind
From the islands far.
Oh far horizons and bright blue wine
And majesty of the seas that shine,
Bull-bellowing waves that ever fall
Round the god-like feet and the goddess tail!

Metrical Structure
Formal and Phonological Structure

The sailor with a guitar watches the wind.

The sea, the horizons, and the waves are all shining.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>410</td>
<td>When, creeping over</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>411</td>
<td>The Sailor's street</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>412</td>
<td>Where the houses like ratskin</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>413</td>
<td>Masks flap, meet</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>414</td>
<td>Never across the murdered bone</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>415</td>
<td>Of the sailor, the whining overtone</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>416</td>
<td>Of dawn sounds, slaves</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>417</td>
<td>Rise from their graves</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>418</td>
<td>Where in the corpse-sheet night they lay</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>419</td>
<td>Forgetting the mutilating day,</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>420</td>
<td>Like the unborn child in its innocent sleep.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>421</td>
<td>Ah Christ, the murdered light must weep</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>422</td>
<td>Christ that takest away the sin</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>423</td>
<td>Of the world, and the rich man's bone-dead grin</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>424</td>
<td>The light must weep</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>425</td>
<td>Seeing that sleep</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>426</td>
<td>And these slaves rise up in their death-chains, part</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>427</td>
<td>The light from the eyes</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>428</td>
<td>The hands from the heart,</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>429</td>
<td>Since their hearts are flesh for the tall</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>430</td>
<td>And sprawling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>431</td>
<td>Reeling appalling</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>432</td>
<td>Cannibal mart,</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>433</td>
<td>But their hands and head</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>434</td>
<td>Are machines to breed</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>435</td>
<td>Gold for the old and the greedy Dead</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
436 I have seen the murdered God look through the eyes
v cvc cvc cv cvcvc cvc cvc ccv cv vc 11
437 Of the drunkard's smirched
vc cv cvcccvccc cvcc 5
438 Mask as he lurched
cvcc vc cv cvcc 4
439 O'er the half of my heart that lies in the street
vc cv cvc vc cv cvc vc cv cv cv cccvc 12
440 'Neath the dancing fleas and the foul news-sheet
cvc cv cvccvc ccvc vcc cv cvc cvc cvc cvc 10

Syllabic Structure
Gold Coast Customs III

410 wen kri:piŋ əuvə
411 seilp:z stri:t
412 wəə əə hauziz laik rətskin
413 ma:sks flxp, mi:t
414 nevə əkrəs ḥa mə:da:d bəun
415 a:n əə seilə əə wainig əuvə təun
416 a:n əə sanədz, sleivz
417 raiz frem əəgreivz
418 wi:n əəko:ps li:t nait əei lei
419 fəgetiŋ əə mjuːtleiŋ dei
420 laik ḥə əncə:n tə:jəld in its ḥnə:t sliːp
421 a: kraist ḥəəməːda:d lait məst wiːp
422 (kraist əst teikist əwei ḥə əsin
423 a:v əə wəːld and əə ritʃ ənəz bəun-dəd grin)
424 əə lait məst wiːp
425 siːŋ əst sliːp
426 and əəəz sleivz raiz əp in əədeθ-ty einz paːt
427 əə lait frem əəaiəz
428 əə əndəndz frem əə əət
429 sins əə həits aː fleʃ fəˈə təːl
430 ənd sprəliŋ
431 riːliŋ əpəliŋ
432 kənibəl mə:t
433 bət əə əndəndz ənd hed
434 aː məʃiːnz tə briːd
435 gəuld faː bəuld and grə:di ded
436 aː həv siːn əə maːda:d gəd əuː əruː əaiz
437 a:v əə drəŋkə:dʒə smə:tʃ t
438 əəmək əə hiː laːt t
439 əuvə əə hət əv maː hə:t əə əə laiz in əə striːt
430 niːə əə daːnsiŋ fliːz and əə fəul njʊːz-ʃiːt.

Phonetic Structure
Gold Coast Customs III

410 When, creeping over
411 The Sailor's street
412 Where the houses like ratskin
413 Masks flap, meet
414 Never across the murdered bone
415 Of the sailor, the whining overtone
416 Of dawn sounds, slaves
417 Rise from their graves.
418 Where in the corpse-sheet night they lay
419 Forgetting the mutilating day,
420 Like the unborn child in its innocent sleep.
421 As Christ, the murdered light must weep -
422 Christ that takest away the sin
423 Of the world, and the rich man's bone-dead grin
424 The light must weep
425 Seeing that sleep
426 And these slaves rise up in their death-chains, part
427 The light from the eyes
428 The hands from the heart,
429 Since their hearts are flash for the tall
430 And sprawling
431 Reeling/appalling
432 Cannibal mart,
433 But their hands and head
434 Are machines to breed
435 Gold for the old and the greedy Dead.
436 I have seen the murdered God look through the eyes
437 Of the drunkard's smirched
438 Mask as he lurched
439 Over the half of my heart that lies in the street
440 'Neath the dancing fleas and the foul news-sheet.

Metrical Structure
I have seen the murdered God (Christ) in the eyes of the dead lying in the street.

Christ must weep for the slaves.

Christ who was murdered must weep. He takes away the sin of the world.

The murdered bone, whining overtone of dawn, corpse-sheet night, the murdered light must weep

houses = ratskin masks flapping soldiers = unborn child in its innocent sleep in the grave.

II Sailor's street murdered slaves Christ light sleep weep bone hands heart

I have seen the murdered God look through his eyes

Of the drunkard's smirched

'Ask as he lurched

O'er the half of my heart that lies in the street

The dancing fleas and the foul news-sheet.
Gold Coast Customs IV

No. of syllables

483 The drunken burning,
cv ccvccvc cvcvc 5
484 The skin drums galloping,
cv ccvc ccvcc cvcvcvc 6
485 In their long march still parched for the sky,
vc cv cvc cvc cvcc cvcvc ccvc cv cv ccv 9
486 The Rotten Alleys where beggars groan
 cv cvccvc ccvcc cv ccvcc cvcc ccvc 9
487 And the beggar and his dog share a bone;
vcc cv cvcvcv cvc cvc cvc cvv ccvc 10
488 The rich man Cain that hides within
 cv cvc cvc cvc cvc ccvc cvcc cv cv cvcc 8
489 His lumbering palaces where Sin
 cvc cvcccvccv ccvccvc ccv ccv 9
490 Through the eyeless holes of Day peers in,
ccv cv cvcc cvvcc vc cv cvcc vc 9
491 The murdered heart that all night turns
 cv cvccvc cvc cvc vc cvc cvcc cvcc 8
492 From small machine to shapeless Worm
 ccvc ccvc cvccvc cv cvccvc cvcvc 8
493 With hate, and like Gomorrah burns
 cvc cvc cvc cvc cvc ccc cvcccvcc 8
494 These put the eyes of Heaven out,
cvc cvc cvc vc vc vc cvc vc 8
495 These raise all Hell's throats to a shout,
cvc cvc vc cc cvc cvcc cvccvc cv cv cvc 8
496 These break my heart's walls toppling in,
cvc ccvc cv cvcc cvcc cvccvc vc 8
497 And like a universal sea
vc cccvc cvv ccvccvcc cvvcv 8
498 The nations of the Dead crowd in.
cv cvccvcc vc cv ccc cccvc vc 8

Syllabic Structure
Gold Coast Customs IV

483 ᶂ汕头 a:ning,
484 >this skin dr:amz g:lapig,
485 in ᶂ汕头 log ma:ty stil pa:typ fe ᶂ汕头 skai,
486 >this rotam xliz wea bega:z gr:oun
487 and ᶂ汕头 bega:nd hiz dog jie:ga baun;
488 ᵃ汕头 ᶂ汕头 man kein jai haidz wifin
489 hiz lambarig pxleisiz wea sin
490 ṭro: Schumer a:lis haulz a: v dei pizz in,
491 ᶂ汕头 ma:de h:t jai:z:il nait tə:nz
492 from sma:1 moji:n ta ippis wo:m
493 wiz heit and laik go:maura bo:nz-
494 ᶂ汕头 put jai:z:ev hevan aut,
495 ᶂ汕头 reiz jai:z:il helz orjaut ts:usaut,
496 ᶂ汕头 breik mai ha:ts wolz toxplin in,
497 and laikjuz:nivasal si:
498 ᶂ汕头 nei:jans av ᶂ汕头 ded kraud in.

Phonetic Structure
Gold Coast Customs IV

483 The drunken burning,
484 The skin drums galloping,
485 In their long march still parched for the sky,
486 The Rotten Alleys where beggars groan
487 And the beggar and his dog share a bone;
488 The rich man Cain that hides within
489 His lumbering palaces where Sin
490 Through the eyeless holes of Day peers in,
491 The murdered heart that all night turns
492 From small machine to shapeless Worm
493 With hate, and like Gomorrah burns -
494 These put the eyes of Heaven out,
495 These raise all Hell's throats to a shout,
496 These break my heart's walls toppling in,
497 And like a universal sea
498 The nations of the Dead crowd in.

Metrical Analysis
The drums of skin are galloping in the long march.
The beggar and his dog share a bone and groan in the rotten alleys,
Cain and Sin go together.
The murdered heart (Christ) suffers.
It's hell everywhere.

The drunken burning,
The skin drums galloping,
In their long march still parched for the sky,
The Rotten Alleys where beggar groan
And the beggar and his dog share a bone;
The rich man Cain that hides within
His lumbering palaces where Sin
Through the eyeless holes of Day peers in,
The murdered heart that all night turns
From small machine to shapeless Worm
With hate, and like Gomorrah burns —
These put the eyes of Heaven out,
These raise all Hell's throats to a shout,
These break my heart's walls toppling in,
And like a universal sea
The nations of the Dead crowd in.

**Formal and Phonological Repetition**
I saw the Blind like a winding-sheet
Tossed up and down through the blind man's street
Where the dead plague-spot
Of the spirit's rot
On the swollen thick houses
Cries to the quick,
Cries to the dark soul that lies there and dies
In hunger and murk, and answers not.
Gomorrah's fires have washed my blood -
But the fires of God shall wash the mud
Till the skin drums rolling
The slim cries sprawling
And crawling
Are calling
"Burn thou me'."
Though Death has taken
And pig-like shaken
Rooted and tossed
The rags of me.
Yet the time will come
To the heart's dark slum
When the rich man's gold and the rich man's wheat
Will grow in the street, that the starved may eat,-
And the sea of the rich will give up its dead -
And the last blood and fire from my side will be shed

For the Fires of God go marching on.

Syllabic Structure
Gold Coast Customs V

518 ai so: 4a blaind laik 3 waindij -ti:
519 tost ap nd daun thr: 4a blaind manz stri:t
520 wo 4a ded pleig spot
521 4v 4a spirits rot
522 4n 4o swuulan 4ik hauziz
523 kraiz t4 ba:kwik,
524 kraiz t4 4o dark soul 4at laiz 4ev'and daiz
525 in hans 4nd 4oik, and a:nsciz rot.

526 gumguraiz fai:z h4v wc'it mai bland -
527 4t 4a fai:z av 4od j4l wc'4a mod
528 til 4a skin dramz rulig
529 4o slm kraiz sprulig
530 4nd krulig
531 a: ko:lig
532 "ba:n 4au mi:" 4a
533 4u de4 haz teiken
534 4nd pig-laik seiken
535 ru:tid 4nd tost
536 4a r4gz av mi.
537 jet 4a taim wil kom
538 44 haitis daik slm
539 wen 4a ritj manz gould 4nd 4a ritj manz wi:t
540 wil gru: in 4a stri:t, 4at 4a sta:vd mei i:t,-
541 4nd 4asi: av 4a ritj wil givap its ded -
542 4nd 4a la:st old 4nd fai: from mai said wil bi jed
543 44 4a fai:z av 4od gau ma:tjig on.

Phonetic Structure
Gold Coast Customs V

I saw the Blind like a windingsheet

Tossed up and down through the blind man's street

Where the dead plague-spot

Of the spirit's rot

On the swollen thick houses

Cries to the quick,

Cries to the dark soul that lies there and dies

In hunger and murk, and answers not.

Gomorrah's fires have washed my blood -

But the fires of God shall wash the mud

Till the skin drums rolling

The slum cries sprawling

And crawling

Are calling

"Burn thou me!"

Though Death has taken

And pig-like shaken

Rooted and tossed

The rags of me.

Yet the time will come

To the heart's dark slum

When the rich man's gold and the rich man's wheat

Will grow in the street, that the starved may eat, -

And the sea of the rich will give up its dead -

And the last blood and fire from my side will be shed

For the Fires of God: go marching on.

Metrical Structure
He expects that God's fires would wash the mud. Though Death is inevitable, he is hopeful about future and he comments on the inevitable aspect of human life and also on the nature of the universe.

Gomorrah's fires have washed my blood. But the fires of God shall wash the mud till the skin drums rolling. The slim cries sprawling. And crawling. Are calling. "Burn thou me!" Though Death has taken And pig-like shaken. Rooted and tossed. The rags of me. Yet the time will come To the heart's dark slim. When the rich man's gold and the rich man's wheat Will grow in the street, that the starved may eat And the sea of the rich will give up its dead And the last blood and fire from my side will be shed. For the fires of God go marching on.

formal and phonological structure

formal and phonological structure/repetition

structure of language

prepositional meaning

The blind man is crying to the soul that is dying in hunger.

He expects that God's fires would wash the mud. Though Death is inevitable, he is hopeful about future and he comments on the inevitable aspect of human life and also on the nature of the universe.

blood-mud. rolling-sprawling, crawling-calling, taken-shaken, come-slim, wheat-eat dead-shed wheat-eat

slum-sprawling, street-starved, God-go street, eat, rich, give, Gomorrah's fires, God-mud, time-come, street-eat, side-shed.

the slim cries sprawling and crawling PM heart's dark slim, the sea of the rich. II rich^{3} fires^{4} wash^{2} blood^{2} slum^{2}
Gold Coast Customs

In a characteristically Sitwellian poem such as 'Gold Coast Customs', there is a good deal of incomprehen-sible, suggestive and rather jelly like vague stuff around the clearly located nuclei. Edith Sitwell's own 'Notes' and some relevant critical comments help us understand the nuclei. There are both stable and unstable elements in her poetry in general and in 'Gold Coast Customs', in particular. In an ordinary poem, the perception of stable elements is more and therefore, it is easily accessible whereas in Sitwell's poetry, as in most Romantic poetry, the unstable elements predominate.

I am going to look at the poem in as many linguistic dimensions as possible and work out its surface and deep structures of meaning. This would enable me to trace the principles of her development and compare the major poem of the second phase with her early poetry. Since it is a long poem, the strategy of analysis would be to look at it as a whole and note down some of the striking features and then follow this up by a detailed analysis of some five chunks from different parts of the poem. The poem runs into 543 lines of uneven length and it is divided into 70 verses of varying lengths.

Before we take up the five chunks of the poem for a detailed stylistic analysis, it is helpful to keep before us some of the critical observations about the poem so that we get a tentative entry into it. The support of the critics is
necessitated by the fact that we are not in a position to hold
the entire poem into one continuous 'stylistic attention' and
arrive at the total semantic structure of it. This is merely
into the poem
a convenient strategy of entry and it does not mean that the
critics are wholly acceptable to us. 'Gold Coast Customs' is
described as Edith Sitwell's 'Wasteland', presenting 'a tragic
vision of the contemporary world' (Pinto, 172). The world of
the cannibal West African negroes as described in the poem is
an image of 'the stupidity and cruelty of the contemporary
world' (Pinto, 172). Edith Sitwell is supposed to have fused
'the levels of barbaric cannibal life with those of capitalistic...
process' (Lindsay:1950, 42). The poem's ending is supposed to
indicate her faith in 'God' and in the 'transformative movement
of man'. Sitwell herself says the following about 'Gold Coast
Customs':

In Ashantee, a hundred and fifty years ago,
the death of any rich or important person was
followed by several days of national ceremonies,
during which the utmost licence prevailed, and
slaves and poor persons were killed that the
bones of the deceased might be laved with human
blood. These ceremonies were called
Customs. (Sitwell, 1976, 189).

'Gold Coast Customs' is about the present spiritual
state of the world, materialism, the besotted,
darkened pleasures of the rich and their cannibalistic
cruelty to the destitute poor. It is built
on three tiers - the negro swamp, which is the
spiritual state, the physical slum of starvation, and its mockery and mirror, the soul moral slum of the heartless rich

Where the rickety houses...
And a mask for the universal worm

(21 lines)

'Rock' is a shrunken echo of 'rickety', 'rot' is a still deader echo of 'rock' and this is deliberate; so is the dissonances of 'plague-spot' and 'heart'. The last syllable of 'romantic' is a crazy reversed echo of the first syllable of 'rickety' and its hollow shrunken counterpart 'rock'. The assonances, dissonances and rhyme within the lines; 'Rock and rot'; 'that smart Plague-cart'; 'Lady Bamburgher rolls where the foul news sheet - and the shambles for souls are set in the street, give a sort of rocking balance; so does the arrangement of three-syllabled words; whilst that of the intermingled one-syllabled and two-syllabled words give a drum-beating sound. Here, then, is the moral slum of the rich, and its mirror, the slum of the starved:

The rat deserts a room that is bare..
That walk up and down in the Sailors' street

This poem is, indeed, the vision of:
The sick thick smoke from London burning..
The nations of the Dead crowd in..

(27 lines) (Edith Sitwell, Mercury:1935). This passage is a strange mixture of stylistics and literary criticism - strange, but revealing. If Sitwell gives something interesting about her style, Singleton (1960, 69) speaks perceptively about the imagery and technique of the poem:

The poem derives a considerable part of its loathsome effect from an extensive use of animal
imagery. Animal sounds echo and reverberate throughout the poem. The vile human morass voices its hideous perverted ecstasy in a grotesque babel of 'bellowing', 'blating', 'braying', 'cackling', 'giggling', 'roaring', 'howling', 'rattling', 'soaring', 'screeching', 'squealing', 'squaling', 'whimpering' and 'whining'...

She employs montage in 'Gold Coast Customs', a technique more usually adopted in the cinema. She writes 'The poem is built on three tiers like the floors of a house. The bottom tier is the negro swamp, which is a phantom, spiritual taste, and on it the other two tiers - the terrible slums of the beggars, and the terrible slum of the cannibal rich - are built. The basic constructical formula is exploited by a combined use of audio and visual montage in terms of the underlying, unifying rhythm and the three states of men. The poem comprises a series of stills and scenes and is rich in cinematic features.

Now let us consider the patterns of sound as noticed in the poem:

And the Tickety houses
Rock and Rot,
Lady Bamburgher airs
That foul plague-spot
Her romantic heart.
From the cannibal mart,
That smart Plague-cart,
Lady Bamburgher rolls where the foul news-sheet
And the shambles for souls are set in the street

(130-38)
Here we notice the use of alliteration (rickety..rock..rot; souls..set..street), assonance (rock..rot, smart..cart), repetition of words (Lady Bamburgher$^2$, Plague$^2$) and end-rhyme (rot-spot, heart-cart, sheet-street) which build up phonetic orchestration of the verse.

In 'Gold Coast Customs', the relevant semantic rhymes are distributed through the poem as an organizing principle. The following examples illustrate how the structure of meaning is organized through internal rhymes:

One **fantee** wave ei ei ei
Is **grave and tall**
As **brave Ashantee's**
Thick mud **wall** (1-4)

He hangs like a **skull** l l l l
With a yellow **dull face**
Made of clay (54-55)

That **roll and sprawl**
In a **cowl of foul blind monkey-skin**
Lest the whips of the light crash roaring in -
Those hearts that **roll**...(85-88) l l l l

One high house **flaps** taps (94) x x x
And the trophies with long black hair, **shrunken** heads

That **drunken shrunk** upon tumbled beds...(252-53)
Cries to the quick
Cries to the dark soul that lies there and dies

(523-24)

In the following lines, semantic links and phonetic links are bound together by alliteration:

A bugbear bellowing
Bone dared rear... (17-18)

Unshaping till no more the beat of the blood—
Can raise up the body from endless mud (67-68)

When the sun of dawn looks down on the shrunken
Heads, drums of skin, and the dead men drunken (74-75)

Where the mud and the murk (118)

And the rickety houses
Rock and rot (130-131)

And the shambles for souls are set in the street (138)

The dust of all the dead can blow (187)

Bull-bellowing band (198)

Grass creaks like a carrion-bird's voice, rattles (227)

Though it is buried beneath black bones (239)

Starved silly Sally, you dilly and dally

The dummies said when I was a girl (330-31)
In the above examples, the words forming alliteration are bound by a common semantic link. For instance, 'beat', 'blood' and 'body' cohere; 'dead', 'drunken', 'mud', 'murk', 'rickety', 'rock' and 'rot', 'dust', 'dead', 'creaks', 'carrion', 'buried', 'beneath' 'black and 'bones' also cohere semantically. There is a dense foregrounding of this kind in the poem.

Edith Sitwell uses another phonetic device of returning to the same image by verbal repetition at several places in the poem. For example, she repeatedly uses the image of /light/ in the following contexts of the poem:

squaling 'light'\( (8,142) \), ventriloquist sound of 'light'\( (20) \), the whips of the 'light'\( (87) \), 'light's' skin drum \( (95) \), ventriloquist squaling 'light'\( (235) \), overtones of the 'light'\( (241) \), murdered 'light'\( (328,421) \), dog-whining dawn 'light' \( (370) \), the 'light' must weep\( (429) \), the 'light' from the eyes \( (427) \).

In most cases, we are made to 'hear' the 'light' as the words such as squaling, ventriloquist, whips, drum, dog-whining and weep denote sound. The poet, thus, perceives 'light' in terms of vivid sounds.

With slight variations, the image of 'the sailor's Street' keeps on recurring in the whole poem:

The Sailor's tall Ventriloquist street \( (34-5) \)
In the sailor's street\( (82) \)
In the sailor's street\( (338) \) the sailor's street\( (411) \)
the blind man's street \( (519) \).
Another image of 'Bamburgher Parties' recurs in the following manner in the poem:

And the Bamburgher parties - they have them all (93)
Of Lady Bamburgher's parties above (104)
Lady Bamburgher airs..(132)
Lady Bamburgher rolls...(137)
And Lady Bamburgher, smark Plague-cart (367)
Of Lady Bamburgher down in the street (384)
Lady Bamburgher's party; for the plan (443)
By Lady Bamburgher's dancing flees (463)

Edith Sitwell links on the phonetic level pairs of long chains of words as in the following examples in the poem:

eyeless mud (14), eyeless face (123), eyeless day(186),
sightless mud (150), giggling mud (232, 236);
the foul plague spot (133), Low plague pit (147),
that small plague cart (136,367), a dead plague spot
(177,520), painted plague cart's (179), plague-spot heart (287).

There is a variety of end-rhyme in the poem. The regular rhyme, as in verse 16, occurs frequently:

rat-fat, swamp-cramp, above-love, game-shame,
day-away,

Alternate rhyme, feminine rhyme and also irregular rhyme occur in a number of verses of the poem.

In the second and the third phases, the semantic relations are relatively obscure and may depend on our knowledge of her use of classical mythology, history and Biblical allusions. For instance, in this poem there are frequent references to the following:
There is a type of irregular repetition or free repetition in the poem which strikes the reader as having a deliberate rhetorical effect. The following single words repeat intermitently in the poem:

- negro (9)
- worm (12)
- cannibal (11)
- ghosts (7)
- mud (21)
- bones (29)
- dust (8)
- black (25)
- white (7)
- dead (16)
- death (9)
- skull (6)
- grinning (8)
- skin (5)
- rot (12)
- blood (7)
- murdered (7)

and a few other words repeat more than once in the poem. The phrases repeated in the poem are:

- And stuck in front, stuck in front (138-41),
- The negro prays, the negro knocks (244-45),
- Rattle and beat what seemed a drum
- Rattle and beat in with a bone (348-49)

The phrases like 'the sailor's street', 'Cannibal mart', 'Lady Bamburgher' repeat several times in different contexts in the poem. The word 'worm' is repeated in the following lines:

- the universal, devouring worm (73)
- a mask for the universal worm (150)
- the Worm's mask hid (155)
- slime of the Worm that paints her kiss (181)
- the deaf Worm's lust (192)
- The Worm is a jailor (323)
- The rich man are your worms that gain (399)
- still undying as the Worm (402-3)
- to shapeless Worm (492)
Repetitions such as these suggest a suppressed intensity of feelings. Edith Sitwell says the same thing over and over again but often in a different way. The 'Worm' image, gradually through its repetitions throughout the poem, gains a symbolic value. In fact, it seems to be her method of creating symbols in her poetry which increase the semantic dimension and depth of her poem. The apparent haphazardness in the manner of repetition as in the examples mentioned above, may also suggest spontaneity and exuberance.

The interpretation of Edith Sitwell's special use of words depends on the relationship contracted by the words in two different dimensions of language - on the one hand, the underlying systems to which the words are made to belong, and on the other, the way in which she actually employs them - their contexts in the poem. For example, she uses the word 'gold' in one verse as follows:

Can a plant tease with its great gold train (201-2)
great gold planet the beat of the Sun (204)
Wear long gold hair? (207)
The great gold planet tease her brain (214)
The great gold suns made size (199)
but gold for flesh (405)
Is your gold hard as Hell's huge polar street
Gold for the old and the greedy Dead (453).

Similarly, she uses the words 'black' and 'white' in her unique way in the following illustrations from the poem:

black and white light (7), black face (9-10)
black and white bones (23), black hair (21),
black box (39), white skulls (48), black negress (125),
bone-white masks (153), black night (163), black
and white striped dust (164), bone-black face (167),
black shadow (205), black image of man (221),
black rhinoceros-hide (225), black skeleton (229),
black clotted night (234), black ghosts (263),
black gap (441), black hippopotamus-hide (471),
dark soul (524), dark slur (538)

In these examples and many more which will be considered a
little later, we will notice that the poet uses her diction
in such a way that it helps the reader to build the structure
of meaning. Her perception of colours - black and white - and
their juxtaposition with concrete as well as abstract entities
that is significant in the sense the reader can perceive the landscape
of 'Ashanetee' in terms of colours.

In the poem the paradigmatic relations of the words used
help us build the structures of meaning. For instance, the
following words used throughout the poem tend to cluster round
a concept or a thing and a structure of meaning emerges from
each one of them. Some of these words can be classified as belong-
ing to a particular semantic field - colour, words for animals,
for various abstract ideas and so on. The following semantic
fields can be clearly mapped out in 'Gold Coast Customs!:

/Death/: ghosts, fright, starve, cruel, weep, soul,
burried, skeleton, battle, dark, night, chaos,
grave, moulder, flesh, skin, heaven, cries, mud,
bones, dust, mark, black, skull, sin, knife, dug,
grinning, clay, rot, plague, blood, cold, coffin, meat, phantom, shambles, murdered, shrunken.

Animals: monkey, weasel, worm, rat, ape, armadillo, beast, apes, gadfly, louse, bull, rhinoceros, carrion-bird, dogs, hippopotamus, pig, leopard, rat, bird.

Colours: black, white, dark, brown, yellow, red, blue, gold, bright-blue, navy-blue.

Sounds: rattle, screeched, bellowing, bray, roaring, crackled, squaling, squaks, giggling, blare, whimpering, groan, whine, ventriloquist, crash, cries, taps, whispering, crack, squack, overtones, knock, mumblings, calling.

The basic vocabulary of texture, shape, motion that Edith Sitwell uses explores a deeper level of semantic structure than is normally used. The final effect is one of complex sense impression or of vitality and compression. She also uses a kind of imagery - that of light and shade which is particularly characteristic of her and it pervades the poem. The examples are already mentioned above where the repetition phenomenon is dealt with. Occasionally her vocabulary extends into non-visual sense impressions like sound as illustrated above and the blending of such images with colour and animal imagery enriches her poem.

When a single word does not exist for a concept she wants to express, she resorts to compoundings and collocations. Like Hopkins, she experiments with her compoundings.
have observed in 'Metamorphosis', her compoundings are syntactic compressions of modifying phrases. By and large they are of coordinating, subordinating and copulative types. By compressing the syntax, she can capture so many instantaneously perceived effects. The compoundings used in the poem are

- plague-spots bray (57),
- worm-soft Sin (66),
- monkey-like shrunk (96),
- rat-fat soul (108),
- plague-cart (smart) (136, 366),
- world-tall worm (140),
- plague-pit (147),
- ape-skin (151),
- bone-white (153-4),
- God-ordained shape (159),
- bone-black face (167),
- plague-spot (176),
- plague-cart's heart (178),
- the blue-striped sand (196),
- Bull-bellowing band of waves,
- rat-eaten bones (273),
- (death's last) dust-heap (282),
- bull-bellowing waves (297),
- god-like feet (298),
- navy-blue ghost (304),
- dog-whining dawn (369),
- the sea-wall (391),
- corpse-sheet night (417),
- bone-dead grin (422),
- death-chains (425),
- foul news-sheet (439),
- mud-covered shapes (448),
- monkey-hide (461),
- rat-like whine (514-15),
- death-slack ease (463),
- hippopotomus-hide (470),
- a winding-sheet (518),
- pig-like shaken (534),
- rhinoceros-hide leaves (509).

Her use of such compoundings foregrounds the poet's mode of perception. The obvious effect is that of comprehension of simultaneously perceived things.

Very often in her vocabulary, there is a metaphorical transfer from one semantic field to another. It is her favourite use of the device of synaesthesia which establishes the syntactic relation between elements semantically incompatible, denoting sensations from different sensorial fields. This is
most interesting in her poetry belonging to the three phases. She uses expressions like 'saint-blue skies (The Sleeping Beauty); the fruit-ripe domes, furred and white is the fallen snow, cold melodious death, bird-soft gloom, water-flowing beauty, goatish snow's locks (The Drum), the maned blue wind, the flat and paper sky (Clown's Houses), Wooden brittle joy, the hairy sky (Said King Pompey), decoy duck dust (The Bat), wrinkled as sea sand (Mariner Man), the feathered air (Fox Trot), the wan grassy sea (Waltz), a swan-bosomed tree (Waltz) and so on. Similarly, Edith Sitwell uses the following expressions in 'Gold Coast Customs':

Squaling light (8) - sound + visual
dust brays white (9) - inanimate + animate + visual
One sin like weasel is nailed (12-13),
the eyeless mud screeched fawning mocks (14),
a bugbear bone that bellows white (19),
ventriloquist sound of light (20)
sailor's tall ventriloquist street (34-35),
the plague-spots bray (51),
shapeless worm-soft unshaping sin (66),
light's skin drum (95),
her eyeless mud (156), shapeless love (157),
the black rhinoceros-hide of the mud (225),
the giggling mud devouring its eyes (232),
the black clotted night (234), the bray of the eyeless mud cannot betray (237-8), the blare of the gaping capering empty air (249), the dog-whining dawn light noted for their hearts whined in fright (371), the eyeless mud squaling (460).
that sick-thick smoke from London burning (474),
the Bedlam daylights murderous roar (477), sin through
the eyeless holes of Day peers in (490), the sightless
mud weeps tears, a sigh to rhinoceros-hided leaves (508),
the bunches of nerves still dance (43, 455), where tained
painted, the plague-spots bray (57), grinning day (103),
the eyeless day (185), deaf worm's lust (191), Grass
creaks like the carrion-bird's voice screeching like
overtones of the light (239, 40), the bone was dead,
alone (349), to the grinning air (352), murdered light
must weep (420), and skull's galloping (454)

Now let us look at the phonetic aspect of the poem with
reference to the five chunks that we have selected for the
analysis. She uses an irregular verse form with stanzas
arranged in accordance with the thought movement rather than
the demands of a stanzaic form. In the first passage of 37 lines
there are 6 verse paragraphs arranged in the following manner:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>chunk</th>
<th>verse</th>
<th>No. of syllables</th>
<th>rhyme scheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>4 4 5 3 9 8</td>
<td>a b c b d d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>4 5 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>a a b b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>6 4 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>a a b b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>6 4 6 3 8 9</td>
<td></td>
<td>a b c b d d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>11 8 11 6 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>a a b c b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>5 5 4 5 3 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>a a b c b c</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII</td>
<td>6 3 5 8 6 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>a b c b d d</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| II     | I     | 9 11 10 8 8 8 8 8 5 9 | abcdeefede |
| II    | 4 5 5 5 |                | a b c b    |
| III   | 5 3 5 5 |                | a a b b    |
| IV    | 5 4 3 5 |                | a b c b    |
| V     | 9 9 8 10 |            | a a b b    |

| III    | I     | 5 4 7 3 8 4 4 8 9 11 8 8 |
|        |      | 10 4 4 10 5 5 8 3 5 4 5 5 9 |
|        |      | a b c b d d e e f f g g h h g g i i i i i i i m m m |
| II    | 11 5 4 12 10 |            | a b c c c    |

| IV     | I     | 5 6 9 10 8 9 9 8 8 8 8 7 7 8 8 8 |
|        |      | a a b c c d d d e e f f e g g d h d |

| V      | I     | 8 9 5 5 7 4 10 9 | a a b b c d e b |
| II    | 8 9 6 5 3 3 5 5 4 5 5 10 10 11 12 9 | a a b b b b c d d e e f f g g h h i |

The above analysis shows that there is a good deal of flexibility in the use of rhymes and the patterning of verse paragraphs. Edith Sitwell has tried to achieve a unique synthesis of her
own rule-based controls of rhymes and rhythms and freedom with the latter dominating her poetic activity. The lines vary from 2 feet to 5 feet or in terms of syllables from 3 syllables to 11 syllables, probably answering the impulses of her thought movement. But the spirit of foregrounding seems to dominate everywhere. For example, in the first verse there are two complete sentences. The second verse paragraph is of the same type. But the third stanza ends with the word 'mocks' and the sentence continues in the fourth stanza which in its turn ends with a comma flowing into the 5th stanza at the end of which there is a pause.

She also uses brackets, dots and dashes in the poem. As far as the rhythm is concerned, it is primarily iambic though the modulations of spondee, pyrrhic, cretic, bacchius constantly pull at the iambic rhythm creating tensions all the time.

Take, for example, the first stanza

```
One fantee wave
Is grave and tall
As brave Ashantee's
Thick mud wall.
Munza rattles his bones in the dust
Lurking in murk because he must.
```

Line one has one spondee; the last foot in the 3rd line is an amphibrach; line 4 has a monosyllable and a spondee; line 5 begins with a monosyllable and ends with two anapaests; and line 6 opens with a monosyllable and an anapaest follows it.

With so many modulations, somehow the rising character of
iambic metre is kept in the poem.

Apart from the rhyme scheme, she makes a full use of internal rhyme, assonance, dissonance, alliteration etc. She has experimented not only with the repetition of single phonemes, but with phonetic clusters (first 9 lines). Apart from repetition of clusters, in terms of parts of words, she repeats as she has done earlier, whole words, semantically bound clusters of phonemes. They also add to the total phonetic patterning of the poem.

I - Lines 1-37:

Let us consider the first chunk of 1-37 lines. Here the verse division is uneven in the sense the number of lines in each of the six verses varies. In fact, it varies throughout the whole poem. The poet uses the 'end-rhyme', but it is not consistently symmetrical like the number of lines in her verses. The pattern is as follows:

Verse I: lines 1-6  
Verse 2: lines 7-10  
Verse 3: lines 11-14  
Verse 4: lines 15-20  
Verse 5: lines 21-31  
Verse 6: lines 32-37

In addition to the foregrounding of end-rhyme, there is a good deal of foregrounding of other phonetic devices such as internal rhyme, alliteration, assonance, consonance and repetition of
lexical items as shown graphically. The cumulative effect of such phonetic foregrounding in the first 26 lines of the poem, according to Edith Sitwell, is the creation of abstract sound patterns. The poet achieves this effect through the use of diphthongal phonemes most of which are front-close and front-centring type. The movement of the tongue which is responsible for the abstract pattern of sound is shown in the diagram below. The linear movement of the vowel phonemes involving the movement of the tongue in the first 26 lines is as follows:
The striking feature of this chunk is the poet's use of the central and front vowel phonemes.
It will be seen from the vowel diagrams of the first 26 lines that the peripheral movement of the tongue often ends in /i/ phoneme.

The obvious lexical repetition forms semantic links in the following manner:
There is a blending of cognitive and connotative semantic links in the poet's use of lexical repetition which helps build the structure of meaning in the poem. Edith Sitwell often goes beyond the connotative meaning of the repeated words and her skilful use of collocations which result into clashes gives rise to different semantic dimensions to the reader's perception. This technique enables the reader to perceive the object or the situation in the manner the poet perceives them. For instance, 'thick' collocates with 'mud wall' but not with 'animal smell'. The abstract concept of 'smellness' is perceived through the modifier 'thick' which is, in the normal circumstances, used with concrete objects. 'bones in the dust' is normal, but 'the dust brays' is the poet's perception of 'dust' in terms 'sound', that too, animal sound instead of through visual
perception. Similarly, 'light squealing' is the perception of the visual in terms of animal sound resulting into a clash. Again, 'eyeless face' is normal but 'eyeless mud' is animation.

The following expressions are foregrounded in such a way that the reader is 'shocked' to notice her unique collocations:

- dust — brays — white
- light — squaling
- bone — bellows — white
- light — sound of
- animal smell — thick and fusty
- humanity — clinging
- sin — nailed
- mud — eyeless (animation)

The collocative clashes are illustrated in the above figure in which the 'wordscape' (Milroy: 1977) builds the meaning in the lines of the chunk. The words indicating the sound are suggestive of animal imagery in the poem. The three perceptions - sound, smell and visual - are blended in a Sitwellian manner in order to create the desired communicative import.
The poet describes the island of Ashantee with the help of the imagery of sea, waves, mud wall, the dead Munza, the dust, the bones, the skull and the cannibalism of the negro race based on her reading of their history. Her landscape has in it the rag houses on the island, the trees, the shore, the mud and dust, the negro, scattered bones and skulls and the waves of the sea and the whole landscape is bathed in the day light.

II - lines 273-299:

The pattern of the chunk is as follows:

Verse 1: Lines 273-83  
Verse 2: Lines 284-87  
Verse 3: Lines 288-91  
Verse 4: Lines 292-95  
Verse 5: Lines 296-99

abccdeefe  
abab  
abcb  
abcb  
abab

As in the first chunk, in the second chunk the poet uses the similar type of end-rhyme and verse pattern type. There are a few examples of lexical repetition as shown below:

/tall/ house an unborn—/thing/  
/abbess/ a shameful/goddess/

In the first chunk the concept of 'death' was indirectly suggested but here it is mentioned directly in the phrases 'plague spot' and 'Death's last dust-heap'. The 'rag houses flap'(36), here, becomes 'A tall house flaps'(284). 'The monkey skin like the sea'(12) becomes 'Majesty of the seas'(297) in
this chunk. Edith Sitwell continues using the same image throughout the poem which forms one of the threads of meaning in the poem. She expresses her perception of waves as 'bulldozer-bellowing waves' in which she continues to use the animal imagery and expresses her visual perception of waves in terms of sound.

III - Lines 410-440:

This chunk is split into two verses only. Verse 1 has 26 lines in it and the end rhyme is

```
\text{a b c d e f g g c c g h i j k k l l l}
```

The second verse is of only 5 lines and end-rhyme is

```
\text{a b b c c}
```

The foregrounding on the phonetic level in addition to the non-symmetrical end-rhyme includes other devices such as alliteration, assonance and consonance as indicated in the analysis. The lexical repetition is as follows:

```
sailor's street
murdered bone of
murdered bone (of sailor)
light
God
dead grin (of the rich man)
slaves rise in their grave
in their death-chains.
light must weep child in its innocent sleep
```
The repetitions of 'murdered' in the context of bone, light and God is quite interesting. On the superficial level, there is a collocative clash, but the structure of meaning is clear when we get into the deep level of meaning. This can happen only if we perceive the imagery from the poet's point of view. The image of the 'houses' which is associated with 'ratskin mask' is continued in this chunk. Similarly 'cannibal mart' recurs which helps strengthen the semantic thread of the slums and cannibalism which runs throughout the whole poem. The structures of meaning are reinforced by using the same image at several places in a variety of contexts in the poem.

The following expressions illustrate the uniqueness of Edith Sitwell's perception of the world that she has created in the poem:

```
The whining overtone of dawn sounds
the corpse-sheet night they lay
the rich man's bone-dead grin
the tall and sprawling reeling appalling
Cannibal mart
```

There is a collocative clash between 'whining' and 'overtone', and 'whining overtone of dawn' and 'sounds' in the first illustration. The use of 'whining' suggests the animal imagery
which the reader perceives through the abstract patterns of sounds. The compounding 'corpse-sheet' functions as a modifier of night in the second illustration. The poet describes the horrifying night in this compounding. In the last example, the sound gives rise to another similar sounding word which belongs to the same semantic field like sprawling and reeling and all the four words 'tall', 'sprawling', 'reeling' and 'appalling' modify the phrase 'Cannibal mart' which stands for Cannibalism. The description of the physical movements helps us to imagine the image of the cannibal.

IV - Lines 483-98:

This chunk is of one verse only. It has sixteen lines of uneven length and the end-rhyme is

\[ ab c c d d e f e g g g d h h \]

In addition to the end-rhyme, alliteration, assonance and consonance are foregrounded on the phonetic level in the chunk. The lexical items which have already occurred earlier in the poem recur in this chunk to enforce the meaning. For instance, words like 'skin', 'bone', 'rich man', 'sin', 'murdered heart', 'sea', etc. are used.

This passage is full of personifications of abstract concepts which are illustrated in the following examples:

```
the skin drums galloping

Sin through the eyeless holes of the Day peers in

HELL

Put the eyes of Heaven out

raise all Hell's threats to a shout
```
All the four examples are the metaphors of Cannibalism.

After the repetition of the word 'sin' in the preceding lines, the poet capitalizes the word in this part of the poem thereby giving it 'symbolic value'. The concept of 'Hell' underlies the second and the third examples. A number of lexical items cohere in the passage and create the concept of Hell in the following manner:

```
    skin drums
    rotten alleys
    bone
    sin
    murdered heart
    groan
    worm

    Hell
    Dead
```

V - Lines 518 - 43:

This is the last chunk of the poem which is in two verses of the following pattern:

Verse 1: 518-25  a a b b c d e f
Verse 2: 526-43  a a b b b c c e e c f f g g h h i

There are instances of internal rhyme, end-rhyme, alliteration, assonance and consonance which are foregrounded on the phonetic level in the poem. The lexical repetition is as follows:

- the blind tossed up..through the blind street
- the plague cries to the quick..cries to the dark soul
- Gomorrah's fires..the fires of God..and fire from my side.
Washed my blood...wash the mud
The slum cries..hearts dark slum
The rich man's gold...the rich man's wheat..the rich
will give up its dead.
My blood...the last blood from my side.

In addition to the repetition of the above words, already
repeated other words like 'street', 'plague-spot', 'rot',
'houses', 'murk', 'blood', 'mud', 'skin', 'drums', 'slum',
'rolling', 'sprawling', 'rage', 'heart', 'rich man', 'sea',
'dead', etc. are again used in order to complete the weaving
of various semantic structures of the poem. Some striking
collocative clashes are noticed in the following examples:

the swollen thick houses

fires have washed my blood

A close linguistic study of the five chunks of this long
poem, 'Gold Coast Customs' indicates that they share similar
phonetic, lexical and syntactic strategies and devices which
are quite different in many ways from those used in 'Metamorphosis'.
In 'Metamorphosis' the lines are arranged in the traditional
couplet form, and the linguistic experimentation is focussed
on semantic linkages, lexical and syntactic repetitions, and
the images are linked together with the help of the thematic
thread of the central concept of 'change'. In 'Gold Coast
Customs', the patterning of lines is different in the sense that
there are small lines of two feet each which dominate the poem evoking with their two accents the African drum beat as a kind of continuous background of music to this poem about Africa. Though Edith Sitwell is still interested in the couplet form, she often breaks the monotony of the couplets with variations in terms of alternate rhymes like a b a b, a b c b, a a b c b and so on. There are no regular stanzas, instead there are verse paragraphs ranging from 4 to 30 lines, though smaller paragraphs of 4 and 6 lines are greater in proportion.

In the first chunk there is a perceptible dominance of animal imagery:

- squaling light (8), the dust brays (9), monkey-skin (11),
- like a weasel (13), the leopard skin (29), a rat-skin (32)

and the imagery related to death:

- bones in the dust (5), lurking in murk (6), dead powder (10), a black skull's face (10), nailed (13),
- bone (18), rusty (24), musty (29) and fusty (31).

In the lines following those in the first chunk, the animal imagery continues, and 'Death' takes a concrete shape in terms of capitalization and personification, and 'Death' is supported quickly by the image of the worm, which after 3 repetitions becomes 'the universal devouring Worm' (73), with 'W' capitalized. The animal imagery, of course, continues - Bird-skin dress (53), worm-skin (59), worm-soft (66), cold as the
worm (69-70), universal devouring Worm (73), monkey-skin (86), rat (83), light's skin drum (95), ape's thick pelt (99), rat-fat soul and rat-skin (108-9), - but what is most important and striking is the appearance of the word 'Sin' in the line 66:

Or the grin
Of the shapeless worm-soft unshaping Sin (65-66).

This indicates the direction in which Edith Sitwell's poetic psyche moves in the poem.

In the beginning of the second chunk, Lady Bamburgher, who is first mentioned in line 46, is already dead and her head is shrunken and it is full of the rat-eaten bones of a fashionable God. The second chunk has a number of little pictures which combine the way montages combine in a film and create a nightmarish world consisting of odd things like 'Lady Bamburgher's Shrunken Head' (272), 'a bloodless and an unborn thing that cannot wake, yet cannot sleep' (276-7), 'a ghost in a gown like a stiff bridge watches the sailor with a guitar' (289-92) and 'Bull-bellowing waves that ever fall.' (298).

In this surrealistic world 'Christ' first comes in the form of an exclamation

'O Christ, that bone was dead, alone' (349)

and in the very next line Christ is mentioned as a person 'who will speak to such ragged Dead as me'. The direction of the movement of the poem becomes clear with the mention of
Christ. In line 395 there is a significant question towards which the poem has been moving with deliberate steps:

How long, since one Christ was crucified?

Immediately after this line the Christian mythology seeks to dominate - Rich man Judas (396), Brother Cain (397), Hell (407-8) and in the 3rd chunk, we have the mention of Christ again:

Ah Christ, the murdered light must weep -
Christ that takest away the sin (420-21)

The nightmare world of mud, skin, skull, rats, cannibals continues to be eloquent throughout the poem and the worm, Heaven, Hell, Sin and God build a structure of Christian values in the very heart of chaos and death, and the whole poem ends with a prophecy:

Yet the time will come
To the heart's dark slum
When the rich man's gold and the rich man's wheat
Will grow in the street, that the starved may eat, -
And the sea of the rich will give up its dead -
And the last blood and fire from my side will be shed.

For the fires of God go marching on.

The way the poem works confirms what has been said in the thesis about a Sitwellian poem. The propositional sense that is easily available in her poems is invariably very little, and comparatively it is 'dhwani' or the other 'suggested meanings' that enjoy a greater dominance. The readers are
supposed to read the poem a number of times until some images, some ideas emerge as the operating elements holding together the structure of 'dhwani' and rendering it meaningful. These operating elements of the poem act as crystalizing agents in our experience of the poem. The devices that Edith Sitwell uses for lending dynamism to the operating elements are those of repetition, capitalization, personification, animation, and the providing of semantic dimension to words by diversified contextualization of them. One should never try to paraphrase a Sitwellian poem. One should, on the other hand, respond to it the way we respond to music and allow the poem to work upon our active-non-active consciousness. But this does not mean that the poem has to be read intuitively. It has to be read with full awareness of the objective linguistic aspects of the poem. Because ultimately it is they which constitute the poem. It is the linguistic strategies and devices which foreground the operative elements and this foregrounding is an objective phenomenon, hence the necessity and the usefulness of stylistic analysis.

Now comparing the poetry of the first phase with that of the second phase in terms of the foregoing stylistic analyses of some of the poems, it is possible to arrive at some conclusions about certain underlying principles of development from the first phase to the second phase:

The phonetic preoccupation has become secondary in the
second phase and it is more strictly organized than in the poems of the first phase in terms of rhyme, internal rhyme, alliteration and assonance. There is a greater preoccupation with semantic patterning of words and sentences. If in the first phase there is orchestration of sounds as we have noticed earlier, in the second phase we may say, there is orchestration of semantic units in terms of significant words, phrases and images. The syntactic deviations are kept to the minimum in both the phases. If in the poems of the first phase the movement of the lines and the generation of images is more or less controlled by a subtle phonetic awareness coupled with her unique perception, in the second phase the controlling power is shifted to certain ideas, though the phonetic manipulations have become quite habitual. The strategies and devices like synaesthesia (squealing light, braying dust), the unusual collocations of adjective and noun (like bugbear bone, thick sleep dreams), unusual compoundings (worm-soft unshaping Sin, world-tall worm, plague-spot heart, bull-bellowing waves), and her concentrated strategies to create a world of her own through her extremely foregrounded images and symbols, settle down in the second phase as Sitwellian 'constants'. The progress in her poetry is, then, to be located only in the varying ratios of these 'constants'. The second phase carries all the characteristics of a period of transition. We discern all kinds of experimentations, gropings, in terms of techniques and themes. For example,
if in 'Metamorphosis' she deals with a philosophical idea of change or flux in the universe in terms of a variety of phenomenona, in 'Gold Coast Customs', she takes an African ritual and recreates it imaginatively and attempts to make it symbolic of the sin in the heart of man. If in 'Metamorphosis' she explores a philosophic idea in terms of the perception of the present, in 'Gold Coast Customs', she adds a time-dimension to her philosophical questioning. Towards the end of the second phase, the poet has already moved to a positive philosophical stance, that of Christianity. We may, then, conclude that the passage from the beginning of the first phase to the end of the second phase is a journey from nihilistic, amoral and ahistorical perception of things to a total conceptual philosophy of Christianity. Sitwell says that she wrote 'Gold Coast Customs' 'with anguish' and she feels that she was writing in this poem about painful, spiritual rebirth ('I would not willingly relive that birth') and W.B.Yeats perceives in the poem 'passion enabled by intensity, by endurance, by wisdom', and stylistically this passion is the outcome of the strategies of repetition and intensification and transformation of some terms into semantically charged symbols related to the central concepts of sin, worm, Hell and Christ.

The second phase seems to end on a note of prophecy which comes after an agonized journey through macabre nightmare.
CONCLUSIONS

The phonetic motivation in weaving the sound texture is not as strong as in the first phase. She builds a structure of meaning through repetitions of certain significant words at various places in her poems. In this phase, it is not merely the sound which has been given importance, but the semantic dimensions of words which have become operative and more significant. As for the sound texture of the poetry of the second phase is concerned, we notice that the phonetic motivation has become weaker than what it is in the poetry of the first phase, though she continues to use the same devices of sound linkage and rhyme linkage transcending the word boundaries. She has become increasingly meaning-oriented. This is proved by the way certain concepts gradually crystalize into operating symbols in her poetry. When we look at the recurring symbols and the meaning-constructs that are associated with the symbol nuclei, we find that she is moving towards certain conceptualization about some most fundamental aspects of human existence.

Her compoundings are syntactic compressions of modifying phrases. By compressing the syntax, she can capture so many instantaneously perceived effects. It is her favourite use of the device of synaesthesia which establishes the syntactic relation between elements semantically incompatible, denoting sensations from different sensorial fields. This is most interesting in her poetry of all the three phases.
The phonetic motivation which has become secondary in this phase is more strictly organized than in the poems of the first phase in terms of rhyme, internal rhyme, alliteration and assonance. There is a greater preoccupation with semantic patterning of words and sentences. If in the first phase there is orchestration of sounds, in the second phase, we can say that there is orchestration of semantic units in terms of significant words, phrases and images. The syntactic deviations are kept to the minimum in both the phases. If in the poems of the first phase, the movement of the lines and the generation of images is more or less controlled by a subtle phonetic awareness coupled with her unique perception, in the second phase the controlling power is shifted to certain ideas though the phonetic manipulations have become quite habitual.

The second phase carries all the characteristics of a period of transition. Towards the end of the second phase the poet has already moved to a positive philosophical stance, that of Christianity. Sitwell's passage from the beginning of the first phase to the end of the second phase is a journey from nihilistic, amoral and ahistorical perception of things to a total conceptual philosophy of Christianity. The second phase ends on a note of prophecy.
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