CHAPTER III
PHASE - I

The first phase of Edith Sitwell's poetry consists of poems written between 1913 and 1928 - The Mother and Other Poems (1915), Twentieth Century Harlequinade and Other Poems (1916), Bucolic Comedies (1923), The Sleeping Beauty (1924), Troy Park (1924), Elegy on Dead Fashions (1926), Rustic Elegies (1927) and Popular Song (1928). Most of these poems are more or less similar in respect of stylistic strategies like extreme foregrounding in terms of diction and semantics and an abnormal concern with the texture of sounds. We find that in this phase Edith Sitwell was consciously hammering out in terms of language her own set of perceptions as though she wanted to look at the world in a completely fresh and original manner. If we open any page of this collection of lyrics, we get phrases like 'the foolish moon has flowered; creaking water' (Rose); 'fruit is soft as siren's smiles', 'The sun is as black as a Nubian' (The Higher Sensualism); 'These thoughts are as thick as peas' (Clown); 'feathered-breast of a dew was grey' (Pavane); 'The flat and paper sky', 'wooden brittle joy' (Clowns Houses); 'A butterfly poised on a pigtailed ocean (En Famille); this indicates that Edith Sitwell is 'experimenting' with the use of metaphor, trying to work out her own set of similitudes between the tenor and the vehicle. The main concern in these early poems appears to be to embody her sensations and perceptions in terms
of language, her characteristic way of 'experiencing' these sensations and perceptions being what Bullough (1941, 113) calls 'transliteration of sense impressions'.

These poems have another common characteristic — that is, each poem is a linguistic construct — structured by the logic of its own sound texture, rhymes, assonances, associations, repetitions, contrasts, parallels and such other 'linguistic motivations'. All these and many more aspects of these poems will become evident in the detailed stylistic analysis of the poems chosen.
Symbols used for encoding the structure of language in the poems analysed.

P  Phonetic level
S  Syntactic level
L  Lexical level
ES End-stopped line
RO Run-on line
MM Metaphor
SS Simile
X  Collocative clash
*  Alliteration
** Assonance
@  Consonance
=  Internal rhyme
+  End-rhyme
Ø Half-rhyme
† Repetition of clusters
¶ Repetition of words
‖ Refrain
워 Repetition of stanza
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Syllabic Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>JANE, Jane, CVC CVC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tall as a crane, CVC VC V CCVC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The morning light creaks down again; CV CVVCVC CVC CCVCC CVC VCVC</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Comb your cockscomb-ragged hair, CVC TV CVCCVCVC CVVCVC CV</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jane, Jane, come down the stair. CVC CVC CVC CV CCV</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Each dull blunt wooden stalactite VC CVC CVCCVCVC CCVCVCVCVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Of rain creaks, hardened by the light, VC CVC CCVCC CVCC CVC VC CVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sounding like an overtone CVCCVC CVC VC VCVCVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>From some lonely world unknown. CCVC CVC CVCCVC CVCC VCVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>But the creaking empty light CVC CV CVCCVCVC CVCCVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Will never harden into sight, CVC CVCV CVCC VCVCVC CVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Will never penetrate your brain CVC CVCC CVCCVCVC CV CCVC</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>With overtones like the blunt rain. CVC VC CVCCVCVC CVC CV CCVCVC CVC</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The light would show (if it could harden) CV CVC CVC CV VC VC CVC CVC CCVC</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Eternities of kitchen garden, VCVCVCVC VC CVCCVC CVC</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Cockscomb flowers that none will pluck, CVCCVCVC CCVC CVC VCVC CCVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>And wooden flowers that 'gin to cluck. VC CVCC VCVCVC CVC CV CCVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>In the kitchen you must light VC CV CVCCVCVC CV CCVCVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Flames as staring, red and white, CCVCVC VC CVCCVCVC CVC VCVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>As carrots or as turnips, shining VC CVCCVCVC VC VC VCVCVC VCVCVCVC</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Where the cold dawn light lies whining. CV CVC CCVCVCVC CVC CVVCVC</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Cockscomb hair on the cold wind CVCCVCVCVC VC VC VCVCVCVC CCVC</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Hangs limp turns the milk's weak mind... CVCCVCVCVC CCVC CCVCVCVCVCVCVC</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>JANE, Jane, CVC CVC</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Tall as a crane, CVC VC V CCVC</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The morning light creaks down again! CV CVVCVC CVC CCVCC CVC VCVC</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Syllabic Structure**
AUBADE

djein, djein,
to:1 az e krein
'de mo:ni:t lait kri:s daun agein;
koum jo: kokskaum reqid hit
'de djein, djein, koum daun ha stl.
iti dal blant wud:dn stxlktait
'une rein kri:ks, ha:dnd ba'i lait,
'saundi laik en suvataun
fram sam launli woy:ld annsun
bat kri:kii emt:pi lait
wil neve ha:dn inte sait,
wil neve penitreit jo: brein
wil suve teunz laik fe blant rein.
'de lait wud ju (if it kud ha:dn)
iti:nitiz eu kitjon ga:dn,
kokskaum flauoz zot nan wil plak,
'an wud:dn flauoz zot 'gin te klak.
in zokitjon ju most lait
fleimz oz stxariy red an wait,
z0 kvarats o:r az ta:nips, sainiy
wze 'ze kauld d0n lait laiz wainy.
Kokskaum huar en ze kauld wind
hangz limp, ta:nz ze milks wi:k maind..
djein, djein,
to:1 az e krein,
'de mo:ni:t lait kri:s daun agein!

Phonetic Structure
AUBADE

JANE, Jane,
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again;
Comb your cockscomb-ragged hair,
Jane, Jane, come down the stair.
Each dull blunt wooden stalactite
Of rain creaks, hardened by the light.
Sounding like an overtone
From some lonely world unknown.
But the creaking empty light
Will never harden into sight,
Will never penetrate your brain
With overtones like the blunt rain.
The light would show (if it could harden)
Eternities of kitchen garden,
Cockscomb flowers that none will pluck,
And wooden flowers that 'gin to cluck.
In the kitchen you must light
Flames as starling, red and white,
As carrots or as turnips, shining
Where the cold dawn light lies whining.
Cockscomb hair on the cold wind
Hangs limp, turns the milk's weak mind...

Jane, Jane,
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again!

Metrical Structure
Formal and Phonological Repetition

**Structure of Language**

1-3 P + Jane crane again * crane creak II light II light creaks (solidx:abstract) ES

4-5 P + hair-stair * comb cockcomb come III Jane Jane II down S Imperative L dome-cockcomb-ragged hair (image) ES

6-7 P + stalactite-light ** dull blunt II creaks II light L x blunt-rain-creaks (solidx:liquid) RO

8-9 P + overtone-unknown S Imperative L comb-cockcomb-ragged hair (image) ES

10-11 P + light-sight XX creaking " light3 harden2 L x creaking empty-light (solidx:abstract) ES

12-13 P + brain-rain II will never2 blunt2 L x blunt-rain (solidx:liquid) ES

14-15 P + harden-garden " would, could @ kitchen garden II light4, harden3 RO

16-17 P + pluck-cluck ** none pluck @ none wood'gin L x wooden flower-cluck (animation) II cockcomb2 flower2 ES

18-19 P + light white @ must light S imperative L x flames-staring (animation) RO

20-21 P + shining-whining * light lies ** lies whining @ carrots II light-6 L x light-lies whining (animation) ES

22-23 P+@ wind-mind * cockcomb cold, @ cold wind hangs turning ** comb, cold II cockcomb2, cold-2 ES

24-26 P + Jane crane again, * crane creak II light7 creaks4 L x light creaks.

**Propositional Meaning**

A tall girl Jane is addressed to. It is morning.

Jane is asked to comb her hair and come down the stair.

It's raining and the rain is making sound.

which is mysterious.

The light will not affect her brain (she will not understand it) she's told.

The light will show the kitchen garden.

its flowers.

Jane must light flames in the kitchen.

They look red and white like carrots and turnips (in the kitchen garden).

Her hair blown by the wind, disturbs the surface of the milk (which she is probably boiling).
This poem is taken from *Bucolic Comedies* published in 1923 in which Edith Sitwell has made attempts to develop sense-values. Her experiments are in the area of the use of lexis, particularly deviant and shocking collocations of various lexical items and also in the use of sounds in her poetry written during the period to which 'Aubade' belongs.

The most striking feature of this poem is her attempt to use foregrounding at all levels, particularly, the phonetic and the lexical. The linguistic foregrounding is so dominant that we just cannot think of constructing a meaning structure without giving full attention to the linguistic relationships.

In a poem like this we cannot start from a meaning standpoint at all. The entry into the traditional poem could be through its meaning, but in the context of the present poem, we have first to concentrate on the linguistic items, their organizational patterns, and gradually construct the meaning through our responses to the linguistic items.

The phonetic level of a poem consists of sound texture and rhythm. The sound texture is the result of the organization of sounds in various patterns. The most obvious patterns that help us to characterize the sound texture are - repetitions of individual sounds (vowels and consonants) which could be further spelt out into recognizable categories like rhymes, half-rhymes, internal rhymes, assonances, consonances, dissonances, alliteration, feminine ending, repetition of clusters,
reversal of sound patterns, repetition of complete meaningful clusters (words), refrains etc. Rhythm, which is the result of the arrangement of syllables with their stress values coupled with their metrical values, can be analysed in terms of traditional base and modulations, the placement of pauses, the use of enjambment and so on. The rhythm can also be analysed in terms of speed, as Edith Sitwell often speaks of.

We have to bear in mind that all these phenomena operate in terms of the vicinity of the linguistic items to one another, since it is the ear that recognizes these various phenomena within the bounds of auditory memory. The intensity of effect is proportional to the nearness of sounds to one another. We will substantiate this a little later in the analysis.

The poem is written in 12 couplets and the first couplet (in fact, it is broken into 3 short lines) is repeated in the end, thus forming a circular movement in the poem. The syllable-pattern of the poem is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verse</th>
<th>No. of syllables in each line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>?</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
Out of 139 syllables in the poem, 112 are monosyllabic words. This predominance of monosyllabic words suggests the apparent simplicity of the poem. On the background of such words in the poem, the foregrounding of polysyllabic words is quite significant. For instance, words like 'cockscomb'(4), 'stalactite'(6), 'penetrate'(12), 'overtone'(13), and 'eternities'(15) are foregrounded in the poem.

The syllabic pattern is more or less regular. The lines are varied from 6 to 9 syllables. Primarily, it is a four-foot couplet with heptasyllabic lines. There are 15 monosyllabic feet and as many as 15 modulations. In all 11 spondees in different positions are used, out of which 3 are used in the following two lines:

```
  / / / / x / x ^
Each dull blunt wooden stalactite
  x / / x / x /
Of rain creaks, hardened by the light (6-7)
```

Such a use of the spondees give an effect of gravity or effort to the passage of the verse. Another similar example of the use of 3 spondees in one couplet is noticed in lines 22-23:

```
  / / / x x / /
Cockscomb hair on the cold wind
  / / / x / /
Hangs limp, turns the milk's weak mind...
```

The four-foot couplet is the oldest and the simplest metrical form in which two similarly constructed lines rhyme. The monosyllabic opening in lines 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 16, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23 and 24 is a modulation. The end rhyme of all
the couplets is almost regular. It is of the pattern

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

The most obvious and striking feature of the poem is its formal and phonological repetitions. For instance, the poem contains, on a formal level, the repetition of the word 'light'; on the phonological level the actual sound of the word 'light' /lait/ is echoed at irregular positions, but at more or less regular intervals, and it constitutes a kind of phonological foregrounding. (lines 3, 7, 10, 14, 18, 21, 26).

Since the poem is about 'Aubade' - an early morning - the sun-rise - I believe, such a device of repetition hammers home the content. The refrain 'Jane, Jane' occurs 3 times (lines 1, 5 and 24). The lexical repetition of different lexical items is predominant in the poem. The words repeat as follows: 'creak' (3, 7, 10, 26); 'down' (3, 15); 'cockscomb' (4, 16, 22); 'blunt' (6, 13); 'wooden' (6, 17); 'hardened' (7, 11, 14); 'kitchen' (15, 18); 'cold' (21, 22); There is a repetition of the phrase 'will never' in lines 11 and 12. By underlying rather than elaborating the message, such free verbal repetitions present a simple emotion with force. It may further suggest suppressed intensity of feeling. An apparent haphazardness in the manner of repetition, as shown in the figure can also suggest spontaneity and exuberance. In fact, this disorderliness is a necessary characteristic of free repetition such as this.
Most of the lines in the poem are end-stopped lines in which the last syllable coincides with an important grammatical break such as a full stop or a semi-colon or a comma. But lines 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 18 and 22 are 'run-on' lines in which there is a grammatical overflow from one line to the next. For example, in the line

14 The light would show (if it could harden)
15 Eternities of kitchen garden.

syntactic pull

there is tension between the metrical pause at the end of the line 14 and the syntactic pull of the object of the transitive verb 'show' which is in the following line. This is a kind of grammatical overlap between the couplets mentioned above. This enjambment sets up a tension between the expected pattern and the pattern already occurring. In other words, the use of enjambment in the present poem is foregrounded, particularly where the norm is end-stopped lines, to create a conflict between the metrical system which demands a pause, and the grammatical system which resists one.

There is a high frequency of pauses in the poem. In all eight pauses occur within lines and fourteen occur at line ends.

Internal rhyme occurs in

Jane Jane crane again (1, 2, 3)
ei ei ei ei ei
Assonance occurs in

light like (7-8)
ai __ ai
none pluck cluck (16-17)
^ _____ ^
light lies whining (21)
ai __ ai __ ai

Edith Sitwell uses the device of alliteration in order to connect the two words by similarity of sounds so that we are made to think of their possible connections. The examples are as follows:

crane creak (2,3)
comb cockscomb (4)
light lies (21)
cockscomb cold (22)

Word-final consonance occurs in the following words:

down again (3) from some (9)
none gin (17) cold wind (22)
hangs turns (23) would could (14)

The liquid /l/ sound repeats in line 6 in the following manner:
each dull blunt wooden stalactite

Similarly it also repeats in lines 22 and 23.

It will be seen from the above illustrations that Edith Sitwell's sense of sound is a centrally operating factor in a variety of ways in the poem. She builds the basic structure of on the basis of the poem's 'orchestration' of phonological units.
Edith Sitwell does not show any concern for any syntactic oddities in the poem. But her tremendous concern for the sound texture is quite obvious in this poem as well as in most other poems written in Facade and Bucolic Comedies. The use of syntax in 'Aubade' is quite normal, in the sense, it is in keeping with the poetic tradition. She has used 'fragmentation' in the first couplet as follows:

Jane, Jane [you are]
Tall as a crane,
The morning light creaks down again (1-3)

Here the use of the subject and the verb in the first two lines is in the deep structure. Similar instances are noticed in the couplets 7 and 8. The possible phrase 'such as' could be at the deep structure at the end of line 15 of the poem. Instances of elaboration are used in the couplets 3, 4, 9 and 10. For example, the S V O A pattern is elaborated by extended embeddings in the following lines:

In the kitchen you must light
Flames as staring, red and white,
As carrots or as turnips, shining
Where the cold dawn light lies whining (18-21).

The sentences in the poem do not end at the end of the couplets 3, 5, 7 and 9. They override the stanza as in the couplets mentioned above. It is a deviation in the context of the tradition of English verse according to which a sentence ends with the end of a stanza and generally it does not overflow.
Edith Sitwell has foregrounded this deviation 8 times in the poem.

It will be useful to make a distinction between two kinds of meaning while considering the lexical items used in the poem. That is, the meaning the lexical item denotes an element of the code on the one hand, and the meaning it assumes when it appears in contexts of use on the other. The poet uses the following expressions in the poem:

• 'light creaks' (3)
• 'creaking empty light' (10)
• 'light lies whining' (21)
• 'blunt rain' (6)

The poet in the above phrases has gone beyond the normal range of choice which results in violent collocative clashes. The following paradigm illustrates the point:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>normal use</th>
<th>violent and deviant use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>door creaks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stair creaks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>light creaks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rain creaks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>empty vessel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>empty light</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blunt knife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>blunt edge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>blunt rain</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'light breaks' is an accepted literary idiom, but 'light creaks' is a new way of describing the visual in terms of the sense of
hearing. By using such a collocation, the poet, it seems, mixes up our sensory perceptions. We normally believe that each one of the senses—the sense of hearing, the sense of sight, the sense of touch and the sense of smell, act separately when we perceive the world around us. But it appears to be very much different so far as Edith Sitwell's poetic sensibility is concerned. She breaks down the accepted mode of perception by mixing them up in a new way. The poem, then, builds up its own level of surprises. For instance, she uses the expression

'light lies whining' (21)

(A dog lies whining' could be a normal expression) which is again a sort of shock the reader gets while perceiving the sense of light in terms of sound. Edith Sitwell uses the device of extreme defamiliarization when she associates 'rain' with 'dull, blunt wooden stalactite' (6).

The use of such images not only startles the reader, but it shocks them out of their wits. The following diagram illustrates the poet's use of the device of extreme defamiliarization on the lexical level in 'Aubade':

```
empty +concrete +solid

LIGHT ← creaks ← +concrete ← RAIN +concrete +liquid
+abstract +solid
+visual +concrete +animate
lies +animate

whining +animate
```
The phonological repetition of certain sounds gives rise to images in the poem. In fact, the structure of meaning is built through such associative links. For instance, the initial word of line 4 'comb' is repeated in the following word 'cockscomb'. Now the word 'cockscomb' gives rise to the words 'ragged hair'. The 'raggedness' is associated with the 'cockscomb' and the word 'comb' gives rise to the word 'hair'. The word 'cockscomb' is further repeated in the line 16 in the context of 'flowers' which in turn is associated with the word 'pluck'. The poet uses the word 'cluck' in the following line since it rhymes with the word 'pluck' already used and also the use of 'cluck' is justified in the context of 'cockscomb'. This can be shown as follows:

Edith Sitwell is extremely sensitive to the light and colour and she fuses them with sound and touch sensations in the poem. The use of the following words in the poem suggests the red colour: 'cockscomb'(4), 'cockscomb flowers'(16), 'cockscomb hair'(22), 'flames'(19), 'red'(19), 'carrot'(20). The word
'light' (repeated 7 times), 'turnips'(20) and 'milk'(23) suggest the white colour. The words suggesting sound are 'creak'(3 times), 'overtones'(2 times), 'cluck' and 'whining'. The words such as 'ragged', 'blunt', 'wooden', 'hardened', 'empty' suggest the touch.

Lexical cohesion occurs in the use of the words 'kitchen garden', 'cockscomb' 'flowers', 'pluck', 'carrots', 'turnips', 'milk' since they all refer to a coherent scene or situation related to a kitchen and a kitchen garden.

The juxtaposition of the serious as in the lines

Sounding like an overtone
From some lonely world unknown (8-9)

and the non-serious in the lines

Jane, Jane
Tall as a crane (1-2) and
Will never penetrate your brain (12)

draws our attention.

A simile is an overt comparison and a metaphor is a covert comparison. A metaphor is more concise and immediate because of the superimposition of tenor and vehicle whereas a simile is explicit. Edith Sitwell uses a few similes and a metaphor as follows:

(a) tall as a crane (2)
  tenor vehicle

(b) rain sounds like an overtone
  tenor vehicle
It will be seen from the above analysis that the proportion of phonetic and lexical foregrounding in the poem is comparatively very high, whereas there is very little foregrounding with regard to rhythm and syntax. The level of light-heartedness or playfulness starts at the very beginning in the first three lines with the nursery kind of rhyme. The spirit of playfulness is, it appears, behind the strategy of foregrounding which has resulted in her extreme experimentation of every sort. Sitwell, while writing about this poem in her essay, 'Some Notes on my own Poetry' (1936) says, that 'the poem is about a country servant, a girl on a farm, plain and neglected and unhappy, and with a sad bucolic stupidity, coming down in the dawn to light the fire'. The so-called theme of the poem is apparently very thin but the significance of the poem is not related to this ordinary meaning of the poem at all. The poem does not 'mean', but 'is' - and it is a complex structure of subtle perceptions in terms of sensations, associations and linguistic 'making'.

The linguistic analysis of the poem makes it very clear that a Sitwellian poem is different from the traditional poem in a number of ways. The most striking aspect is that the ratio

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{tenor} & \quad (c) \text{flames} \quad \text{staring red and white} \\
& \quad \text{as} \text{carrots} \quad \text{turnips shining} \\
& \quad \text{vehicle} \\
& \quad (d) \text{cockscomb-ragged} \text{hair} \quad \text{(metaphor)}
\end{align*}
\]
of propositional sense and the meanings arising out of suprasegmental features and semantic deviations of language that we find in a traditional poem is reversed in the Sitwellian poem. The following figure illustrates the point:

Now let us look at the easily available propositional sense of 'Aubade'. The poem is in the form of an address to Jane:

'Jane, it's morning, comb your hair and come down the stair. It's raining, and the interaction between light and rain will never be perceived nor comprehended by you. In the kitchen garden there are flowers...but in the kitchen you must light the fire and heat the milk'. It is very clear that this propositional sense does not make the totality of the poem at all. In fact, it is the least important part of the poem. It is just a peg on which to hang the complex linguistic construct that we have looked at. There appears to be an implicit suggestion that Jane (probably the maid) does not have the perception that the poet (or the addressor/the implied 'I') in the poem has:
But the creaking empty light
Will never harden into sight
Will never penetrate your brain
With overtones like the blunt rain

The syntactic repetition 'will never' emphasizes the gap between Jane's perceptions and understanding, and the poet's.

Edith Sitwell, in her explanatory note on the poem, says:

The poem is about a country servant, a girl on a farm, plain and neglected and unhappy, and with a sad bucolic stupidity, coming down in the dawn to light the fire; and this phrase means that to her mind the light is an empty thing which conveys nothing. It cannot bring sight to her - she is not capable of seeing anything; it can never bring overtones to her mind, because she is not capable of hearing them. She scarcely knows even that she is suffering. If she were capable of seeing anything, still she would only see the whole of eternity in the world of kitchen garden to which she is accustomed, with flowers, red and lank as cockscombs (uncared for, just as she is uncared for), and those hard flowers that dip and bend beneath the rain till they look (and seem as though they must sound) like hens clucking.

The poem is about the persona's perceptions which create his/her unique world. Jane's tallness is perceived in terms of the image of a crane which is generated by the necessity of a rhyme 'Jane' and 'crane'. The word 'light' which is repeated 7 times in the poem (lines 1,7,10,14,18,21,26) is the central event
of the poem. In line 3, it 'creaks down'; in 7, the 'rain'
which 'creaks' is 'hardened' by 'light'; in line 10, the
same 'light' becomes the 'creaking empty light'; in line 14,
the 'light' hardens; in line 18, the 'light' has the other
sense of kindling the fire; in line 21, the 'light' lies
whining; in 26, the 'light' creaks down again. The 'light'
is perceived in a synesthetic mode. It is perceived as some­
thing hard; it is also perceived in terms of the sense of
hearing. In line 14, there is a suggestion of lending some
animation to 'light' and in line 21, it gets fully animated,
'light lies whining', say, like a dog. Edith Sitwell explains
the origin of the image (1936, 20-21):

To me the shivering movement of a certain cold
dawn light upon the floor suggests a kind of
high animal whining or whimpering, a half-
frightened and subservient urge to something
outside our consciousness.

All this shows the way 'light' is perceived through various
senses. In other words, the nature of perception and the
possibilities of human perception are probably the most important
part of the meaning of the poem. Jane's hair is perceived in
terms of the raggedness of a cock's comb. Why 'cock's comb'? 'Cock's comb' is the result of (a) the association of the cock
with morning and (b) the phonetic motivation of comb - 'comb
your cock's comb' ragged hair'. Now 'cock's comb-ragged hair' becomes,
in line 22, 'cock's comb hair'. In line 16, there is a mention
of 'cockscomb flowers'. 'The blunt wooden stalactite of rain' of lines 6-7 gets abridged into just 'the blunt rain' in line 13. The adjective 'wooden' in line 6 gets transferred to the 'flower' in line 17. The poem is thus held together by such inter-connections worked into the poem.

The sensation of hardness seems to work throughout the poem. Line 3: light creaks, rain is dull, blunt, wooden; line 7: the rain is hardened by the light; line 11: light will never harden into sight; line 14: if (light) it could harden; line 17: flowers are described as 'wooden'. The predominance of the harsh plosives like alveolars /t/ (34) and /d/ (24) and voiceless velar /k/ (35) is in keeping with the phenomenon of hardness running through the entire poem.

In this poem all the senses appear to be working simultaneously and perceiving things in a mixed multidimensional manner. The poem ultimately is an experiment in human perception which invokes not only the working of the senses, but also the working of the metaphoric imagination, all in terms of language which also lends its own dimensions to perceptions.

That the perceptual media are kept constantly alive is proved by the fact that the rhythm in the poem is kept in an agitated state, it is constantly changing. In the poem of 26 lines which are predominantly iambic, we have 11 heptasyllabic lines in which the rhythm hovers between the iambic and the
The most operative thing linguistically, is, according to me, Sitwell's unique methodology of creating highly striking metaphors. She cuts across the conventional boundaries of experience and language and generates what the conventional critic would call 'eccentric' images. (light creaks, rain creaks, empty light, blunt rain, tall as a crane, rain sounds like an overtone, flames staring red and white as carrots, cockscob regged hair, light lies whining). The device of extreme de-familiarization is most evident in her metaphorical process, the motivation being breaking down of the older modes of experience and exploring newer modes in terms of perceptual and linguistic possibilities.

It is interesting to see that Edith Sitwell herself speaks of a new mode of perception as the theme of 'Aubade'. In her Notes (1936, 17-18) while talking of the theme of 'the growth of consciousness' in 'Early Spring', she says:

In many of these poems the subject is the growth of consciousness. Sometimes it is that of a person
who has always been blind, and who, suddenly endowed with sight, must learn to see; or it is the cry of that waiting, watching world, where everything we see is a symbol of something beyond, to the consciousness that is yet buried in this earth-sleep; and it is this that we find in "Aubade", a poem which, on its first appearance, was held to contain obscurities which were inseparable.

She speaks of the same mode of perception again a little later in her Notes (p.21):

sometimes we find a consciousness awakening from sleep, seeing, with a clear, sharper vision than that of the ordinary sense dulled with custom - piercing down to the essence of the thing seen, knowing that the ephemeral six-rayed snowflake is the counterpart of the six-rayed crystal in its eternity - seeing that....and so guessing at the immense design of the world, "the correspondences whereby men may speak with angels".
**DARK SONG**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Syllabic structure</th>
<th>No. of syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>THE fire was furry as a bear</td>
<td>CV CVv CVC CVCV VC V CVv</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>And the flames purr....</td>
<td>VCC CV CCVCC CV</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The brown bear rambles in his chain</td>
<td>CV CCVC CV CVCCVCC VC VCVVC VCV</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Captive to cruel men</td>
<td>CVCCVC CV CCVC CVC</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Through the dark and hairy wood...</td>
<td>CCV CV CVC VCC VCVVCVCC VCV</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The maid sighed, &quot;All my blood</td>
<td>CV CVC CVC VC CV CCVC</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Is animal. They thought I sat</td>
<td>VC VCVCVC CV CVC VVC V</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Like a household cat;</td>
<td>CVC V CVCCVCC CV</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>But through the dark woods rambled I...</td>
<td>CVC CCV CV CVO CVCCVCCVCC V</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Oh, if my blood would die!</td>
<td>V VC CV CCVC CVC CV</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The fire had a bear's fur</td>
<td>CV CVV CVC V CVC CV</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>It heard and knew...</td>
<td>VC CVC VCC CCV</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The dark earth furry as a bear</td>
<td>CV CVC VC CVCVVC VCVV CV</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Grumbled too!</td>
<td>CVCCCVCC CV</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DARK SONG

1 ḏə faić wəz fəri ə zə bəə

2 ən ḏəfleiməz pə:

3 ḏə braun bəə rəmbələz in hiz tjein

4 kəptiv tə krəıl men

5 θə:u: ʣə da:ʃ kən həəri wud—

6 ḏə meid səd "ːəl mai bləd

7 iz əniməl ʔeϊ əʃt ai sət

8 laikəəusahaanld ʔət

9 bet θə:u: ʣə da:ʃ wudz rəmbələd ai

10 ʔə if mai bləd wud dai!"

11 ḏə faić hədə bəəz fə:

12 it hədən nju:

13 ḏə da:ʃ əə ʃəri əzə bəə

14 grəmbələd tu:

Phonetic structure
DARK SONG

1. THE fire was furry as a bear
2. And the flames purr...
3. The brown bear rambles in his chain
4. Captive to cruel men
5. Through the dark and hairy wood...
6. The maid sighed, "All my blood
7. Is animal. They thought I sat
8. Like a household cat;
9. But through the dark woods rambled I...
10. Oh, if my blood would die!"
11. The fire had a bear's fur
12. It heard and knew...
13. The dark earth furry as a bear
14. Grumbled too!

Metrical structure
This line and the two following lines came into my mind through hearing a song of Stravinski's I do not know its name and I only heard it once; but it contained lines rather like these.

The fire looked like a furry bear. The flames made purring sound.

It looks like a chained, brown bear captivated by cruel men rambling in the dark wood.

The maid gave a sigh saying that her blood is animal. People take her for a domestic cat.

But she says that she rambled through the dark wood and wonders.

If her blood would die, the fire looks like having a bear's fur.

Realised. Even the earth, which is dark and furry like a bear grumbled.
It is one of the Facade poems written in 1925 when Edith Sitwell was, in a sense, experimenting with language. I have chosen this poem particularly because Edith Sitwell herself gives a detailed stylistic analysis of it. It would be profitable, I thought, to examine both the poem and her stylistics from the modern stylistic point of view.

The poem is written in 14 lines - five couplets and a quartrain. Lines 1 and 2 are linked by a half/imperfect rhyme (bear-purr), 3 and 4 by a regular rhyme (chain-men), 5 and 6 by an eye-rhyme (wood-blood), 7 and 8 by a regular rhyme (sat-cat), 9 and 10 by a regular rhyme (I-die), and in the quartrain, which comes in the end, lines 11 and 13 are linked by a half rhyme (fur-bear) and 12 and 14 by a regular rhyme (new-too). From this description, it will be seen that it is a half-controlled incantatory poem. The stanzaic pattern shows that the second line in the couplets and the second and the fourth lines in the quartrain are shorter in length. The rhyme scheme is -

```
a a b b c c d d e e f g f g
```

It seems from the metrical analysis that the four-foot couplet tries to break away from its apparent norm of four-foot line to free verse. The basic rhythm is iambic tetrametre. Six spondees

```
flames purr, bear ramb/led sighed, All,
woods ramb/led, bear's fur, and earth fur/ry
```

are foregrounded in the poem which seem to give an effect of gravity and effort.
Most of the lines in the poem are end-stopped in which the last syllable coincides with a grammatical break such as a full stop, semi-colon or exclamatory mark. But lines 6 and 7 are a good example of 'run-on' lines. For instance in

6 The maid sighed, "All my blood
7 Is animal. They thought I sat
8 Like a household cat;

there is a tension between the metrical pause at the end of the lines 6 and 7 and the syntactic pull of the verbs 'is' and 'like' respectively with which the lines 7 and 8 begin. This grammatical overlap - enjambment, sets up a kind of tension between the expected pattern and the pattern already existing. As in 'Aubade', Edith Sitwell has foregrounded the enjambment in the poem, when the norm is end-stopped line. This has created a conflict between the metrical pattern which demands a pause and the grammatical system which resists one.

The syllabic pattern of the poem is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stanza</th>
<th>no.of syllables in each line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8  4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>7  6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8  5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8  6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6  4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of 76 words in the poem, 67 words are monosyllabic. The foregrounding of the polysyllabic words like 'furry'
'rambles'(3), 'captive'(4), 'hairy'(5), 'animal'(7),
'household'(8), 'rambled'(9), 'furry'(13) and 'grumbled'(14)
is significant. The predominance of monosyllabic words explains
the poem's apparent simplicity. However, the paraphrasable
content of the poem is not quite straightforward.

The most obvious and striking feature of the poem is
the formal and phonological foregrounding. It is so dominant
that we cannot build the structure of meaning without giving
full attention to the linguistic relationships in the poem.
We have to concentrate on these linguistic items and their
organizational patterns and then gradually build the structures
of meaning through our responses to the linguistic patterns
in the poem. The poem contains the repetitions of the words

'fire'(2 times) 'furry'(2) 'hears'(4)
'rambles'(2) 'dark'(3) and 'blood'(2)
on a formal level. On the phonological level, the actual
sounds of these words are echoed at irregular intervals in the
poem which form a kind of phonological foregrounding.

There is a considerable amount of phonological structu­
ring in the poem. For instance, lines 1-4 exhibit alliteration:

The fire was furry as a bear (1)
And the flames purr...
The brown bear rambles in his chain (3)
Captive to cruel men (4)
The word-final consonance occurs in lines 5-6 which is both
horizontal and vertical:

Through the dark and hairy wood...
The maid sighed, 'All my blood
Is animal. They thought I sat
Like a household cat; (7-8)
But through the dark woods rambled I...
Oh, if my blood would die! (9-10)

The vowel patterns are explicitly prominent, particularly the use of diphthongal glides and unreduced vowels demands our attention. For instance, the phonological orchestration of the vowel phonemes - /ai/, /εi/, /ei/, /ɔi/, /ʌ/, /ʌ/, /u:/, /æ/, /ɔ:/, /aɪ/ and /u/ in several words in the poem is noticeable.

In many of her early poems Edith Sitwell has worked in terms of fusion by contradiction or fusion by establishing a slant semantic relationship between the lexical items. Such instances strike us shockingly since they are definite violations of the normal range of choices in the language. For example, in the present poem, she uses the following expressions:

fire was furry (1)
hairy wood (5)
blood would die (10)
dark earth furry as a bear (13)

This results in violent collocative clashes as illustrated below:
Like in 'Aubade', Edith Sitwell breaks down the accepted mode of perception in this poem by mixing up the senses. Her use of images in the poem is equally striking. The use of one word leads her to the use of another, prompted mainly by the phonetic shape of such words. Out of such linguistic patterning, the images emerge, consequently building the semantic construct in the poem. The symbol/image of 'fire' is used since it is most perceptible in the darkness of 'Dark Song'. Poetry is a loose structure of various suggestions of 'dhvani' (Apte: 1924) arising out of the interrelations of various words. There is a similarity between fire and girl, cat and bear, girl and earth. The 'earth', 'man' and 'animals' are bound by fire which stands for the creative energy that moves through the universe.
The semantic structure of the poem is extremely interesting. 'bear' and 'cat' seem to be in opposition. 'They think, I am a cat', the girl seems to say, 'but there is a bear in me...'

There is an onward movement from simile into metaphor and metaphor into personification. Through the technique of transformation, everything seems to be living. Edith Sitwell is in the process of developing her own myths.

The syntactic pattern of a poem reflect cognitive preferences, a way of seeing the world. It reflects the fundamental principles of artistic design by which the poet designs his poetic world. In order to get a deeper insight into the poem's inner form and its aesthetic centre, we will have to discover the syntactic patterns. However, there is not much syntactic foregrounding in the present poem.

The use of the dots at the end of the lines 2, 5, 9 and 12 functions as sudden 'cuts'. Most of the sentences have normal straightforward syntactic pattern - S V O or S V A. There is a case of syntactic inversion in line 9,

But through the dark woods rambled I

obviously to meet the metrical demand of the following line, establishes a link with the following line. The pattern of the line 12 appears to be peculiar, in the sense, the verbs 'heard' and 'knew' in the line

It heard and knew (12)

demand the use of an object. Instead of using the object in
explicit terms, Edith Sitwell uses dots at the end. She begins with the past tense form and moves on to the historic present in the line following it.

When we compare the linguistic organization of the poem 'Dark Song' with that of 'Aubade', we see that the phonetic motivation in 'Dark Song' is strikingly less than what it is in 'Aubade'. Although the number of easily recognizable phonetic parallelisms is more, the more dominant motivation is lexical. This shows that the poet is more meaning-conscious in this poem than in 'Aubade'. There appears to be a greater drive to convey some preconceived idea through linguistic manipulations than to allow the language to create its own meaning as it goes on (as in 'Aubade').

Now let us look at Edith Sitwell's own analysis of the poem:

'Dark Song' is a poem about the beginning of things, and their relationship - the fire that purrs like an animal and has a beast's thick coat (the crumbling furry black coat), a girl whose blood has the dark pulse and instincts of the earth... The long, harsh, animal-purring "r"s and the occasional double-vowels, as in "bear" and "fire", though these last are divided by a muted "r", convey the uncombatable animal instinct. The poem is built on a scheme of harsh "r"s, alternating with dulled "r"s, and the latter, with the thickness of the "br" and the "mb"s in:
"The brown bear rambles in his chain", give the thickness of the bear's dull fur. The subtle dissonances of the first line

"The fire was furry as a bear"
the one-and-a-half syllables, stretching forward and upward and then breaking, of "fire", contrasted with the dark thick numb insistence of the first syllable in "furry", - the fact that the dissonances ending the first six lines are dropping dissonances - this conveys the feeling of the animal's thick paws that have not the power of lifting. The sinking or dulled dissonances, which end some of the lines in the place of rhymes, "bear" "fur" - "chain" "men" - the way in which, in the midst of this darkness, there is an occasional high insistent vowel-sound, these effects are deliberate, and are meant to convey a darkened groping. Only once is there a rising dissonance (again purposeful) and that is towards the end of the poem.

If some of the images in these poems appear strange, it is because my senses are like those of primitive peoples, at once acute and uncovered - and they are interchangeable; where the language of one sense is insufficient to convey a meaning, a sensation, I use another, and by this means, I attempt to pierce down to the essence of the thing seen, producing or heightening its significance by discovering in it attributes which at first sight seem alien, but which are actually related - by producing its quintessential colour (sharper, brighter, than that seen by an eye grown stale), and by stripping it of all unessential details. The apparent strangeness comes, too, from the fact that all expression is welded into an image, not removed into a symbol that is inexact, or squandered into a metaphor. (Sitwell, 1936:22-23)
Edith Sitwell's analysis is, on the face of it, not objective. She starts with the intended meaning/theme of the poem, which according to her, is 'the beginning of things, and their relationship'. Her later analysis of the sound texture is governed by her conception of the intended meaning. Her interpretation of the function of the predominance of "r"s is, again, subjective and meaning-bound. She thinks that some "r"s are muted/dulled which is a wrong concept. What she means by muted "r"s is that the "r" is present in spelling, but not pronounced. Phonetically such as "r" does not exist. Her comment on the predominance of "r" is also wrong. Because there are only 10 "r" sounds in the poem and the remaining 12 "muted" "r"s are not to be counted. Actually speaking alveolar plosives are in greater number. Her comments on dissonances - 'this conveys the feeling of the animal's thick paws that have not the power of lifting' - are highly sensitive and perceptive and her concept of the dropping dissonances is insightful and acceptable. Her interpretation of this phenomenon is again highly subjective. Probably any reader's interpretation of any set of linguistic items is subjective. But the act of criticism lies in seeking corroboration - 'I think this is what the lines mean - do you agree with me?' and normally two perceptive readers agree with each other. In the case of Edith Sitwell's interpretations, it is difficult to easily accept them because of their
remoteness from a normal reader's comprehension.

Keeping the poet's own analysis and interpretation of the poem in the background, let us make an attempt at reconstructing the meaning of the poem in terms of (a) easily accessible core of propositional sense, and (b) the area of 'dhwani' or suggested meanings generated by the rhythmic, the phonetic, the syntactic and the imagistic patterns in the poem which we have worked out in the earlier part of this chapter.

The poem mentions four things: the fire, the bear, the maid and the earth. The fire burns, the bear rambles in a dark wood, the maid sighs and says, "All my blood is animal..." "I rambled through the dark woods...Oh if my blood would die!" The fire hears this and knows and the dark earth also grumbles. It is very clear that the attempt at squeezing the propositional sense does not yield anything significant at all. Since in the early Sitwellian poems the propositional sense has only a short role to play compared to the role of 'dhwani', it is probably more fruitful to approach through the 'dhwani' than through the propositional sense, though in this poem the propositional sense works as a nucleus holding together the 'dhwani' dimensions - which was not the case in 'Aubade'.

More than the four things mentioned above what is important in the poem is the way they are connected with one
another in terms of similes, metaphors and other devices like repetition of certain words (the other phonetic connections have been already worked out earlier in the chapter). In line 1, the 'fire' and 'bear' are connected by means of a simile

'The fire was furry as a bear'

In line 11, they are connected through a metaphor

'The fire had a bear's fur'

In line 13, the earth and bear are again connected by the simile used in line 1

'The dark earth furry as a bear'

The earth is connected with woods by the adjective 'dark':

The dark......wood (5)
The dark woods (9)
The dark earth (13)

The bear which appears in the simile in the first line materializes as one of the dramatis persona of the poem in line 3

The brown bear rambles in his chain
...through the dark and hairy wood (3)

In lines 11 and 12, there is a suggested identification of the fire or a bear, or a transformation of fire into a bear. In line 13, there is a suggested identification of the bear and the earth or a transformation of the earth into a bear.

The dark earth furry as a bear grumbled too !
The bear and the maid are connected through the repetition of the word 'rambled'. There is a parallelism between 'the brown bear rambling in the dark wood' and 'the maid rambling through the dark woods'.

The operating element in the poem appears to be that of 'animality': (1) The fire is like a bear (Edith Sitwell herself speaks of the fire that purrs like an animal) (2) The flames purr (like a cat is implied) (3) The bear rambles (4) The maid says 'All my blood is animal'. She also says, 'They thought I sat like a household cat'. In line 12, the fire is personified into probably an animal, because in line 12, it is mentioned as 'it', the pronoun for an animal and not for a human being. In lines 13-14, the dark earth grumbles (like an animal). This is in keeping with what Edith Sitwell says about the 'uncombattable animal instinct' that is at the root of creation or, what she says, 'the beginning of things'.

The repetition of the 'dark' is also significant. We get this in lines 5, 9 and 13, and in the context of the poem the contrast of 'dark' and the 'fire' with its 'flames' suggests, in her words, 'life's groping in the dark'. What is important about the poem is her attempt to embody her conception about creation in terms of language. For instance, she says that the "r"'s suggest animal purring; the occasional double vowels...those are divided by a muted 'r' convey the
'uncombatable animal instinct'. 'The poem is built on a scheme of harsh "r"s, alternating with dulled "r"s, and the latter, with the thickness of the "br" and the "mb" gives the thickness of the bear's dull fur. this conveys the feeling of the animal's thick paws that have not the power of lifting'. Later the sinking or dulled dissonances are supposed to convey a darkened groping. Even though her remarks are not fully acceptable, what is important is the fact that she attempted to embody her feelings and thoughts in terms of language.

The above analysis of the poem emphasizes the fact that we are not supposed to respond to the poem in a linear, logical, propositional manner. We are expected to look at the poem as a picture giving attention to the totality of the poem at one glance and hold together in the consciousness all the connections, and allow our mind to generate whatever meaning it can. The difference between 'Aubade' and 'Dark Song' is that in the former there is an attempt to embody only the perception of the external reality, whereas in the latter, there is an attempt at conceptualization about the origin and evolution of life. In the later poems of her early phase, we find the tendency to conceptualize taking an upper hand in relation to her impulse to perceive reality in a new way.
SAID KING POMPEY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of syllables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 SAID KING Pompey, the emperor's ape, cvc cvc cvccv cv vccvcvc vc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Shuddering black in his temporal cape cvcvcvc cvc vc cvc cvccvvcvc cvc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Of dust &quot;The dust is everything - vc cvcc cv cvcc vc vccvcvc cvc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The heart to love and the voice to sing, cv cvc cv cvc vcc cv cvc cvc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Indianapolis, vccvcvcvvc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 And the Acropolis, vcc cv vccvcvvcv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Also the hairy sky that we vccv cv cvc vccv ccv cvc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Take for a coverlet comfortably.&quot; cvc cvc v cvccvcv vccvcvvcv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Said the Bishop cvc cv cvcvcv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Eating his ketchup vcvc cvc cvcvcv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 &quot;There still remains Eternity cv ccvcv cvcvcc vc vccvcvcv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Swelling the diocese - ccvcvc cv cvcvcv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 That elephantiasis, cvc vccvcvvcvc cvcvcvvcvvcv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 The flunkeyed and trumpeting Sea!&quot; cv ccvvcvcv vcc ccvvcvvcvvcv cv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Syllabic Structure

Monosyllables: 40
Polysyllables: 61
Said King Pompey

1 sed kiŋ pompi ʃi empareːz eip
2 haːrɪŋ bɪk ɪn hɪz ˈtempərəl ˈkiːp
3 ən dəst · "də dəst iz evrɪˈdɪŋ ·
4 hə həːt tələv ən hə voʊs tə sɪŋ
5 indjəːnəpəlis
6 ən ʃi ˈkrəpəlis
7 ˈlestu hə həˈɡəɾi skai ʃaːt wi
8 teiŋ fə rə kəˈvələt kæmˈfətəbli ··
9 sed hə bɪʒəp
10 itiŋ hɪz ˈketjəp ·
11 "ʃiː stil remeɪnz itəˈnɪti
12 (swelɪŋ ʃə ˈdæɪsiːz) ·
13 ʃət ˈelɛfəntaiəsəs
14 tə flæktiːd ən ˈtræmp tiːŋ sɪ: !"

Phonetic structure
Said King Pompey

1. SAID| King Pompey, the emperor's ape,
2. Shuddering black| in his temporal cape
3. Of dust: "The dust| is everything -
4. The heart| to love| and the voice| to sing,
5. Indianapolis,
6. And| the Acropolis,
7. Also the| hairy| sky that we
8. Take| for a coverlet| comfortably."
9. Said| the Bishop
10. Eating his| ketchup -
11. "There still| remains| Eternity
12. (Swelling the| diocese) -
13. That| elephantiasis,
14. The flunkeyed and trumpeting Sea !"

Metrical Structure.
Said King Pompey

1 SAID King Pompey, the emperor's ape,
2 Shuddering black in his temporal cape
3 Of dust "The dust is everything -
4 The heart to love and the voice to sing,
5 Indianapolis,
6 And the Acropolis,
7 Also the hairy sky that we
8 Take for a coverlet comfortably."
9 Said the Bishop
10 Eating his ketchup -
11 " There still remains Eternity
12 Swelling the diocese -
13 That elephantiasis;
14 The flunkeyed and trumpeting Sea : "

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structures of language</th>
<th>Propositional Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2 P + ape-caper; ** emperor-temporal</td>
<td>King Pompey, the emperor's ape said the following while shuddering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L x Pompey-ape-caper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S ≠ Said king Pompey (dislocation)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 P + everything-sing; 11 dust²; 0 dust-heart</td>
<td>The dust is everything. One needs love and voice to sing about heart/wish to)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** love-dust.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6 P + Indianapolis-Acropolis</td>
<td>Indianapolis, Acropolis and the sky gives us comfort and makes us happy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 P + We -comfortably; § coverlet-comfortably</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L x hairy sky</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-10 P + Bishop-ketchup</td>
<td>The Bishop, while eating his ketchup talked about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S ≠ said the Bishop(dislocation)</td>
<td>eternity. He compares the swelling of the dio use with elephantiasis which also resembles the trumpeting sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12 P + eternity-sea; diocese-elephantiasis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14 L x swelling sea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swelling the diocese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flunkeyed trumpeting sea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The poem is written in 14 lines - five couplets and a quartrain, exactly like 'Dark Song'. Lines 1 and 2 are connected by a regular rhyme (ape-cape); and lines 3 and 4 (everything-sing); 5 and 6 (Indianapolis-Acropolis); 7 and 8 (we-comfortably); 9 and 10 (Bishop-Ketchup) - all are connected by a half-rhyme (Eternity-Sea) and the lines 12 and 13 by another half-rhyme (diocese-elephantiasis). From the point of view of both rhythm and diction, the poem has the flavour of a limerick.

When we read the poem, its formal patterns leap to the eye, and one can speak of 'visual prosody (Gross:1973) with regard to the poem. It strikes us with its formal symmetry and impresses with the concreteness and density of its linguistic structures/texture. Lines 1 to 8 form one unit, which begins with the phrase 'Said King Pompey', and the second unit, lines 9 to 14, which also begins with a similar sounding phrase 'Said the Bishop', balances the first in terms of formal parallelism.

The metrical analysis of the poem shows how Edith Sitwell is skillfully irregular in her versification. She appears to be irregular both with regard to the metrical line and metrical rhythm within the stanza or the whole poem. The poem begins with the anapaestic rhythm in the first two lines creating the effect of swift and irresistible movement. The interplay of metre and staccato rhythm produces a prosodic
Unlike 'Dark Song' in which most of the lines are end-stopped, 'Said King Pompey' has a number of run-on lines resulting in the conflict between the metrical pattern which demands a pause and the syntactic system which resists one. For instance, the word 'cape' at the end of the second line which rhymes with 'ape' (line 1) forces us to pause at that point, but the beginning of the following line 'Of dust' pulls us forward since it is the grammatical overflow of line 2 which creates a tension:

\[
\text{Said King Pompey, the emperor's } \text{cape} \rightarrow \text{ape} \\
\text{Shuddering black in his temporal } \text{cape} \rightarrow \text{cape} \rightarrow \text{keip} \\
\text{Of dust}
\]

Initially, the 'cape' is pulled towards the 'ape' and 'King Pompey' grammatically and because of the possessive pronoun 'his'. After a little pause caused by the end of the line, it gets to the qualifier 'dust' of line 3. Therefore, the 'cape of dust' gains a tremendous dramatic effect, and modifies the image of the King with his cape because the cape is that of dust! 'The cape of dust' is a highly deviant kind of collocation. So the King Pompey - the emperor's ape and Dust are very powerfully bound in one semantic space. The king's statement about Dust creates this fusion. Line 7 ends up with the pronoun 'we' which functions as the subject of the grammatical structure of lines 7-8, and the following line begins with the verb 'take' and this creates a syntactic
pull resulting in the enjambment. Here because of the pause that comes in the end of the line and the tone of the enjambment, both 'we' and 'take' get an unusual kind of emphasis, and this is in keeping with an unusual kind of statement.

Also the hairy sky that we
Take for a coverlet comfortably

Metaphorically, 'we' seems to get identified with the earth, the sky as its coverlet.

The syllabic structure of the poem is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>stanzas</th>
<th>no. of syllables in each line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>9 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>8 5 6 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of 101 syllables in the poem, 40 words are monosyllabic and 61 words are polysyllabic kind. Obviously, the foregrounding of the polysyllabic words compared to the earlier poems is quite significant. Words such as Pompey, emperor's, shuddering, everything, Indianapolis, Acropolis, coverlet, comfortably, eternity, diocese, elephantiasis, flunkeyed and trumpeting draw our immediate attention.

One of the most striking features of the poem is its phonological foregrounding which is, compared to the two poems
we have examined earlier, extremely complex and subtle. The intricate knitting of sounds is done on the principle of what one might call 'syllabic autonomy'. According to this principle, each syllable is important and has connections with other syllables in an autonomous manner, transcending the boundaries of words. Hopkins, too, is profoundly concerned with sound texture, but he works mostly with the traditional device of alliteration - the device which respects the identity of words and works on maintaining the similarity of sounds in the initial positions. In her early poems like 'Aubade', Sitwell does use the device of alliteration - crake creak, comb cockscomb come, comb cold. But in the 'Dark Song' we have both alliteration - fire-furry, flames, brown bear, captive cruel - and the repetition of individual sounds and clusters of sounds - the repetition of "r" sound in furry, rambles, cruel, brown, through, hairy, grumbled. But in 'Said King Pompey', the phonetic texture is woven through the interconnections of syllables and clusters of syllables in an intricate manner. The most striking example is the repetition of 'p' in the first two lines in words like Pompey, emperor, temporal, cape. The repetition of "v" in everything, love, voice, coverlet, with a modification of the sound in comfortably; and in lines 12, 13 and 14 we have "l" in swelling and elephantiasis; it gets associated with /f/ and in line 14 we have the cluster 'fl' in a different
order. The most significant cluster of sound is 'mp' which we get in four words: Pompey, emperor, temporal, trumpeting. About 'Pompey', 'emperor's Ape' and 'temporal cape', Edith Sitwell has some interesting comments to make which will be dealt with later. Our analysis shows that the most important recurrent sounds are /s/, /t/, /p/ and /k/, and the most striking vowel is /a/. Edith Sitwell's remark that the poem is based on the pattern of "r" does not seem to be based on truth.

Vowel patterns are quite striking in the sense the use of the stressed central vowel /a/ is densely foregrounded in words such as 'shudder', 'dust', 'love', 'Coverlet', 'comfortably', 'flunkeyed', 'trumpeting'. The phonological orchestration of /aiə/ in 'elephantiasis' (13) and /ei/, /ɔː/, /aː/, /ɔi/, /aː/, /eə/, /ai/, and /iː/ repeatedly used in several words is noticeable.

So using the concept of the summative word (Hymes:1967, 41), we might conclude that 'dust' is the most significant word phonetically since it contains the most recurrent and striking sounds in the poem (dust). This is in keeping with the propositional meaning of the poem - "the dust is everything". (3).

The words 'hairy' and 'coverlet' (7,8) are connected by a semantic link. 'We', 'comfortably' and 'Eternity' are connected by the rhythm and it establishes a semantic relationship between them. 'diocese' (12) and 'Sea' (14) are connected both semantically
and phonetically. 'Elephantiasis' and 'Swelling' are semantically linked. Similarly 'Bishop', 'diocease', 'flunkeyed', 'trumpeting' and 'sea' are cohesively bound in the poem.

The rhyme in lines 1 and 2 is based on the transcendence of word boundary:

\[\text{emp}r\text{á}z\text{e}p\text{e}i\text{p} \quad \text{with} \quad \text{k}\text{e}i\text{p}\]

In 'everything' the last part which is unstressed rhymes with 'sing' which is stressed:

\[\text{ev}\text{r}\text{i} \quad \text{sin}\]

Here again part of the word rhymes with the full word though imperfectly. Both the examples indicate that Edith Sitwell deliberately tries to break the identity of a word either by transcending the word boundary or by fragmenting the word. The 3 syllables of 'Indianapolis' and 3 syllables of 'Acropolis' she uses for an irregular rhyme called rhyme-riche in which the same sounds are repeated:

\[\text{indijanpali}\text{s}\quad \text{akrapali}\text{s}\]

Again in lines 7-8, 'we' rhymes with the last syllable of 'comfortably, which again rhymes with the last syllables of 'eternity' and 'Sea'. Again in 'Bishop' and 'ketchup', we have very interesting imperfect rhyme. The dissimilarity in 'b' and 'k' is alright, but that is followed by the dissonance 'i' and 'e' which is followed by the dissonance of consonants 't\text{j}' and 's'.

[342x784]123
[135x714]and phonetically. 'Elephantiasis' and 'Swelling' are semantically linked. Similarly 'Bishop', 'diocease', 'flunkeyed', 'trumpeting' and 'sea' are cohesively bound in the poem.

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[36x832]123
but the last part of the syllable consisting of two sounds /ˈAp/ in both the words is the same. 'Diocese' rhymes with 'elephantiasis'. It is a good rhyme but 'tiasis' is a part of the word 'elephantiasis', which again proves that for Edith Sitwell the syllables are more important than the words.

The diction of the poem is extremely mixed. We have a group of words which are related to the royal past - 'King Pompey', 'Acropolis' etc. We have a number of words related to the church - 'Bishop', 'diocese', 'Sea', 'flunkeyed', 'trumpeting' etc. We have geographical terms like 'Indianapolis', 'Acropolis'. We have colloquial terms like 'ketchup', 'hairy', 'love', 'sing' and 'dust'. We have also abstract terms such as 'temporal' and 'eternity' in the poem. What is most interesting in the poem is the way the words are connected:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>king</th>
<th>Pompey</th>
<th>emperor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bishop</td>
<td>diocese</td>
<td>Sea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

'Diocese' and 'elephantiasis' are connected with phonetic 'anuranan'. Similarly, there is a phono-semantic connection between 'diocese' and 'Sea' apart from the rhyme. 'Elephantiasis' and 'Swelling' are naturally linked and 'coverlet' and 'hairy' are semantically connected. 'Indianapolis' and 'Acropolis' are also semantically linked.

The dominant grammatical feature of this poem is the repetition of the syntactic frame which results in syntactic parallelism. For example, the poem begins with the syntactically
inverted structure 'Said King Pompey' followed by an adverbial phrase of manner 'Shuddering black in his temporal cape' (2).
Lines 3 to 8 give the direct speech of Pompey. The second syntactic frame begins in an identical manner with 'Said the Bishop' (9) followed by an adverbial of manner 'Eating his ketchup' (10) which is again followed by a direct speech of the Bishop in the following four lines (11-14). Baker (1967, 32) calls constructions such as 'Said King Pompey' and 'Said the Bishop' as 'dislocations' which give poetry 'one of the most obvious characteristics of common, unpremediated colloquial language'. 'Said King Pompey...shuddering black..(1-2) is a deviant syntactic structure in the sense the gerund 'shuddering' or for that matter any gerund cannot be used after the verb 'said'. Moreover, after the gerund 'shuddering' there should have been an adverb/adverbial phrase (shuddering angrily/with fear etc.) whereas in the poem the poet uses the adjective 'black' adverbially which is a syntactic deviation. In line 3, 'The dust is everything' is very much different from 'everything is dust'. Edith Sitwell uses fragmentation in line 4 'The heart to love and the voice to sing'. This kind of fragmentation serves best to translate many of the obscure processes of mental life with a minimum distortion'. (Baker: 1967, 128).
There is an elision as shown below:

The heart (which is meant) to love
The voice 'which is supposed) to sing.
The possible connections as shown in brackets are missing, but the syntactic parallelism

NP + to infinitive

brings these phrases together. In the lines 7-8

Also the hairy sky that we
Take for a coverlet comfortably

the placement of the adverb 'comfortably' sounds rather odd.

Edith Sitwell uses the device of extreme defamiliarization in the images such as 'Pompey...shuddering black (1-2);
'the hairy sky' (7); 'Swelling the diocese' (12); 'The flunkeyed and trumpeting Sea'(14). The result is violent collocative clashes as shown below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>hairy ape</th>
<th>normal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the hairy sky</td>
<td>deviant X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swelling the sea</td>
<td>normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>swelling the diocese</td>
<td>deviant X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the flunkeyed person</td>
<td>normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the flunkeyed sea</td>
<td>deviant X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trumpeting sound</td>
<td>normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trumpeting sea</td>
<td>deviant X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now let us consider Edith Sitwell's remarks on the poem, written in her Notes (pp.27-28):

"Said King Pompey"

- a poem about materialism and the triumphant dust, is, like "Dark Song", built on a scheme of "r"s, but there the use and the effect is wholly
different, for this poem is not formed on a scheme of alternate harsh and muted "r"s, as in 'Dark Song'; instead, the "r"s with the faint elision which in this case results from them, give the effect of dust fluttering from the ground, or of the beat of a dying heart:

In the first two lines, the sound rises, "Pompey" in sound, is a dark distorted shadow of "Emperor" and its "crouching echo, "temporal" - a shadow upside down, one might say, for in "emperor" the sound dies down in hollow darkness, whereas in "Pompey" it begins in thick muffling animal darkness, and then rises, dying away into a little thin whining air. The crazy reversed sound "Indianapolis", "Acropolis" - (Acropolis being a hollow darkened echo of Indianapolis, broken down, and toppling over into the abyss) - this effect is deliberate".

I have dealt with her remarks mentioned above earlier in the Chapter where I have accounted for her 'intuitive stylistics'. However, Edith Sitwell's awareness of the use of sounds in the poem in order to create certain effects is interesting though subjective.

Through this stylistic analysis we gain insight into what Edith Sitwell is trying to do in these poems. She is trying to build the structure of language in a new way gaining insights into the fundamental aspect of reality and the fundamental aspects in this poem are Time and its inevitable associate - decay and degeneration.
The poetry of Edith Sitwell's first phase belongs primarily to what Barthes calls, 'intransitive writing', "whose central concern is not to take us 'through' his (writer's) writing to a world beyond it, but to produce writing". (Hawkes: 1977). It is evident from the analysis of the 3 chosen poems that meaning structures are built entirely through the device of intra-textual patterning primarily on the phonetic and semantic levels. Since the propositional sense has the least role to play, the poetry of the first phase has what Pinto (1972, 170) calls "non-representational quality". To begin with, language is everything to Edith Sitwell. It suggests that her transaction with the universe consists in her perception of it in terms of language. Taking into consideration Anne Cluysenaar's view (1976) that a poem is a unified communicative event, we may say that behind her extreme foregrounding in terms of sound, diction and semantics (which is the device of extreme defamiliarization), there is a conscious attempt at a philosophical coming to terms with the universe. The philosophy at this stage appears to be "I see, therefore, I am", that is, 'my world is what I perceive', and Sitwell's attempt is to perceive not in the accepted traditional manner, but from her own unique and individual point of view. This accounts for the central strategy of defamiliarization which consists of various devices like synaesthesia, syllabic autonomy, experimentation with the use of metaphors by working out her own strange sense
of similitude between tenor and vehicle. On the whole she appears to be keen on breaking down the older modes of perception and experience and on exploring newer modes in terms of perception and linguistic possibilities. In the poetry of this phase we notice that the basic structure of meaning is related to the orchestration of phonological units. In other words, it is her sense of sound that is her centrally operating factor in the poetry of this phase, the second element being not syntactic, but lexical foregrounding. We may describe the structure of a first-phase poem as a complex intra-textual patterning in which the ratio of propositional sense and the meaning arising out of suprasegmental features and semantic deviation of language is the exact reverse of the ratio that we normally find in a traditional poem.

In the later poems of the first phase, we notice a tendency to impose a certain conception in respect of the universe on the observed reality which indicates a certain progress in her philosophical attitude along with a keen awareness of the world of perception. She develops a questioning attitude about the origin of the world and the basic nature of the world as existence. She becomes aware of a certain animal force working through various processes of reality, and she also recognizes that the time dimension is basic to human existence along with its inevitable corollary of decay and degeneration. My point in speculating about her philosophical
attitude at this stage is to grasp the underlying principles behind the development of her poetry. In the first phase itself we find a gradual movement from perception, which is complex, to conception which at this stage is simple and fundamentalist. This movement can be located in the deliberate linguistic patterning of her poems like 'Dark Song' and 'Said King Pompey'.
REFERENCES


Edith Sitwell, *Selected Poems* (London: Duckworth, 1936)


