CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION
The period before the First World War qualitatively evolved a new type of aesthetic commonly known as socialist realism. This new art presented a stern reaction against dogmatism and acquired a special literary meaning i.e. projection of real life both in novel and poetry. The correct starting point of this new art of anti-dogmatism was the Boer War which was in fact a struggle against colonisation of the British people in Africa and Asia. Subsequently this new art reflected on the literary scholars of England of the early twentieth century. The sweeping change in novel and drama made an unwarranted negation to the ideological foundation of sex and religion of the English people. Poetry however passed through sensational experiments. Intellectual production of art and poetry confirmed significant innovation and not invasion of the Victorian temper of the past tradition. When England was aiming at the development of the English poetry in a new form MISS EDITH SITWELL appeared in the English literary horizon. Her arrival had not only a local significance but also she created a world-wide sensation. In her aesthetic quests she added her programme of "revivification of rhythmic patterns." 1 Although her poetic career was moulded by the thoughts and ideals which emerged out of the Boer War (1899-1902), the First World War (1914-1918) and the Second World War (1939-1945) she was in essence a poet following up the test of the time.

A poet of talent, Miss Sitwell was much influenced by French Symbolism. She enlarged and enriched her art in the style of French Symbolism. She was marked with a new seriousness moving beyond truth and honesty. 'Truth' has been conceived in her poetry as psychological rather than objective, and 'Honesty' demonstrated her art of synaesthesia.
Modernism in poetry has given rise to some misgivings. According to some 'modernism' can be traced in Naturalism and Imagism. According to the others the Symbolist movement is the beginning of literary modernism, and actually found form in Georgianism and Surrealism. MISS SITWELL was untouched by either of these movements except Symbolism and she conceived modernism in her passion for humanity and adoration of life around. The contemporary climate of modern culture was shifted from rancorous moralizing and arid self-righteousness to the realistic craving for peace and equality.

Of Miss Sitwell's delineation on social aspect converted more readers to her side, but her relations with the readers in her early life was not always idyllic.

The persons born in aristocratic families acquire certain advantages and disadvantages by inheritance — they can easily cultivate in them qualities that move round the aristocrat. Equally, they remain ignorant of the ways of life of the common people, their ideals and outlook. Miss Edith Sitwell was subjected to these limitations. Her extreme sensitiveness, her devotion to books and music brought adverse views from her parents. But her catholicity of temper and freshness of outlook made her a comfortable companion for the then moderns.

In romantic image painting she possessed the English quality like Keats and Tennyson. Like Keats, an unconscious pre-Raphaelite, she had the poetic mastery, she may be called the Keatsian nightingale in the domain of the early twentieth century English poetry.

T.S. Eliot has a high place in the modern English poetry. Miss Edith Sitwell who was considered anti-traditional before the end of the First World War was the pioneer of modernism in English poetry before T.S. Eliot culminating in his poetry the new psychology, anthropology, symbolism and metaphysics. From the level of the fantastic she raised herself to the level of the spiritual in her latter years.

In this thesis an attempt has been made to trace critically the development of MISS EDITH SITWELL as a poet during the years beginning from the First World War to the late fifties.