CHAPTER FOUR

EDITH. SITWELL AND OTHER CONTEMPORARY
POETS COMPARED
English Poetry before the First World War presented a picture blended with blustering and chauvinistic sentiment of the Victorian imperialism. When Edith Sitwell appeared in the English literary scene, some people of the English society looked to an Earl as 'the highest mountain peak, to be venerated, but not approached, by ordinary mortals', and 'a Baronet is the lowest thing on God's earth'. At the beginning of the twenties the poets in England virtually tried to end the drift and they took up science to their aid. At the same time some other poets experimented on philosophical and mystic poems. Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) is well known for his scientific interests, Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) geared on burning patriotism, Robert Bridges (1844-1930) wrote mainly on love and nature, W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) and Walter de la Mare (1873-1956) were deeply touched by the mystic fervour. The early twentieth century English poetry was thus a curious mixture of the traditional and the experimental forces.

In the year 1886 an Indian member of the Theosophical Society, Mr. Mohini Chatterjee, visited Dublin where he taught the basic ideas of the Indian Philosophy to the poet William Butler Yeats and others. The monk Purohit Swami of Ramkrishna Mission was another Indian who had been to England for several years to teach the Indian Vedanta philosophy to the English people. The poet W.B. Yeats and the monk Purahit Swami jointly published a book, The Ten Principal Upanishads (1937) which is a translation of the famous Indian Upanishads. The imagery and the vocabulary of some of the early twentieth century poets reflect the influence of science as well as the Indian Hindu philosophy taught by these two great Indian scholars.

Dame Edith Sitwell turned her attention on the problems of the society that arose from the impact of too much industrialisation and scientific inventions. She also did not accept the decadent romantic tradition that persists in the Georgian poetry. Dr. Sitwell
began to compose poems in her love for nature but her deepened sense of pity for the poor and down and outs of the society such as prostitutes, drunkards, etc., shattered all of her romantic illusions and she became a poet of disillusion and pessimism. In this respect she has close affinity with the poets T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats. In her works there are touches of satire. Her close study of the poem The Rape of the Lock of Alexander Pope (1688-1744) in her early age influenced her to attack the modern society with her own terrible and blind satire.

II

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939) is generally compared with Dr. EDITH SITWELL. "Yeats is essentially a dreamer," sums up Compton-Rickett about his poetic temperament. He was a pessimist poet. His earlier works were decorated with Pre-Raphaelite escapism. Irish folklore and legends of primitive impulses of human beings helped him to make a compromise between the Victorian imperialism and the Georgian simplicity. The world of beauty around was to him a world of peace which could not be successfully explained, but felt at heart and caught by the soul. He was a poet of dreamy weird imagination, of celtic revival, of wonder and other-worldliness reflected on the face of wild nature. Yeats himself stated that:

"But I, being poor, have only my dreams,
I have spread my dreams under your feet,
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams."

To be entirely frank, Dr. Sitwell's writings voiced her reaction to the thoughts, ideals, and conduct of her age. Her poetry is both a reaction and supplement to the highly imaginative romantic poetry of Wordsworth and Tennyson. The natural world became fashionable topics for voicing the complex human relations and their most delicate and partial perceptions. The readers share the experiences and thoughts of the poets as they face now the leaping approach of the year 2000. The poet of The Mother and Other Poems who expressed the
reprehensible conduct of a son who was born and brought up in the modern society also aspired for a life of mirth and merrymaking away from the oppressing world. Family, parents, children and such other kins and relatives are a distinct feature of human civilization. They have come into existence to meet a psychological need of man. Man wants to grasp the Infinite through concrete symbols and feel His presence in everybody; and as a result, man has formed relationship with all the human beings of the world. This Indian concept of family life, aspiring virtue, wealth and enjoyment strengthened her moral consciousness, faith in spiritual life and spontaneous experience of vastness.

"SAID King Pompey the emperor's ape
Shuddering black in his temporal cape
Of dust, 'The dust is everything-
The heart to love and the voice to sing
Indianapolis
And the Acropolis,
Also the hairy sky that we
Take for a coverlet comfortably.'

(Nursery Rhyme)

W.B. Yeats was a poet of solitude and rural peace. He believed that there is an essential kinship between man, Nature and God. This faith of oneness in all is the Key-note of mysticism. A mystic also believes in the immortality of the soul. A band of critics consider that Yeats was greatly influenced by Plato who believed that body may die, but the soul remains as part of the Eternal. Perhaps contact with Dr. Mohini Chatterjee's Indian Vedanta Philosophy influenced Yeats to a certain extent. Yeats had in his mind a curious mixture of western thought and the eastern faith in the experience and vision. This aspect helped him in knowing the tenets of the poems of Rabindra Nath Tagore (1861-1941) and William Blake (1757-1827). His lake poems are fundamentally mystical in nature in which he sought to convey his supernatural experiences and visions.

" I will arise and go now, for always night and day
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;
While I stand on the roadway, or on the pavements gray,
I hear it in the deep heart's core!

Isles
(The Lake of Innisfree by W.B. Yeats)
Dame Sitwell was aware of her own mission. The poem *The Bee-Keeper* was based on the translation Indian Upanishadas translated by W.B. Yeats and Purohit Swami. A delicate and haunting melody of this poem charms the soul like a piece of incantation. The whole poem is like a supernatural voice in consonance with the mysterious call of Nature felt in the soul with an awaking wistfulness for peace and rest.

"O the bright immortal Lover,  
That is in thunder and all voices — the beasts' roar —  
Thunder of rising saps — the voice of Man!  
O bright immortal Lover Who is All!"  

(*The Bee-Keeper* by Miss Sitwell)

Mysticism emphasises asceticism and a negation of life. But for Yeats lust for life is the key-note. He developed a system of his own united with philosophy, mythology and magic to achieve the mystic sensation. He studied Plato, Plotinus and other occult writers associated with magic, theology, astrology and philosophy.

For Dame Sitwell it was a lyrical cry of a desolate heart which the glamour of civilization presses so hard and took away her romantic imagination for a permanent abode of rest of the soul. She followed the dialectical process of Hegel about the evolution of the world that takes place in the process of homogeneity, differentiation and integration. To her the movement of human thought is dialectical. Her study of Rimbaut, Pope, Kant and Berkeley helped in intellectual analysis or rational exposition of the images. Kant's theory is essentially agnostic. Kant maintains that there is an extramental world of reality independent of the mind. Berkeley asserts that God creates and sustains the world as a system of ideas within His own mind and our perception is a reproduction of the ideas of the Divine mind. Dame Sitwell holds that the world exists as a system of ideas in the minds of finite subjects — "He sits in this desert where no sound of wave shall come," (*A Song of the Cold*). She has marked similarity with Yeats about the way of life. But she was not an ascetic, she did not believe in the negation of life.
Yeats hinted at the birth of a bestial anti-civilization at the end of the two thousand year Christian Cycle compounded from Christ's Matthew, 24 Prediction, and His future return. St. John's Vision of arrival of anti-Christ in the shape of the beast of Apocalypse meant a "revelation" to Yeats (The Second Coming by Yeats).

The influence of the French Symbolist Movement of W.B. Yeats and Dame Edith Sitwell is clearly seen in their poems. The term "Symbol" evokes emotion. The symbols are therefore connotative, evocative and emotive. In using images the poets express their uncommon personal feelings. Symbols are of two kinds (a) traditional, and (b) personal. A traditional symbol e.g. 'sun' creates different personal feelings in different poets and different readers. The translation of the works of Mallarme, Villiers by Arthur Symons, and Arthur Rimbaud by Miss Helen Rootham infused an impersonal vision in the minds of Mr. Yeats and Miss Sitwell respectively. The beauty and the meaning of the symbols invested with a profound personal significance in them. Symbolism for Yeats was however coloured by his belief in magic as well as his own nationalism.

Bhabatosh Chatterjee, Reader in English, University of Burdwan holds that:

"There are four main sources of Yeats' symbolism — Celtic mythology, Greco-Roman mythology, his own personal philosophical system, and literature and art." 

Dame Sitwell took symbolism for what is commonly known as 'romanticism', a mode of escapism. She was a strong believer in the spiritual reality penetrating the unreality of the physical world.
"A mind Michael Angelo knew
That can pierce the clouds,
Or inspired by frenzy
Shake the dead in their shrouds;
Forgotten else by mankind,
An old man's eagle mind."

(An Acre of Grass by W.B. Yeats)

* * * *

"Nobody comes to give him his rum but the Rim of the sky hippopotamus-gum
Enhances the chances to bless with a benison
Alfred Lord Tennyson crossing the bar laid
With cold vegetation from pale deputations
Of temperance workers (all signed In Memorium)
Hoping with glory to trip up the Laureate's feet;
(Moving in classical metres)"

(Sir Beelzebub by Miss Sitwell)

W.B. Yeats is also known as a lyric poet. His lyric poems are generally divided into (i) Lyrics of Escape, (ii) Political Lyrics, (iii) Lyrics of reminiscence, and (iv) Love Lyrics. At the age of twenty-three Yeats met Maud Gonne and instantly he fell in love with her. Thereafter Maud Gonne remained at the centre of his love Lyrics. Verses The Rose (1893) and The Wind Among the Reeds (1899) are a glowing passionate lyrical cry of Yeats for his lady-love Maud Gonne. Miss Sitwell at first fixed her love on Alvaro de Guavara and then on Pavel Tchelitchew. But both the affairs failed. She was ill-treated by her mother in her childhood being born a female. In her youth she was not accepted by any one on whom she could project her love. Her unsuccessful love dynamically changed her. Her love lyrics have the poignancy and ecstasy no less than the best lyrics of P.B. Shelley.
"For here, my sight, my sun, my sense,
In my gown white as innocence,
I walked with you, Ah, that my sun
Loved my heart less than carrion!"

(The Hambone and the Heart by Miss Sitwell)

"Gone is that heat. But this is the hour of
brotherhood,
the warmth that comes
To the rejected by Life—the shadow with no eyes"

(The Two Loves by Miss Sitwell)

***

"And the lover seeing in woman the rankness of Nature,—
A monstrous Life-force, the need of procreation
Devouring all other life——"

(The Two Loves by Miss Sitwell)

Miss Sitwell dedicated these two poems—The Hambone and the Heart and The Two Loves—to her second lover Mr. Pavel Tchelitchew, the Russian painter.

In the year 1903 Maude Gonne married Major MacBride. Yeats with broken heart expressed his disillusions.

"Sweet heart, do not love too long
I loved long and llong,
And grew to be out of fashion
Like an old song."

But Miss Sitwell was always self-controlled in her moods and tones. Her love lyrics are superb examples to that eternal yearning of the women for peace and quiet of Nature that seized the souls of men who weary of the noise and turmoil of civilized life want to be free from that.

"Then for all my darkness I shall be
The peacefulness of a lovely tree—
A tree wherein the golden birds
Are singing in the darkest branches, O!"

(The Song of the Man from a Far Countree)
W.B. Yeats was sincere in his poetic art and technique. His earlier poems were composed in an easy diction of romantic tradition. He used profuse imagery for word-pictures. But his later poems indicate naturalness and realism and syntax of common speech. According to Yeats "poetry is not criticism of life, but the revelation of a hidden life." His verses bear the musical resonance and the conjuring trick of rhythm reflected in his verse. But he used hyperbolic words very often which marred the artistic sincerity and integrity at times.

In technical art of versification and rhythm Miss Sitwell was a romantic poet at heart, but she experimented with rhythm, assonances and dissonances and the readers derive aesthetic pleasure from her realistic theme and treatment. There is in her poems a delicate and haunting melody which charms the souls as the incantations do. She was a romantic-Victorian in temper and a classical poet in mood, a symbolist in doctrine and an obscurist in speech. Her synaesthetic art unless fully grasped, the readers would not understand the inner meanings inspite of repeated and laborious readings.

"So what can I give to her? Civilisation's Disease, a delirium flushed like the rose
And noisy as summer?"

(Poor Young Simpleton I)

The poems of Yeats are fused with pre-Raphaelite decoration in the Swinburne-Rossetti-Morxia tradition. The pictures painted by the words "bee-loud glade", "deep heart's core" (The Lake Isle of Innisfree), "October twilight", "clamorous wings" (The Wild Swans at Coole), "shadowless noon", "dusky face" (Solomon to Sheba) may be mistaken for Swinburne's unless the poems of Yeats are carefully read. The tapestries of the word-pictures painted by Miss. Sitwell in "castanetted sea" (Trio for Two Cats and a Trombone), "Tarlatine blue", "barouche pillows", "manteaux espagnols" (Waltz), "ripe-bearded
fire", "smooth-weeping tree" (Harvest), "sextuple Suns" (Tears), "emerald lore", "green rejoicing" (Green Song), "honey-red foxes" (A Sleepy Tune), "peony bud" (The Song of Dido), "Shadow's treasury" "Time's sea" (Hymn to Venus) are purely pre-Raphaelite presentation in the manner of Tennyson and Swinburne; "dove-breates flowers" (The Hambone and the Heart), "bird-throat grieves" (Romance) "five-metalled suns" (Elegy on Dead Fashion), are evidence of the maturing power of Miss Sitwell as a poet.

In keeping with the modern realistic trend Yeats was unique. In speech, rhythm and diction his poems are combined with twentieth century realism and nineteenth century romanticism. Profundy of thought, simplicity of form and colloquial diction of his poems are examples of the modern century poetic slogan "all verbiage and no decoration". Still then there is no evidence of a decline in his poetic power. The poems of Miss Sitwell are characterised by stark and naked realism, brutality and coarseness, masculine vigour and complexity of contents. Her Gold Coast Customs is a fine example of madness of a particular community and religious hypocrisy still present in the twentieth century. Yeats was much touched on reading the poem Gold Coast Customs. "Yeats hailed the poem, saying that it restored something that had departed from English poetry with the death of Swift..." 72 Yeats had no faith in Christianity as well as in contemporary science. Miss Sitwell was essentially Christian in her religious belief. Her imagery was drawn from the contemporary scene and modern life rotating round modern scientific accessories. Her poems are a curious inter-mixture of contemporary social order, modern science and cold inhumanity of the democratic age. Yeats had no share in the sorrows and sufferings, joys and pleasures of the common people. Miss Sitwell was pioneer in exposing the common sufferings of the poor, emptiness of the warfare in which the poor people suffer, passion, intensity and fervour of a desolate mother.

"My little lamb, of milk bereft... My heart was all that I had left."
(The Hambone and the Heart by Miss Sitwell)
DAME EDITH SITWELL and THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT are two great poets in English literature of the twentieth century, and Edith Sitwell is looked upon as the pioneer poet who revolted against the popular Georgian poetry of her time. Although Edith Sitwell (1887-1964) and T.S. Eliot (1988-1964) reigned over the literary world of England jointly for the same period; the former is indebted to the French symbolists and the latter, a naturalised British citizen who read Greek philosophy at Oxford (1911-12), expressed the anti-romantic classical attitude and discarded 'emotion' as the main spring in the creative process. In the twenties when both of them were about 32/33 years of age they produced two mutually exclusive and diametrically opposite views in their literary art. Miss Sitwell experimented with magic language in verse form, T.S. Eliot turned over to his impersonal theory of poetry. The literary careers of these two poets present another contrast. Edith Sitwell was very shy, and disliked publicity. T.S. Eliot for some time served as an assistant editor of "The Egoist", and then he was the Director of W. S. Faber and Faber, the book-sellers and the publishers. T.S. Eliot is widely known as a poet, dramatist and essayist. Miss Sitwell acquired her name in literature as a poet, novelist and critic.

The great weakness of Romantic-idealistic tradition was its tendency to subjectivism. T.S. Eliot observed that the fearful progress of subjectivism in English poetry was the result of the destructive self-consciousness of the English poets of the early twentieth century. Eliot aimed at "to see the object as in itself it really is." He gave an account of the poet's mind in his essay on Tradition and Individual Talent.

"The poet's mind is in fact a receptacle for seizing and storing up numberless feelings, phrases, images, which remain there until all the particles which can unite to form a new compound are present together."
Dame Edith Sitwell summed up the qualities of poet necessary for the development of literature and art themselves.

"He looks at the brightness of the world without envy, but knows it is only momentarily for his own grasp, though he takes a youthful happiness in watching that of others."

Eliot's critical judgement is dogmatic. He said with ardent conviction about the wise tutorship of the critics that "the tendency of a nimble but myopic minority to progenerate heterodoxies" is an implicit suggestion that a poet must be free from impressionism.

In religious belief T.S. Eliot took the middle way. He had "a catholic cast of mind, a Calvinistic heritage and a puritanical temperament". Dr. Sitwell wrote that "the soul of man is engaged, not only in adoration, but also, at times, in a glorifying and joyous combat with his God." She became a Roman Catholic in the year 1955. T.E. Hulme postulates a few propositions about poetry and T.S. Eliot subscribes to all these:

i) There is no such thing as a "poetic" subject matter. Poetry is a product of Imagination and not of Fancy, "the great aim is accurate, precise and definite description."

ii) The proper aim of the poet is to get the exact curve of what he sees, whether it be an object or an idea in the mind.

iii) Poetry contains images and metaphors and "Images in verse are not mere decoration, but the very essence of an intuitive language."

iv) The complexity with which poetry deals is not mechanical, but organic. Each part of a poem is "modified by the other's presence and each to a certain extent is the whole."

T.S. Eliot's Prufrock was published in the year 1917. The publication unveiled a new era and it brought immediate fame to him.
Miss Sitwell on the other hand passively endured the blows of fate.
In the fifth cycle of Wheels this has been clearly illumined in the poem Churche Parada of Sir Osbert Sitwell.

"Each bird that whirls and wheels on high
Must strangle, stifle in, its cry.
For nothing that's of Nature born
Should seem so on the Sabbath Morn...."

(Wheels, 1920, PP.20)

The world of Miss Sitwell and the world of her admirers and critics, though linked, were incommensurable when Wheels were published for the poet felt a change in the direction, imagery, and rhythms in poetry had become necessary, owing to the rhythmical flaccidity, the verbal deadness, the dead and expected patterns...." (Some Notes on my Own Poetry) 73 and tried to overcome the deep-seated conceptions of poetry of the Victorian age by presenting rhythmical poems of her own model.

Seriousness and thoughtfulness are the distinctive features of the poems of Miss Sitwell published in Wheels. She performed a coveted role in this coveted anthology in pinpointing her constructive criticism, unparalleled heroism and courage. The two waves of English poetry originated simultaneously. One was T.S. Eliot according to whom poetry is a matter of images and metaphors—
"Images in verse are not mere decoration, but the very essence of an intuitive language." The other generated in the mind of Miss Sitwell according to whom

"The beauties of poetry are unconfined;
they grow like a tree, to give our summer a pleasant shade, they ripen like fruit, and spring like a fountain to cool our thirst."

(The pleasures of poetry, pp529)

The images of T.S. Eliot and Miss Sitwell when contrasted produce an ecstatic music for Mr. Eliot, and a pleasing softness in burning imagery for Miss Sitwell.
"I shall not want Capital in Heaven
For I shall meet Sir Alfred Mond,
We two shall lie together, lapt
In a five per cent. Exchequer Bond."

(A Cooking Egg - by T.S. Eliot)

"I wander in the fields and know
Why kings do squander pennies so —
Let they at last should weight their eyes!
But beggars' ragged minds, more wise,
Know without flesh we cannot see —
And so they hoard stupidity...

(The Girl with the Lint-White Locks published in Wheels, 1919, pp. 81-2).

Dr. Sitwell’s Gold Coast Customs were published in the year 1929 i.e. after seven years of publication of The Waste Land (1922) of T.S. Eliot. To Eliot world presented nothing but vexation, disillusion and revulsion. He was emotionally enriched in describing in a strip-tease manner his pseudo-literary idea of the world.

"I think we are in rat's alley
Where the dead men lost their bones."

(A Game of Chess by T.S. Eliot)

T.S. Eliot used the symbol of "one-eyed merchant", "The Hanged Man" to illustrate the degree of happiness among the modern people; he has also used a word of caution: one must be so careful these days" (The Burial of the Dead).

There are commonplace, everyday situations, and moral situations, which torture people, as well as elevate them to the realm of continuous and unchanging stratum of happiness. The universe we live in is so complex that Miss Sitwell called it "Death's docks". Eliot called it "The Waste Land". The common people have lost their knowledge of good and evil, finite and infinite, immanent and transcendent principle of the Absolute Spirit.
Here in this world, Miss Sitwell says,

"The Negro rolls
His red eyeballs,
***
His God is but a flat black stone
Upright upon a squeaking bone."

Miss Sitwell warns the people about the modern civilization in using in her poetry the African tradition of cannibalism of the nineteenth century which is still prevalent in the modern age in some form or other:

"she grinds
Her male child's bones in a mortar, binds
Him for food, and the people buy."

(Gold Coast Customs by E. Sitwell)

Miss Sitwell in describing this has enunciated the truth that the degree of happiness associated with each level or sub-level is independent of external events. The external events do not create happiness, simply bring it out that is already within. But the degree of happiness has nothing to do with the type of external events, or the work we do everyday.

The poems of Eliot represent a process of gradual evolution of the poet's idea in perception of evil, folly and futility (Prufrock and Gerontion Poems, 1917-1920), the hopeless aspiration for spiritual rebirth in the commercial waste land, ancient and modern (The Waste Land), the ascent of the hill of Purgatory and the vision of Inferno (Ash Wednesday and The Hollow Man). In maintaining these ideas Eliot has formed the anti-romantic attitude under the influence of Remy de Gourmont and T.E. Hulme. So Eliot is often called the champion of classical impersonality. His theory is that "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality."
"Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the shadow
For Thine is the Kingdom

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow
Life is Very long

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow
For Thine is the Kingdom"

(The Hollow Men 1925 by Eliot)

The modern critics believe that there are two kinds of poets and writers — (i) those who serve the exploiters, imperialists, neo-colonialists, and (ii) those who fight for freedom, peace and universal happiness. Miss Sitwell recognizes that every phenomenon has a meaning and a poet should record and interpret the meaning (The Rother and Other Pomes). It is the duty of a poet to give pleasure, but raised Wordsworth's question— "Pleasure to whom?" (Facade and Five Variations on a Theme). Poetry must have rhythms, assonances, dissonances and a message to communicate. Poetry having all technique and no message is no poetry at all (Street Song, Green Song and Other Poems, The Shadow of Cain, The Canticle of the Rose). A poet's conviction that "if he shows spirituality and feeling" he would be a great poet has been discarded by Miss Sitwell in pointing out in her critical essay Poetry and Criticism (Page 26) that "Poetry is primarily an art, and not a dumping ground for emotions". 74
"The tremulous gold of stars within your hair
Are yellow bees flown from the hive of night,"
(Serenade)

"I thought I saw the wicked old witch in
The richest gallipot in the kitchen!
 *  *  *
The mocking money in the pockets
Then turned black...now caws
The fire...
(Façade— The Drum)

"Our final structure, the heart's ragged dress
That rose from Nothing, fell to Nothingness."
(Romance)

"Where is nor light, nor dark, nor soul, nor heart to est;
Only the dust of all the dead, the sound of passing,"
\begin{footnote}
(Epithalamium)
\end{footnote}

"It stretches for ever, and there is no turning
But only fire, annihilation, burning."
\begin{footnote}
(Green Flows the River of Lethe—0)
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"This Earth is the honey of all Beings, and all Beings
Are the honey of this Earth..."
(The Bee Oracles : I. The Bee-Keeper)

In affirming her poetical convictions Miss Sitwell observes
that "When the speech of one sense is insufficient to convey his
entire meaning, he uses the language of another." 75 In communica-
ting her message she has used the language of the Indian Upanishada
(translated by Yeats & Purohit Swami) in one of her latter poem
The Bee-Keeper. T. S. Eliot used the language of the Indian Upanishada
in his earlier poem What the Thunder said, the fifth poem of
The Waste Land (1922).

"The fragments I have shored against my ruins
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad again.
Datta, Dayadhvam Damyata.
Shantih shantih shantih"
(What the Thunder said)
The Indian theme of pure socialism (free from Marxism and Communism) under the caption GIVE(Datta), Sympathise(Dayadhvam) and Control(Damyata) of Brihadāranyaka Upanishada found in Deussen's translation influenced T.S. Eliot in writing the poem What the Thunder Said.

Both Mr. Eliot and Miss Sitwell accepted the Indian themes for their poems but in the poems of T.S. Eliot a sensitive study and presentation of the depths of the human mind is to be found, the poems of Miss Sitwell always contain an element of sympathy for human weaknesses. Eliot's poems are infused with cognitive processes, Miss Sitwell's poems are linked with psyche. Eliot was more concerned with the human heart. Miss Sitwell was precisely touched by the spirit of individual freedom and the immortality of the soul. The subject matter of Eliot's poems portray the barrenness of the idea of the spiritual world of the contemporary literary artists, Miss Sitwell's poems are simple meditation on philosophy. T.S. Eliot was deeply engrossed in the stories of the Indian philosophy.

"The mention of Krishna in part 111 of The Dry Salvages makes explicit the strain of Eastern philosophy adumbrated in The Waste Land and elsewhere in the Four Quarters. The doctrine of Sankhya Yoga which Krishna embodied as charioteer expounds to the young Prince Arjuna in the Bhagavad-gīta contains not only ideas but also specific symbols used by Eliot. The darkness symbol:

In that which is night to all things, therein the self-subjugated remains awake, but where all else is awake, that is night for the knower of the self

— Adapted from Swami Parmananda's translation."

Miss Sitwell neatly narrated the Theory of Negation of the Indian Yoga System in her latter poems Green Flows the River of Lethe—.
Eliot's theory of Impersonal Art has arrived at the most successful conclusion the **Objective Correlative**, which means every subjective emotion can be impersonalised through the objective facts. That means every emotion can be articulated by means of a formula based on external sense-perception. By reading the sensory facts mentioned in a poem we should automatically be in touch with the emotion they are radiating.

Miss Sitwell's conception of removing the obstacles to the way of pure poetry is to follow the Categorical Imperative of the great eighteenth-century philosopher Immanuel Kant. In all human beings there is an inexorable urge to act morally and there is a teleological urge in man to go up from a lower state of existence to a higher state.

"I think it cannot be denied that one of the principal reasons why certain critics, and large part of the public, feel unable to understand the aims of modernist poets, is that these poets are leaving the tradition that leads from Wordsworth, and are returning to an earlier line in poetry." 77

T.S. Eliot was a professed classicist, a poet of Vision, a thinker, and a critic. Obscurity of his verse is his patent quality. His poems are based on stream of consciousness theory and the problem of time. His verse is rhythmic and at times it is musical.

Miss Sitwell was a poet of romantic tradition. She anxiously raised in her poems the problems of culture and the problems of mankind in the light of the modern civilization. Her poems about the most common people contained, in embryo, her sympathy for the
oppressed, the poor and the simple people of the society. Her poems are liked by all. Through poems she established a link between the east and the west. Her earlier poems are suitable for music and dance. She was a poet, a thinker, a critic who never confused poems for religion and morality although she meditated upon deep philosophical and metaphysical thoughts.

IV

Two mid-twentieth century poets MRS. SYLVIA PLATH and MISS EDITH SITWELL bear some comparison. Mrs. Sylvia Plath (1932-1963) was an American by birth, but she married the flourishing poet Mr. Ted Hughes in the year 1956 and the poet-couple settled at Devonshire purchasing a cottage in the year 1961.

The life and literary career of Mrs. Plath were closely bound up with frustration and dejection. From her early childhood she was over-sensitive, ambitious and wanted to be a top star in every phase of life. So her poems abound with the details of her subconscious mind, but they do not reflect the spirit of the time.

"The womb
Rattles its pod, the moon
Discharges itself from the tree, with nowhere to go."

(Childless Woman by Sylvia Plath)

Mrs. Plath and Miss Sitwell have similarity in the art of synaesthesia. Mrs. Plath expressed her images obliquely in terms of the other, but Miss Sitwell invested her synaesthetic narrative with greater artistry and significance.

"The air is a mill of hooks—
Questions without answer,
Glittering and drunk as flies
Whose kiss stings unbearably
In the fetid wombs of black air under pines in summer."

(Mystic by Mrs. Plath)
"THE clouds are bunched roses,
And the bunches seem
As thicks as cream,
The country dozes, and I dream."

(The Songs by Miss Sitwell)

Mrs. Plath was a disillusionist like T. S. Eliot. The exposition of queen in Shakespeare's drama Antony and Cleopatra

'Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale/Her infinite variety'—is the proper characterization of the feminine quality of love. In delineation of this aspect Mrs. Plath exposed her passionate and restless soul confined to her study circle. Miss Sitwell was immeasurably wider in her range, full of emotional power and dedicated spiritual labour.

"It is a heart
This holocaust I walk in,
O golden child the world will kill and eat."

(Mary's son by Mrs. Plath)

* * * * *

**** Remember only this our hopeless love
That never till Time is done
Will the fire of the heart and the fire of
the mind be one."

(Heart and Mind by Miss Sitwell)

Beside Mrs. Plath another poet established her name in English literature in the first half of the twentieth century. She was STEVIE SMITH. She was popular for her tenderness and humour. The spirit of the poetry of Stevie Smith was in tune with the time. But Sylvia Plath wrote as if in a state of extreme ecstatic excitement. Miss Sitwell in comparison to both of them was a neo-symbolist in treatment who used different symbols for different passions. She did not divorce literature from modern life, but tried to attach a social meaning for every problem of life.
The war poets of the twentieth century had different emotional origins, different inspirations and motives. They were stirred deeply by feelings and imaginations of warfare. They voiced that war is terribly destructive of human life and property. Most of the war poets of the First World War voiced against war. A few others considered war as a socializing, individualizing and rationalizing agency. Some of the war poets of the Second World War were touched by Freudism, Communism and Surrealism. They composed poems in praise of war. Dame Edith Sitwell was an exception to them. The war poets who were trench poets had seen as soldiers how war gave birth to economic exploitation, starvation and consequent demoralization. War reacted upon the conquering nations. Their pride and arrogance made them ease-loving, luxurious and effeminate. War demoralized both the conquering and the conquered nations. War brought in hatred and ill-will, rivalry and jealousy among individuals, among nations. The two world wars produced the following famous war poets beside many others.

**Poets of the First World War**

Rupert Brooke (1887-1915)  
Julian Grenfell (1888-1915)  
Charles Sorley (1892-1915)  
Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967)  
Isaac Rosenberg (1890-1918)  
Robert Nichols (1893-1944)  
Wilfred Owen (1893-1918)  
Robert Graves (b. 1895)  
Edmund Blunden (1896-1974)

**Poets of the Second World War**

Keith Douglas (1920-1944)  
Alun Lewis (1915-1944)  
Sidney Keyes (1922-1943)  
EDITH SITWELL (1887-1964)

Rupert Brooke was a poet of the youth; his poems were flamed) with youth — 'flame' was a favourite word for him. Julian Grenfell's
poem *Into Battle* published in the 'Poems of To-day' (1922) was written on the heroic aspect of war. Charles Hamilton Sorley did not compose poems to praise the patriotic enthusiasms. Sorley had a deep love for the German people. Absence of patriotism is a special feature of his war poems. He began to write poetry when there was a general reaction against the Decadents and the Aesthetics. Siegfried Lorraine Sassoon expressed agony and ignominy of war and death in poems *The Old Huntsmen and Other Poems* (1917). His passionate longing was 'O Jesus, make it stop'. Isaac Rosenberg believed that 'a poet should have a spirit above wars.' Robert Nichols was a romantic idealist, and his poetry (e.g. *Farewell*) "was essentially a recreation of the catastrophic events, without the force and power of a tragic vision." 78 Wilfred Owen's war poems exposed the folly and futility of warfare. Robert Von Ranke Graves never failed to convey the horrors of the battlefield and Edmund Charles Blunden was aware of the sickening horror and tedium of war.

**VI**

SIEGFRIED SASSOON (1886-1967) was one of the war poets who had experiences of both the world wars. As a war poet Sassoon had painted like Miss Sitwell the horrors of modern warfare.

"Elbow or shoulder, hip or knee,
Two arms, two legs, though all were lost,
They'd be restored him free of cost.
Then a Girl Guide looked to say,
'Will Captain Croesus come this way?'

(Arms and the Man by Sassoon)

In between 1918 and 1920 Sassoon had written in deep imaginative perception the most sophisticated and profound strangeness of the human beings in formulation of the ultimate goals of life.
"I see in the chapel, where you bend before
The enshrouded calm of everlasting Motherhood
That wound your life; I see you humbled to adore
The painted miracle you've never understood."

(To a Childless Woman (1919) by Sassoon)

The Mother (or The Hambone and the Heart) (1915) of Miss Sitwell
and this poem of Sassoon are the astringent medicines for the mind
in healing the sleeping-sickness.

The function of the poets as Sassoon observed has been nicely
presented by Dr. Felicitas Corrigan:

"The poets themselves admit that in their
best lines they discover meanings and metaphors
of which they knew nothing while composing them.
Technique had been instinctive; thought had been
somehow uncensored. The brain-work was there, but
it had been fundamentally mysterious" (On Poetry)."

An inner link can be traced out between Siegfried Sassoon and
Miss Sitwell in holding the common views about the function of
the poets. Sassoon has also followed the metrical rhymes in his poems.

"Primeval days were dull. Events existed
As unexploited masses of material,
Wars, plagues, and famines functioned unassisted,
And there was no synopsis to the serial."

(Lines Written in Anticipation of a London Paper Attaining a
Guaranteed Circulation of Ten Million Daily-by Sassoon)

Wilfred Owen has given an account of Siegfried Sassoon in a
note to his mother Mrs. Susan Owen on 15 August 1917:

"I have just been reading Siegfried Sassoon, and am
feeling at a very high pitch of emotion. Nothing like
his trench life sketches has ever been written or
ever will be written. Shakespeare reads vapid after
these. Not of course because Sassoon is a great writer,
but because of the subjects, I mean. I think if I
had the choice of making friends with Tennyson or with
Sassoon I should go to Sassoon."
All this is true about Sassoon who had attempted to justify the ways of God to men, or about the universal problems of life, mind and matter with which a soldier is confronted in action.

"Good-bye, old lad! Remember me to God,
And tell Him that our Politicians swear
They won't give in till Prussian Rule's been trod
Under the Heal of England... Are you there?...
Yes... and the War won't end for at least two years;"

(To Any Dead Officer - by Sassoon)

"Poor mortal mind, when you, in me, decay —
When once delighting faculties grew dim —
Cry on the parting soul for power to say,
With passion, 'I befriended was by Him.'"

(The Messenger - by Sassoon)

"God of the dear old Mastodons's morasses
Whose love pervaded pre-diluvial mud,
Grant us the power to prove, by poison gases,
The needlessness of shedding human blood."

(Asking for it - by Sassoon)

Miss Sitwell, a sober and well-proportioned poet having a sense of justice and compassion, is no less than Captain Sassoon. In her Three Poems of the Atomic Bomb she has expressed with such passion and profound revelation the absolute antipode of the human beings in the battlefields.

"BOUND to my heart as Ixion to the wheel,
Nailed to my heart as the Thief upon the Cross,
I hang between our Christ and the gap where the world was lost
And watch the phantom Sun in Famine Street — The ghost of the heart of Man...red Cain"

(i. DIRGE for the New Sunrise)

"UNDER great yellow flags and banners of the ancient Cold
Began the huge migrations
From some primeval disaster in the heart of Man.".

(2. The Shadow of Cain)
"THE Rose upon the wall
Cries — 'I am the voice of Fire:
And in me grows
The pomegranate splendour of Death, the ruby, garnet, almandine
Dews: Christ's Wounds in me almandine shine.'

(3. The Canticle of the Rose)

Miss Sitwell's conviction of inevitability of human sufferings, the inability of the weaker generations to struggle on earth is much more Shakesperean or Tennysonian than Captain Sassoon. Miss Sitwell's position is unique in modern descriptive war poetry of a moving, speeding action as perfect as Tennyson's description of hurried action, and better than Sassoon's, who so much excelled in giving pictures of the battlefields where the unfortunate youths are slaughtered to no purpose. War brings in the measureless depths of the darkness of death. Miss Sitwell has combined the romantic art and the disastrous sudden flinging from life to death in an agreeable blend. Miss Sitwell composed the poem Jane Barston for Siegfried Sassoon.

VII

WILFRED OWEN'S poetry was a poetry of pity, and his protest and anger are drowned in the affecting pity that made his poetry. Miss Sitwell's melting pity had risen into a sort of desperate cry of condemnation of war. Both Mr. Owen and Miss Sitwell had exposed the horrors and unnaturalness in the midst of which the poor soldiers are allowed to live. In Owen's Spring Offensive (1917) there is a soul-benumbing description of one of the bitterest fights on the Western front where in an instant many soldiers "leapt to swift unseen bullets, or went up on the hot blast and fury of hell's upsurge." In a letter to Mrs. Susan Owen (mother of Wilfred Owen) (Letter No. 7) Miss Sitwell had written on 3 October 1919:

"There is nothing to say to a woman who has lost what you have lost. But oh, what reason you have to be proud. And the day will come, dear Mrs. Owen, when you will hear your boy spoken of as the greatest poet this war has produced."

81
In producing a poetry of pity Miss Sitwell was a much better poet than Owen although she has given Owen the highest place.

"The living blind and seeing dead together lie
As if in love. ... There was no more hating then,
And no more love: Gone is the heart of Man."

(Dirge for the New Sunrise by Miss Sitwell)

Owen is remembered by his readers for his prophetic, unsparing realism. Owen tears open the mockery of heroism, self-sacrifice and such other deceiving cant.

"What passing-bells for those who die as cattle
Only the monstrous anger of the guns.
Only the stuttering rifles' rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons."

(Anthem for Doomed Youth by Wilfred Owen)

Miss Sitwell recalled the clear and persistent view of Owen about war. Her poem The Shadow of Cain by itself is a noble prophetic utterance. It tells not so much of the bitterness of the Second World War as of the lessons that future generations are to learn.

"And through the works of Death,
The dust's aridity is heard the sound
Of mounting saps like monstrous bull-voices of unseen fearful mimes:
And the great rolling world-wide thunders of that drumming underground

Proclaim our Christ, and roar 'Let there be harvest!
Let there be no more poor—
For the Son of God is sowed in every furrow!"

(The Shadow of Cain by Edith Sitwell)

Owen died on 4 November 1918. His death at a time when the war was within a week of its termination and his participation in the fight added bitter poignancy to his poetry. We seem to catch
"The centuries will burn rich loads
With which we groaned,
Whose warmth shall lull their dreaming lids
While songs are crooned.
But they will not dream of us poor lads
Lost in the ground."

(Miners by Owen)

Miss Sitwell so much considered the poor soldiers' business
in the battlefield, and her personal reaction to the scene of
horror has been described in the following lines.

"To the dust's busyness
She speaks of the annihilation
Of every form of dust, burned down to Nothingness!"

(The Coat of Fire by Miss Sitwell)

Owen usually used the normal structure of English verse, but
by use of assonance and dissonance he secured "the jarring effect"
suggesting the "clangour of modern warfare!" In using assonances
or consonantal similarities in sound, making a half-rime, or
dissonances Miss Sitwell was successful in an agreeable
innovation which has been much fancied by other modern poets like
Stephen Spender, C. Day Lewis, Louis MacNeice, Philip Larkin,
Edwin Muir, Vernon Watkins. Miss Sitwell was so much impressed
that she dedicated the fourth anthology of Wheels in memory of
Wilfred Owen.

Dame Edith Sitwell's outlook about war is so pathetic and
yet so undeniably true that we caught the full import of what
she had seen and felt. In this respect she is much superior to
Owen.

"They brought the Aeon of Blindness and the Night
Of the World, crying to him, 'Lazarus, give us sight!'
0 you whose sores are of gold, who are the new Light
Of the World!"

( The Shadow of Cain )
Owen as a poet had the true instinct of using the 'rounded felicity of phrase'. "Stuttering rifles", "while songs are crooned" etc are some instances to the point. The truth of acute observation of Miss Sitwell, the intense sincerity of her feeling helped her in expressing the exact phrases without descending into trivialities or grossness of expression e.g. "The great rolling world-wide thunders of that drumming underground", "burned down to Nothingness", etc.

Both Owen and Miss Sitwell discarded ornamental decoration and used normal structure of English verse.

"Move him into the sun —
Gently its touch awoke him once,
At home, whispering of fields unsown."

{Futility by Owen)

"Huge as the great gold sun, each parasol
That hides it; fluid zephyrs now extol
Antiope's short bell-shaped pelerine
Worn lest gauze ribbons of the rain be seen."

{Elegy on Dead Fashion by Miss Sitwell

Owen was at Scarborough in the year 1917. Towards the end of December 1917 Robert Graves wrote to Owen: "For God's sake cheer up and write more optimistically — the war's not ended yet but a poet should have a spirit above wars." On 23 January 1918 Owen attended the marriage ceremony of Robert Graves at St. James Piccadilly. Such a jolly figure when died Miss Sitwell was much shocked. She included the poems of Owen viz: Strange Meeting, The Show, A Terre, The Sentry, Disabled, The Dead-Beat, and The Chances in her annual anthology WHEELS, 1919 in memory of Wilfred Owen. Such was the silent and immortal friendship between the poets, Miss Edith Sitwell and Wilfred Owen.
Edmund Blunden adopted a synthetic norm in English verse for reaching the others together in deep lyrical intensity. In feeling and emotional poignancy his poems are mistaken for Owen, in form and technique he is identified with Captain Sassoon and Rosenberg. But in philosophical exploration and making the momentary images permanent Miss Edith Sitwell is equal to Edmund Blunden. The marked difference between these two poets can be traced in Miss Sitwell's dislike for false propaganda, and in her attitude of dispelling the putrid air of suspicion among her readers; the similarity lies in producing the true works of art about their people's desires, aspirations and hopes of living in freedom and in peace. Miss Sitwell and Edmund Blunden both had seen the ravages of the two world wars. Miss Sitwell's Three Poems of the Atomic Bomb originated from the heaps of nuclear ash of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Blunden's poetry comprehends the relationship between poetry and everyday life, and the humanism of the soldiers serving in the fields. His remark that "in a sense, as the Great War unmasked its ugliness, the problem of the legion of soldier-poets was primarily one of reporting" 83 is his true poetic attitude in helping to develop the public opinion about "the evil destruction of war". 84

"To this new concept, white we stood;
  Cold certainty held our breath;
  While men in the tunnels below Larch Wood
    Were kicking men to death."

(Concert Party: Busseboom—by Blunden)

"Below that wall, in Famine Street
  There is nothing left but the heart to eat
  And the Shade of Man. ...Buyers and sellers cry
  'Speak not the name of Light —
    Her name is madness now. ..."

(The Canticle of the Rose—by Miss Sitwell)

For encompassing this type of socialist-realism in their poems both
Edmund Blunden is better known as a man, poet, critic and scholar than a soldier. He joined the University of Hong Kong in the year 1953 as a Professor of English. On the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday on 1 November 1961 Sir Osbert Sitwell sent the following message from Renishaw Hall, Nr. Sheffield:

"Edmund Blunden, as well as being a very good poet, is free from the literary vices of jealousy and sharp sayings. By appearance, disposition and achievement, he could belong to no other country except England. There is no character to whom I admire more." 85

Blunden joined the 11th Battalion, The Royal Sussex Regiment which commanded in France and Flanders in the First World War. Brigadier-General G. H. Harrison has given a fine description of Blunden in the following lines:

"Blunden, always known to me as 'The Rabbit' with his gentle ways and his unassuming manner, was not born to be a soldier but he became one in spite of himself." 86

Blunden was really a gentleman of superb intelligence and poetic gift. He took up military service purely as a profession. Killing and destruction which are the common attributes of a soldier were not the function of Blunden although he was a successful soldier.

Blunden was a pacifist. He did not reduce his poems to logical skeleton, but he infused the themes of peace and loveliness of Nature in his poem which are also the favourite themes of Miss Edith Sitwell. Voice of Autumn, Voice of Spring, A New Song, An Old Song of Blunden have the all-embracing unity of form and content of the poems of Miss Sitwell viz Spring (Bucolic Comedies), When Cold December (Façade), Green Song, A Love Song (Gardeners and
Astronomers). In literature the interaction of ideas and the inter-connection of themes between the poets have been accepted as the cognising means in the evolution of spinning poems. Blunden lived at Hong Kong and Miss Sitwell in England. Still then there was a common link of thinking process between them because they were out and out English in character.

"A gentle heart will mount enough
When the tune upsprings;
Time's self will dance in time's disproof
When true love sings."

(A New Song – by Blunden)

"All things then stood before us
as they were,
Not in comparison,
But each most rare;
The 'tree,of many,one'
The lock of hair,
The weir in the morning sun,
The hill in the darkening air,
Each in its stoleness,then and there,
Created one; that one,creation's care."

(A Short Ode – by Blunden)

"What most we love we do not well express
Or do not oftenest try to put in word;
We are content with well-known happiness,
With memories echoing rather than clear chords."

(Japan Beautiful – by Blunden)

"WHEN I was but a child,that Lion
The Sun came,shaking his gold mane;
"From strength comes sweetness;so.my Lion,
Your strong heart is my honeycomb," "

(Song – by Miss Sitwell)

"SAID the Bee to the Lion
'My life is a good prayer —'
Said the laughing Sun
'My life is the gold air.'

Said the Lion to the Bee
'My life is that of the Sun; in hot gold, I rage
through the gold air.'
But I who have known the weight of the August air
And the golden heat in the heart
Am like a bright small star in a starry sky
Bright to myself only."

( Song - by Miss Sitwell)

"The night before great Babylon
Fall like the summer rain,
Under the great grey towers of the apple trees
Voices sounded again."

(The Night before Great Babylon ... - by Miss Sitwell)

Every poet is a philosopher. He possesses a conception of life and its relationship with God and Nature. Evil is a part of the good. Evil is necessary for realization of goodness of life as a foe is necessary to the strongman to realize his strength. Blunden was optimistic in his belief of man's destiny. He was not swayed by the evils of military life. On the contrary he accepted the good that originates out of the extreme evils. His poem Japan Revived 1953 is a portrayal of his belief that Japan will survive and her past glory will be revived like a ship that has just crossed a stormy sea.

"Blessings upon this ship and all she carries,
Fair winds attend her and her brave company."

(Japan Revived 1953 - by Blunden)

The poems of Blunden and Miss Sitwell have attracted special attention of the readers for their attitude towards mankind, their ability to convey a deep meaning of the images put in their poems, and above all their artistic quality. Blunden is the noblest for dramatic intensity of his poems, but Miss Sitwell has the greatest dramatic power of probing into the realistic description of human sufferings either at war or in the every-day life. It was Blunden who had captivated his readers in describing
"Hark, Keats's nightingale at once, full-throated! Thou, Jar and Genie, dost commemorate one Who called Keats friend:"

(To a British Jar Containing Stephens' Ink—by Blunden)

Miss Sitwell has established friendly relations with her readers in putting the true dignity of man, and she has elevated them to the region free from din and bustle of warfare.

"Where Lord Tennyson in laurels wrote a gloria free, In a borealic iceberg came Victoria;"

(Hornpipe—by Miss Sitwell)

KEITH CASTELLAIN DOUGLAS as a poet and as a public man was singular in his attitude. His idea was that war can excite 'financiers and parliamentarians', but it cannot 'excite a poet or a painter'. Although Douglas was a trench poet his poems cover up the themes of 'love', 'beauty' and 'death'. He believed love is both sensuous and tragic. Love also builds up beauty.

"... mothwise my hands return to your fair cheek, as luminous as a lamp in a paper house, and touch, to teach love and learn."

(The Prisoner by Douglas)

The most impressive poems of Miss Sitwell were also love poems saturated with her sense of judgement of contemporary human behaviour. In her poems she tried to distinguish between Acmeism and Symbolism. The expressions of 'love' and 'passion' have been used to draw up this distinction.
"Immortal hungers in the veins and heart
Born from the primal Cause
That keeps the hearts and blood of men and beasts ever in motion,
The amber blood of the smooth-weeping tree
Rising toward the life-giving heat of the Sun..."

(II. Harvest by Miss Sitwell)

When Douglas was a beginner Miss Sitwell established her name as a poet. Kindness and humaneness — these are wonderful aspects of life, but it is necessary to feel something else too. Without knowledge of the 'Right' and the 'Good' 'Kindness' remains commonplace, so does 'humaneness'. A portrayal of man's courage in struggle was the business of Douglas, Miss Sitwell's was the assimilation of the ethical laws. When an action conforms to a moral rule or laws of conduct, it is said to be 'right'. An action is right, if it tends to bring about what is good. The conception of 'right' is subordinate to the conception of 'good', the good means the Highest Good which includes health, wealth, knowledge, culture, and also satisfaction of intellectual, moral and aesthetic needs. These ideas are revealed in the poems of Miss Sitwell, viz Gold Coast Customs, The Song of the Cold, The Shadow of Cain, Three Poems of the Atomic Bomb (The Canticle of the Rose edition).

The young Douglas tried to accept the ravages of Time, dance of death and war casualties. The youthful mirth is conceived through the images of spring, dance and wine. But the youthful soldier has "a passionate desire to free the imprisoned spirit from the flesh:"

"There was the urge
To break the bright flesh and emerge
Of the ambitious cruel bone."

(The Prisoner by Douglas)

Douglas composed poems out of his actual experiences in the battle-field. Like the poets of the political thirties he was not concerned with politics and social problems. He valued the social
virtues of sympathy, fellow-feeling, love and co-operation. His poems *Encounter with a God* and *Famous Ran* are the product of his home sentiment which is the basis of other social sentiments and virtues. When a desperate, unequal battle began and the Nazis managed to set up machine-guns and deliver direct fire, Douglas was much moved, and he has recorded every action in the battlefield diligently and objectively.

"How silly that soldier is pointing his gun at the woods: he doesn't know it isn't any good —"

(*Russians by Douglas*)

Sunrise can not be seen simultaneously from both sides of the earth. For some it rises, for the others it sets. For Douglas war was a universal perversion of evils and he projected this idea in simple poetic form.

"Through a machine gun's sights
I saw men curse, weep, cough, sprawl in their entrails."

Miss Sitwell was a *romantic* neo-romantic poet in the early forties and she felt war as the deadly shopping which yields no profit to either side.

X

ALUN LEWIS viewed the war impersonally and he looked at it as a menacing shadow which would eventually pass. The theme of love in most of the love poems of Lewis "often dissolved into depressing sensuality" and what is known as 'sex'. The love poems of Miss Sitwell are richly perfumed with the nectarous rill free from erotic imagery of the young soldier-poets like Lewis.

The treatment of love of these two poets when compared, Lewis showed his fondness for florid imagery and diction, but Miss Sitwell paid a glowing tribute to the theme and she was not swayed by the Sur-realist tide.
"You said "This is the time of the wild spring and the mating of the tigers,"

(Heart and Mind - by Miss Sitwell)

"Stars seemed gilded nipples
Of the Night's vast throbbing breasts,
Softly disclosing themselves at the fall of dark."

(Songs For the Night - by Alun Lewis)

The early poems of Lewis are pseudo-romantic and pretty conventional. He was a member of the University Hockey Eleven in 1932-33. In 1937 he was conferred with the M.A. Degree in Medieval History. He was awarded a Pickles Research-Studentship of the University of Manchester. He took a year's course in teacher training at Aberystwyth and then he joined a school at Pengam, Glamorgan. Thereafter he joined the military-service and served for sometime in the Arakan front of Burma border.

The poetry of Alun Lewis is enriched by a confluence of different currents, one or another of which can be seen in the poetry of his contemporaries. Lewis was enchantingly sensuous. But with Lewis "sensuousness" corresponds to 'surrealism'. There is a touch of nakedness in his best passages:

"O man and woman
In that hour of need
Fling wide the sluice
Release the seed."

(The Desperate - by Alun Lewis)

Miss Sitwell was a sensuous poet purely in the literary sense. The readers know her as a poet having a sense of immeasurable bountifulness of the natural world full of birds, beasts, trees and flowers. Herein lies her poetic talent. Lewis was a poet of the senses, he paid tributes at the alter of sex, but to Miss Sitwell, the mother earth gave her store to fill her poems with wonderfully
Picturesque details which are perfect specimen of verbal felicity in English literature.

"And bright as a seedsman's packet
With zinnias, candytufts chill,
Is Mrs. Marigold's jacket
As she gapes at the inn door still,"

( Polka - by Miss Sitwell )

Lewis was a poet of pity like Wilfred Owen and Miss Sitwell. His lyrical cry and his feelings of separation from family are full of the grandeur of accessories than skill of contrivance.

"I have left
The lovely bodies of the boy and girl
Deep in each other's placid arms
And I have left
The beautiful lanes of sleep
That barefoot lovers follow to this last
Cold shore of thought that I guard."

(The soldier - by Lewis)

The latter poems of Alun Lewis contain the tenets of the Indian thoughts of four values of life — righteousness, material welfare, emotional satisfaction and final emancipation. In this respect Lewis balanced with Miss Sitwell, viz her poems of The Bee Oracles.

"Nandi, bull of holiness,
Ganapathi, elephantine force,
Siva, destroyer and sparer,
Consider this poor corpse.

Not being and then being,
— Cowdung fire, bed of earth, —
How shall the peasant fare between
One birth and another birth."

(Village Funeral : Maharestra - by Lewis)
SIDNEY ARTHUR KILWORTH KEYS viewed war as an obsession with pain, fear, and death. Sidney Keys in his childhood roamed in the world of myths, fables, and heroes. In his Oxford years, he fell in love with a German girl, Miloin Cosmann, but the love affair was "both unhappy and unsatisfying." Being frustrated in love, he left Oxford and joined the army. The critic Mr. A. Banerjee observed that "Feelings of pain, separation, suffering and fear presented themselves to him in their stark reality, and as a poet, he sought to deal with them in their own terms." 87

This reminds us of Miss Sitwell's witty remark, "poets should not marry." Her love for Alvaro de Guevara and Pavel Tchelitchew also ended in frustration. A funny similarity between the two poets.

Favourite themes of Keys were human sufferings, crime and death. Elegiac notes in his poems brought him very near to Thomas Gray (1716-71). The poems of Keys were an intermixture of knowledge and experience. As a trench poet, Keys has given acquaintances and links with men of letters and artists living at home and the soldiers fighting at the battlefields. Elegy of Keys was intellectual in tone, but the elegy of Miss Sitwell was emotionally tuned. Her nursery rhymes, humorous verses were a transition between personal dissatisfaction in love and life. Keys was resourceful in his presentation of what actually happens in the battlefield. Miss Sitwell was disappointed at the modern warfare, especially at the mass destruction of the Second World War.

"The uniform of pain with pain put on is straiter Than any lover's garment; yet the death Of these is different, and their glory greater."

(The Foreign Gate - by Sidney Keys)
"Flesh is fire, frost and fire:
Flesh is fire in this wilderness of fire
Which is our dwelling."

(The Wilderness — by Sidney Keys)

"... In the evenings bringing home the workers,
Bringing the wanderer home and the dead child,"

(A Old Woman — I by Miss Sitwell)

"The tongue is on fire, all tastes on fire, the mind
Is red as noon upon the Judgement Day!
The tears are rolling, falling worlds of fire!
With what are these on fire? With passion, hate,
Infatuation, and old age, and death,
With sorrow, longing, and with labouring breath,
And with despair and life are these on fire!"

(The Coat of Fire — by Miss Sitwell)

In a letter (3) Maurice Bowra (Letter No. 102) Miss Sitwell wrote on May 21, 1946:

"I do not wonder that you felt like tears when thinking of Sidney Keys, and that wicked, senseless loss."

The best poems of the trench poets who were superior military officers are satirical, condemning the utterly destructive policies of the modern warfare. But Keys accepted tragedy as a literary feature. He believed that everybody has a tragic chapter in life. So he considered it better to write poems on the theme of death. Miss Sitwell was much moved by the poem Moonlight Night on the Port of Keys which was about the soldiers and the sailors lost at the sea.

"Some were unlucky, Blown a mile to shoreward
Their crossed hands lie among the bitter marsh-grass."

(Moonlight Night on the port — by Keys)

Keys was skilful and supple in his presentation of the tragic ends of life. But Miss Sitwell has described with sonorous majesty the most terrific scourge that has afflicted the human race.
"We came again
After the long migration
To the city built before the Flood by our brother Cain."

(The Shadow of Cain - by Miss Sitwell)

Miss Sitwell was modest in her presentation of the tragic theme.
After all modesty is the real secret of femininity.

The later poems of Keys contain a sense of religious certainty
based on the Arthurian legends of the theme of redemption through
sacrifice and death. Keys was an emotional pragmatist like Tennyson,
but Miss Sitwell was a pantheist like Wordsworth. Literature is
sometimes identified with the aspects of human life and the
contemporary poets exchange their knowledge through personal
experiences of each other. As war poets Keys and Miss Sitwell voiced
against Jingoism, chauvinism and imperialism, but Keys acted upon
the brute force of the battle-fields and Miss Sitwell revolted against
the operation of brute force.

"The rock says 'Endure',
The wind says 'Pursue',
The sun says 'I will suck your bones
And afterwards bury you'."

(Death and Plowman - by Keys)

"He lay in that great Death like the gold in the husk
Of the world... and round him, like spent lightnings,
lay the Ore —
The balm for the world's sore."

(The Shadow of Cain - by Miss Sitwell)

Both the poets, Keys and Miss Sitwell, were the worshippers of the art
of synaesthesia. In this art Keys was an intellectual aspirant. He
wanted to say something more in his poems in the sense of propaganda.
'I will suck your bones...', the Second World War sucked the nectar
of humanity and left the rind for the posterior generation to play
ping pong with it. Miss Sitwell was endowed with special divinity.
Her synaesthesia is a healing balm of sadness for the children as well as the adults, "the balm for the world's sore" (The Shadow of Cain). Keys was a neo-romantic poet who fought against Fascism and the warmongers. In ideological concept he was in the line with Owen and Captain Sassoon. Miss Sitwell fiercely expressed the brutalities of warfare like Keys, but she dealt with the themes of righteousness and wrongness more objectively and comprehensively.

The art of synaesthesia helps in thinking of the contradictory ideas such as the relation between the limited and the Unlimited, the bound and the Unbound. The charm of this art depends upon the charm of the mind that perceives and records the perception of the highest good. It is accompanied by happiness which is an index of perfection. Lewis and Keys took up this art for a series of sensations, ideas and feelings. They believed that this art produces the friction of the brain-cells that helps in writing poetry.

Miss Sitwell was a poet, not a philosopher, a social reformer either. With her poems is associated the talent of the gifted poet, the eloquence and cleverness of her speech, skilled wit of expressing the heart, tactful ingenuity and personality of a self-determined woman. Miss Sitwell lifted herself above the narrow individuality and she identified herself with the social order viz. the family, the community, the nation, their interests and the idea of humanity. All these imply social service and universal love, love for the mankind. Keys was a soldier. A soldier's business is not searching out the basis of morality. He took up this art as an aid to express his sensual pleasure. Miss Sitwell's art of synaesthesia contributed to the progress of humanity, helped her in acquiring harmony of sensibility, with reason, and brought in the total happiness of the mind that helped her in realization of the Beautiful. It was to her an index of personality, an approach to morality in this vast world where she was alone.

"And say, 'What is that sound? I am alone... Is it my great sunrise?" 
( O yet forgive )