VIII. CONCLUSION
The poetical works of Dame Edith Sitwell can be divided into the following groups:

i) Criticism of contemporary English society (Books mentioned in Section-I);

ii) Childhood memoirs of the poet herself (Books mentioned in Section-II);

iii) War thoughts originated from the two World Wars and the Korean War (Books mentioned in Section-II and Section-III);

and

iv) Philosophical thoughts derived from the Indian Upanishadas (Books mentioned in Section-III and Section-IV).

She projected these ideas in different books of verse, but the beauty has been marred by dreadful repetition of thoughts and imageries. This affects the continuous flow of thinking process of the readers. The rose plants have their thorns, the moon looks nice for its stain, the precious diamonds look beautiful for the impurities within. Edith Sitwell's works have the bright gems of repetitions. This reminds Benjamin Franklin's (1706-1790) witty remark, "Honey is sweet, but the bee has a sting." Her achievement as a poet is noteworthy, she was famous for her openmindedness and humility. Her whole personality worked as a powerful current, it awakened her dormant divine love. As the magnetic forces attract the small iron pieces towards the magnet so her poems which are the examples of her marvellous purity of mind and utter egolessness attract the readers of all ages to her. The little E's firm conviction that she would be "a genius" proved true.
More complex questions have necessarily arisen. Poems of Dame Edith Sitwell were mere outpourings of an accomplished heart or these were the exposition of genuine artistry, and as a poet how far she was modern. A brief analysis of the doctrine of a poet on this context will be helpful in proper understanding and judgement.

The doctrine of a poet is divided into (i) the doctrine of Flimesis, and (ii) the doctrine of Catharsis. The doctrine of Flimesis refers to the doctrine of imitation. Plato condemned poetry because it was imitative in character. Aristotle defended the imitative character in poetry. The word 'real' is used in Plato always in the sense of ideal. For the Platonists the idea of the ideal is God Himself. All the ideas are blended together with the idea of God. Poetry is poesis, poetry includes tragedy, comedy, music, etc. According to Plato literature encourages disintegration of personality.

Plato (427-347 B.C.) was the disciple of Socrates (463-399 B.C.) and the teacher of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). Aristotle's Poetics is a charge against Plato. Aristotle says that the artists make use of some verbal medium and the medium chosen decides what it is, a tragedy, a comedy. And poetry includes both tragedy and comedy. It is decided not by subject matter or idea imitated as Plato says but by the medium which it chooses. In Aristotle's analysis subject matter is almost ignored, the technique is imitated and from that, pleasure comes. Pleasure again in Aristotle is non-emotional and it is primarily intellectual. Poetry gives non-emotional pleasure. It is defence against Plato's condemnation of poetry as mere passion and emotion. The literary artist is interested in how to imitate, but not in what to imitate.

The Christian literature is indebted to Cicero and Seneca. They say, divine order is not independent. It becomes the part of a moral consciousness of man. They discarded Plato's view that poetry festers passion and emotion, epic encourages the baser instincts and runs against reason.
Intellectual art is divided into:

1. Poetry  
2. Tragedy  
3. Comedy  
4. Painting  
5. Dancing  
6. Sculpture

The first three make use of the medium of sound and the last three of colour. The medium of sound moves in the dimension of time. The medium of colour moves in the dimension of space. The idea of time believes in successiveness. With 'Time' is associated the idea of passion, with 'Space' is associated the idea of intellect, the idea of understanding. Manners and humours are spatial developments. Passion forms literature. For Aristotle poetry is primarily structural linked up with dimension; comedy is intellect linked up with space, tragedy is emotional linked up with time. Aristotle says that tragedy is primarily temporal and its appeal is to passion, successiveness is not associated with comedy and manners are not successive. They are social or spatial. Comedy believes in spatial evolution and tragedy in temporal evolution. Poetry is therefore both spatial and temporal evolution.

Dame Edith Sitwell holds that Shelley tried to answer what is poetry in writing The Defence of Poetry. Plato, Sidney and Shelley are partially true, and partially wrong in assessing the 'truth' in poetry. In Poetry and Criticism what Dame Sitwell has told of Milton and Coleridge is true to her idea about poetry and the poets. Poets are beset by three parrot-cries:

i) the cry of "free verse";
ii) the cry of "all technique and no great moral message"; and
iii) the last, "poetry is meant to give pleasure".

In assessing poetry she stands between Aristotelian doctrine and the Christian faith. Life follows its course irrespective of the wishes of the mankind, and its movement from the bound to the Unbound is irresistible. Idea about inseparability of truth and
faith rotates round life. Life pulsates with pleasure and pain.
So life eternally longs for realization of the Beautiful. But beauty is not always identified with goodness. The beautiful does not necessarily invoke the right. Vulgar songs, indecent dances, obscene pictures, immoral dramas may be beautiful, but these are not morally justifiable. Poetry devoid of the moral sense, rhythm and aesthetic sentiment is like a wild horse. A poet should deserve first of all and then desire to compose poetry. Poetry is both imitative and selective. Poetry should imitate the moral sense and bring in the aesthetic ideals.

Art \[\rightarrow\] Life \[\rightarrow\] Ideality \[\rightarrow\] the Absolute

The Mother and Other Poems sought to connect poetry with general well-being, or the greatest happiness of the greater number of people. Poetic justice necessarily imply poetic value. Both are objective. Beauty and ugliness exist in external objects. Actions of persons, right or wrong, are the products of their voluntary actions. Façade, The Bucolic Comedies and The Sleeping Beauty connect moral evaluation with particular kinds of beauty and taste and take away from their objectivity the intrinsic worth for welfare of the poetic good.

Again, every age must have its own way of expressing ideas. Standing on the brink of the abyss of nothingness, or at the cross road of the frustrated seventies and the beginning of the eighties the literary artists are peeping at the dawn of the coming age, the twenty-first century. A day begins with (i) the dawn, and (ii) the moment before sunrise. A period of last twenty years is the preparatory period for turning of a century. If 1990 is considered the beginning of the moment for the great sunrise of the year 2000, then 1980 is the early dawn for turning of the twentieth century. Life will ever remain the same as it was, it remains as it is, following its own natural laws. Education moulds and culture bears the tradition. The poet herself has illustrated what is poetry in Edith Sitwellian process of thinking.
"I am Fire. See, I am the bright gold
That shines like a flaming fire in the night — the gold-trained planet,
The laughing heat of the Sun that was born from darkness —
Returning to darkness — I am fecundity, harvest."

(II. Harvest, lines 57 - 60)

One of the many features of her poetry is realization of the illumined joy. The foremost Neo-Platonic Philosopher-mystic, Plotinus, an Egyptian, established a bridge between the Orient and the Occident. He was non-Christian in faith, but he influenced Christian mysticism and English poetry profoundly. Dame Edith Sitwell accepted the oriental belief that poetry is vision, illumination. It is a process, a journey of the self, a reach towards the contact, a repose, a meditation of what lies in the holies. Rhythm, assonances, dissonances put in poetry bring forth joy. So poetry is a wholesome ideal illuminating the minds, inspiring the hearts, moulding the lives of the good, worthy and intelligent people. A poet is like 'a flaming fire in the night', a physical proximity, 'the laughing heat of the Sun that was born from darkness', and a poetry is the harvest.

Human actions are two-fold, (i) voluntary, and (ii) non-voluntary. A voluntary action has three stages, (a) the mental stage, (b) the bodily stage, (c) the external stage of consequences. Desire, Wish and Will belong to the mental stage; muscular actions belong to the bodily stage; the bodily action produces consequences. All these are moulded and remoulded by the circumstances in which the poets, the literary artists, the connoisseurs live. A poet is an appreciator, he sees beyond the limit, a poetry is fulfilment of his ambition, and the poetic justice is the poet's appeal to the popular sentiment. The Elegy on Dead Fashion, Gold Coast Customs, The Pleasures of Poetry, Street Songs, Green Song and Other Poems Dame Edith Sitwell projected these ideas about poetry.
The Bee Oracles (I. The Bee-Keeper and II. A Sleepy Tune) are the essence of her life, actions as well as her teachings. She drew attention of all to the undeniable evidence of the supreme bliss in the human beings and presented it in hints to the mankind seeking after money and power (viz The Song of the Cold, The Shadow of Cain, Poor Man's Music). She was an outcast for her poetic faith which she sang in her music and in ceremonies of life (The Outcast and Music and Ceremonies).

Next comes the question of the poetic tradition she maintained in her life. She, in fact, emerged as the composite ideal of various human aspirations, the fulfilment of the quest for perfection of various hearts and minds. She shared Shakespeare's study of passions and emotions of the human hearts in situation and circumstances through which men and women pass in their lives. She studied Nature like Milton and Wordsworth, like Gray she was a poet of transition between classicism and romanticism. She maintained airy grace and a sustained lightness of touch of Pope, the dreamy grace of Coleridge's supernaturalism as well as the visionary idealism of Shelley, sensuousness and concreteness of Keats, (viz, Tattered Serenade: Beggar to Shadow), the Victorian attitude of Tennyson, the dramatic lyricism of Byron. Like Marlow's Dr. Faustus (1592) she made a good beginning and ending of some poems (viz Still Falls the Rain, Harvest, One Day in Spring), Elizabethan and Keatsian echoes prevailed in The Soldier's Song (The Sleeping Beauty, Canto 10). But she essentially maintained Keatsian love of the beautiful, his romantic attitude to Nature and rhythmical craftsmanship. She however referred the poet Tennyson in poems Hornpipe, and Sir Beelzebub to attach deeper value to the poems. John Keats liked much the Elizabethan poetry. He is famous for his Elizabethan-aestheticism, sensuousness, pictorial quality and the art of synaesthesia.
Dame Edith Sitwell mingled all these Keatsian qualities in thought and expression. The lyrical gift of Swinburne and his blank verse couched in idiomatic phrases also attracted her attention.

"The shepherds hairy-rough as satyrs come, 
Bring up their fleeces that are waterfull 
With freshness clear as precious gums of trees 
Where weep the incense-trees from some deep smart. 
So the fresh water from your fleece flows in 
To fill with richness all my desert heart."

(Daphne)

She was a poet of 'humanism' and the inner stream of most of her poems carries 'the pig-snouted breeze' of her synaesthesia as well as this idea of 'humanism'. The latter modern poets Louis MacNeice (b.1907), Stephen Spender (b.1909), Roy Fuller (b.1912) and Dylan Thomas (1914–1953) were much impressed by this characteristic appeal of humanism and portrayed it in their poems. Louis MacNeice followed the rhythmic patterns in poetry and he practically refused to respond to feminism of modern poetry of his time. Stephen Spender and Roy Fuller belonged to a left-wing group and they wrote on Edith Sitwellian process of spinning 'humanism' in poetry (e.g. The Backward Son (1940) of Stephen Spender and Autumn 1942 of Roy Fuller). The dedication of the poem Harvest-II to Stephen Spender and the poem Elegy for Dylan Thomas itself indicate the literary influence of Dame Sitwell on them.

The idea of 'modernism' in poetry changes with the change of time. But the man-woman relation remains always the dominant factor in understanding the concept of 'modernism'. In the mid-twenties when Miss Sitwell began to compose poetry 'modernism' was then a movement for the emancipation of the women. In the late thirties 'modernism' was identified with Surrealism and Marxism. In the post-war fifties 'modernism' stood for the general promiscuity in the society. In the sixties when Dame Sitwell passed away 'modernism' was considered a cry for feminism. From the twenties to the late
fifties most of the modern poets composed poems generally on (a) Marxism, (b) socialism, and (c) feminism. In the post-Victorian period the poets and the novelists entertained realism, art, chivalry and compassion to develop. In the mid-twentieth century religion and morality lost their fervour and the literary artists voiced on the contemporary feminist platform about the women's role in society. They believed in 'free verse' and relieved poetry from the fetters of poetical metre and rhyme.

(Dame Edith) Sitwell took up 'modernism' differently. The womanliness of woman was not her subject matter. She believed poems should have (i) rhythmic patterns, (ii) poetry is a criticism of contemporary society, (iii) poetry should voice the moral order, and (iv) it should ultimately lead towards the Absolute. Poetry is not sculpture or painting. For realizing the art of sculpture or painting the connoisseurs look to it silently, patiently. This is an act of sight and relates to the eyes. But poetry is melodious sounding, it relates to the ears.

Her poetic conviction was a perfect blend of the eastern thought and the western culture. In that sense far from being 'modern' she could not even cross the gate to peep in modernism. As a poet she remained within the relativistic space-time continuum of the age of George Eliot (1819-80), Lord Tennyson (1809-92), Robert Browning (1812-89), George Meredith (1828-1909) and John Ruskin (1819-1900) not because the atmosphere was peculiar to her occasion alone, but her innovations of technique were a new approach to respond to the issues of her day. The poem Gold Coast Customs is masculine in character and it carries the truth that the material power enjoyed by the uncultured uneducated people lead to the most fearful evils.

Modern science has a profound influence on the world affairs and has necessitated a radical revision of many of our basic concepts of literature such as 'mysticism', 'rationalism', etc. By 'mysticism' is meant the religious philosophies. And religion creates a complete
spiritual family outside the system of generation. Communist culture does not believe in religious precepts, its appeal is biological and desocializes the inherent perfection for attainment of unity with all people, cultured and uncultured, educated and uneducated, savages and saints all together. Modernism is not only a major thrust to the existing religious culture but a protest against the established community rooted in joint-family system. Modern poets' appeal to these communist concepts is instant and immediate. Dame Sitwell on the other hand voiced for resocialization of the community and tried for establishing the pantheistic union. Modern poetry to her is a bridge passage showing the eternal light of past civilization to the mass movement without collective terror and totalitarian bondage. Modernism is not corrosive authoritization but obedience to the coherent norms of conduct. The war poems of Dame Sitwell are the highest forms of rhetoric inseparably linked with 'morality', 'rationality' and 'perfectionism'. These war poems prove the truth that 'modernism' does not mean anarchistic personalism.

"And everywhere
. The great voice of the Sun in sap and bud
Fed from the heart of Being, the panic Power,
The sacred Fury, shouts of Eternity
To the blind eyes, the heat in the winged seed, the fire
in the blood."

(The Shadow of Cain)

In Christian spirituality there are two definitions of prayer:

i) 'Prayer is a conversation with God',

ii) 'Prayer is the raising of the soul to God'.

The first meeting of the soul with God is a harmonic realization, the fulfilment of a spiritual aspiration. In the world order there is perfect harmony, a system, a "Novum Organum" in the language of Francis Bacon. An alter idem to it can never be seen. Like the world order the spiritual order also presupposes spiritual discipline. Attempting higher degrees of concentration without fulfilling the
primary conditions will be the cause of failure in spiritual life. The latter poems of Dame Sitwell are filled with spiritual wisdom to overcome the obstacles. Physical strength of the body comes from food, knowledge is derived from the mental universe, so divine power comes from the God. Prayer gives a sense of security to soul, clears the way for the inflow of spiritual power. Dame Sitwell’s latter poems, especially _The Bee-Oracles_, are based on prayer. The Indian Upanisadas do not thrust prayer upon anybody, not at all upon those who do not feel the need for it. Dame Sitwell’s poems of old age are filled with sweetness of the Indian Upanisadas. The readers of modern poetry may not feel the need of such sweetness in poetry. But she cried out for want of knowledge of the upanisadas in her early youth. The _Song_ dedicated to Alberto de Lacerda, a poem of Part VII of _Collected Poems_ (1957), is an indication of this.

"And now I sit under the bright apple-tree
And weep that ever the speech was spoken
That the false angel said unto me.
For had I never the apple-branch broken,
Death had not fallen on mankind and me."

(13. Song)

The doctrine of suffering runs parallel to peaceability, passivity. The poet has concentrated her mind on the thoughts about the future of the mankind and the duty of the human beings on the context of the doctrine of suffering. The poet listened to the other modern poets patiently, seriously who wrote on liberalism, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, etc. But she could not forget that Christianity is the beneficiary in all human activities. She did not forget the suffering of Jesus Christ for the ultimate good of the human beings. In _The Outcast_ (1962) she composed a poem on 'A saying of St. Agnes' _His Blood Colours My Cheek_. This is an exhortation to the human beings that whose happiness is within, who rejoices within and is illumined within he actually attains the supreme bliss of Jesus Christ. Suffering makes a man perfect. The sufferings of humanity.
are for the forgetfulness of the moral order. The highest welfare work of the poets is to revive this consciousness among the human beings.

Human beings are always discontented, their unhappiness is due to their greatness. Time was when people lived simpler lives, their needs were few and easily supplied. Now life is complex, needs are many. Our intellectual development is great. So we have wider opportunities for vices with the aid of science and commerce. The poet inspired by humanitarianism tried to pave the way for world-harmony and universal brotherhood, and denounced imperialism, capitalism, militarism and fascism and tried to attain the perfection of life.

Dame Sitwell's new approach to humanism, her deep spontaneous feelings have been put in the new free verse. By 'free verse' she meant the poem (i) free from the metrical prosodies, (ii) the lines may be of different length without any definite pattern and indifferent to syllabic construction, (iii) but there should be rhythm in the grammatical unity, and (iv) the rhythm in the grammatical unity, and (iv) the rhythmic sense-units and accentual verbal units should bring in rhythmic import. Actually the lines of modern free verse are not too long, but Dame Sitwell did not accept this. Her lines are at times too long.

"For does not the dust of the common world hold the dark seed
Of a humble plant that grows
Beyond its morning wisdom — changed, one side, to gold,
And, on one side, to beast —
From which grows Pithecanthropus Erectus. What is man
But a hybrid between beast and plant and God?"

(A Song of the Dust)

The modern poets argue that the new verse should be absolutely free from the rhyme, or if it appears at all it must not be of any regular pattern, and some lines should be left blank. Herein lies the difference of Dame Sitwell with the other modern poets.
She believed that poetry cannot survive without rhythm. 

Prufrock, 1917 of T.S. Eliot written in the pattern of Jacobean blank verse, Snake of Lawrence written in iambic decasyllable pattern are examples of verse libra i.e. 'verse which is born free'. But Dame Sitwell's free verse is a blend of blank verse and rhythm. She started with a conventional pattern (viz Serenade) and ended in one which cannot be assigned to any recognised metrical scheme (viz Music and Ceremonies). Leaving value judgements her poems are considered like the rivulets passing through the hills with light melodious tune whose coiling streams are mostly short but sometimes long like big water-falls. Leaving the conventional metrical scheme of a newly wedded bride she wanted to put in poetry 'strongness', 'vigour', 'piercing strangeness' of a heroic woman living and moving in a rustic environment. She wanted to transplant flower plants in the earth taking them from the beautifully decorated pots, wanted to break the strict discipline of accomplished aristocracy to enjoy the unrestrained dance of the rustics.

It is difficult to define poetic art but the root of it is honest presentation. It is a hobby, and whose poetic-hobby comes from within he can paint, or play on musical instruments, or compose poetry, or write dramas. Poetic art is not anybody's inherited capital, it is Providence-made unregulated regulation, it does not surrender to the artist in any established way, or any beaten track. It moves in its own way, it guides the artist in its own method. In the field of poetic creation there is no place of falseness.

A literary artist presents what he thinks, a poet composes what he feels. Creation means study, cultivation and constant application. Creation is presentation. Dame Sitwell presented in poems what she had seen, or felt in mind. The circumstances that encircled her, the facts that happened, the green vegetation, the animal kingdom, the stars and planets, all these and the poet herself were relative together.
It was her divine consciousness, a kind of self-consciousness, higher than anything which can conceive the need to create and compose poems as a flower plant brings forth flowers.

The mind of Dame Sitwell was like the mind of one who has left home for discovering the nature of the ideals of the human beings. That untold desire of the ascetic mind vibrates in the wings of her poesy that took seat in the unrestrained clouds and moved place to place bringing numerous feelings to the different persons. She was primarily a poet of the youth. She opened a new chapter of the literary history and began a particular literary movement for restoring rhythm to poetry and decorating verse with the art of synaesthesia. This literary movement is similar to the marching of the modern youth, or sprouting of the green vegetative world. In this literary movement her higher point of consciousness was realization of the impersonal ideals e.g. truth, beauty and good, the social ideals e.g. the association between man and man, man and woman, friendship, love and brotherhood, as well as the spiritual ideal e.g. the realization of the Holy.

As a poet Dame Sitwell has been revealed in two ways. Firstly, as a great poet of the youth. Secondly, as a universal artist who survives beyond the age. In searching out the spirit of the early and mid-twentieth century revealed in her poems the readers may not find the poet's "tapestry empyrean" of unrestrained emotion, but they would feel her terrible sense of worry for the future mankind unless they leave off mutual distrust, hatred and jealousy (cf. The Shadow of Cain). Dame Sitwell was also a moral thinker. She accepted that the human life is a combination of the soul's sublimity and the heart's ordinary affection. Passion and sentimentalism rule the human beings and it is our duty to fight them off. Life does not end on this earth, it is continued beyond the grave. Life "Is the great logic of the winter, the geometry of Death;" (The Road to Thebes : Beside the Yellow Foam that Sings of Lydian Airs).
She is living in her lively poems and the ageless vitality of her poems would bring her in the same line of the great poets like Shelley, Keats, Tennyson and Swinburne.

The commentators may find out other subjects in the poems of Dame Edith Sitwell but a careful and comprehensive study would establish that she was a poet of the youth and the suffering multitude. There are many other modern poets whose subject matter is the common people, but Dame Sitwell's respect for the humanity stands high above all. She presented all of her ideals in lovely poems and songs. After the Victorian age the poets gradually lost their prophetic character. Dame Sitwell revived it to a great extent and poetry in her lap nursed a greater dawn.

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At the beginning of the eighties the necessity of the poems of Dame Edith Sitwell has been felt by the readers most keenly. Peace and joy of her enlightenment became a legacy for all mankind. She was true to her poetic mission throughout the whole of her life and she did all that can be done for 'revivification of rhythmic patterns' in poetry, for protection of Christianity and the oppressed people as well as the good and the righteous persons. She established a bridge between the Indian Upanishadas and the English poetry quite different from Yeats-Eliot tradition.