

Through four stanzas- each contributing to the gradual build-up of the central theme of the poem- Edith Sitwell skillfully conveys the distinct difference between love and lust. Metaphorically, the poet depicts the two very contrasting emotions through an implicit message induced within symbolism of natural entities. As the title implies, Sitwell also emphasizes on the two sources of the two human emotions of love and lust, the 'Heart and Mind' respectively. Like most of her poems, Sitwell uses the technique of dichotomy to set a foundation for the poem's theme of physical and emotional love.

This poem comprises an inconsistent rhyme scheme and structure. Examples of literary devices such as rhetoric can be seen throughout the poem. Personification is used to provide the various essence of nature seen in the poem- the 'Lion', the 'Skeleton' and the 'Sun'- with human-like characteristics (talking and feeling). The first two and the very last stanza of the poem possess a similarity in the tone of the language used: the word 'Said' at the beginning of each stanza creates an impression of a narrative being directed to the readers.

The poem commences with a vivid picture of a Lion talking to his Lioness about inevitable death; he is calculating the consequences he might face as soon as his lover is one with the 'dust' (The word 'dust' denotes a living being's perishable, mortal life-span). The Lion grumbles about how her radiating persona and beauty- compared to the 'raging fire like the heat of the Sun'- would be 'no more' in existence. The readers capture a glimpse of the Lion's narcissistic side: clearly, he is not emotionally moved by the thought that his beloved would cease to exist, all he worries about is losing his Lioness's beauty and fulfilling his pleasure. The next line within parenthesis confirms the truth about the Lion's true intentions- '(No liking but all lust)' suggests what the lion truly loved the Lioness for and portrays an example of physical love driven by the Mind. The lion admired the lioness for her 'flowering' beauty but, never for who she was within.

'We shall mate no more' also provides evidence of the Lion's desires. We can assume that the thoughts of his 'Mind' solely cater to the development of lust; he lacks the unconditional love from the Heart. 'Till the fire of the sun the heart and the moon-cold bone are one.' -this sentence brings in the elements of time and paradox into the poem. The lion expresses how he and his lioness will not be able to 'mate' ever again for a long eternity after she dies. The mentioned 'fire of the sun' and the cold 'moon' signify a paradoxical allusion and metaphor to how two things can never be compatible or be complementary to one another- the sun and the moon can never be 'one' even after eons later. Another interpretation: the Lion's statement is a subtle indication to how warm, tender love from one's heart can never be the same as one's raw, cold lust- these contrasting emotions cannot be 'one'. Through the Lion's persona, Sitwell portrays men who lack intellectual and emotional understanding of love: they are shallow and self-centered - they do not find the time to admire their lover's inner beauty.

The next stanza shows the true meaning and effect of love from the 'Heart': when two people love each other with all their heart, even death can't bring them apart as the bond itself 'is greater than all gold' or is 'more powerful'. 'Said the Skeleton lying upon the sands of Time'- this line introduces a perspective different from the Lion's monologue (this stanza focuses on love from the Heart). 'The fire of that sun the heart...are one' from the first stanza denotes that the 'Heart' and 'Mind' can never be alike. The 'Skeleton' adds-on to this by stating, 'mourning heat of the Sun/ Is greater than all gold...' The warm feeling of love exceeds the value of all precious metal and riches. This emotion is superior to what the tawny lion experiences when the 'fire' kindled by his lust 'consumes' him- all by itself, this fire of lust will eventually burn out and is not forever to stay; it doesn't 'grow' further after an extent. However, the