

PREFACE

This is an attempt to see how 'centre' and 'circumference' have always remained as both topos and trope in Stephen Spender's poetry. The two phrases had special fascination for him, as he has been made clear in the introductory chapter(ch-i). Whatever his subjects –love, war, politics, poet's responsibilities –Spender seems to have been more a poet in crisis than a poet of crisis. It becomes clear that the 'crisis' is due to his navigating between a still centre and its circumference.

Like Eliot, Spender was both a critic and poet. The interface between the two identities has been highlighted in chapter ii. Chapter iii-chapter-vi deal with different phases of Spender's poetic career from the angle indicated in title of the thesis itself. I humbly claim that not much –not even an article or a paper-has been written on his last book of poems titled *Dolphins*. But I have tried to do justice (as best I could) to the work which Spender published just a year before his death in 1995.

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