The publication of a slender volume of verses, on the avowedly English model, entitled 'Kusummala', in 1887, was for Gujarati poetry an epoch-making event, historically as significant as that of Wordsworth's 'Lyrical Ballads' in 1798 in England. As the 'Lyrical Ballads' is believed to have marked the end of the neo-classical tradition and the beginning of the Romantic Revival in English poetry, the 'Kusummala' was the first deliberate and organized attempt in the latter half of the nineteenth century at introducing a new kind of Gujarati poetry, which marked the end of an old and the beginning of a new tradition. The book assumed, therefore, an extraordinary historical importance as a land-mark, inasmuch as it crystallised in a tangible and perceptible form the influence of English on the new poetic trends and tendencies in modern Gujarati poetry, which began with Dalpatram and Narmad. If it was the regular study of English poetry in the colleges that made the writing of the kind of poetry, found between the covers of 'Kusummala' possible, it was also the all-pervading influence of the English on the way of life and thought of Gujarat, which made its reception so quick and warm. The University of Bombay was established in 1857 and it was exactly after thirty years that the effect of the Western education it imparted and the poetic taste it cultivated, manifested itself in Gujarati poetry in its first substantial and concrete form through 'Kusummala'. The author was Narsinhrao Divsala.
Divatia—a poet, critic and philologist of note. Old Gujarati poetry, in Narmad's time, was gasping, but not extinct and the new one was not powerful enough to be born. Old poetic traditions were still formidable in their strength and though Narmad consciously and heroically tried to divert the course of Gujarati poetry into, what may be called, the English channel, his actual performance, besides being very impulsive and ill-organized, was not compelling enough in its artistry to achieve the results he had in view. Old poetic traditions were not altogether dead even in Narsinhrao, but what distinguishes Narsinhrao from his two immediate predecessors in the field of poetry was the singleness of his aim and the premeditated nature of his plans to break from the past and put Gujarati poetry on the modern path, by which is meant the path leading to the new realm of poetry revealed by the contact with the West through English. With Narsinhrao begins the second lap of the journey on this path. His first volume of verses was at once the cause and the result of a near-revolutionary change in the poetic taste of Gujarat. This, however, does not imply that modern Gujarati poetry had arrived at its destination with Narsinhrao, who, in fact, is just another mile-stone on its long and arduous journey through the century.

If English education and the multilateral contact with the West through English induced a new kind of Gujarati poetry, these also brought into being a new type of literary criticism. New poetry needed a new critical approach for its interpretation and different standards for its evaluation. Not infrequently, the poet of this period was also a critic and the critic not without some poetry to his credit. The two departments of creation and criticism ceased to be, as in the past, almost exclusively under the charge of two separate ministries. This

co-existence of the two faculties in a single individual helped to do away with the traditional distinction in the roles of the poet, whose business was supposed to be composing poetry, and of the critic, whose office was believed to consist in criticising and pronouncing judgments on poetry. Narsinhrao, for instance, was a poet and a critic rolled into one. Not content with merely writing poetry, he was, like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, anxious also to examine critically what constituted true poetry. Thus, in his very first volume of verse, he asked, "What is the true nature of poetry?". It is true that Narmad was also, in his own way, a critic, but even if he had asked the question, like the jesting pilot, he does not seem to have waited for the answer.

There was, of course, no question of India or Gujarat taking her first lessons in poetry or literary criticism from England or the West. India, in fact, had a rich tradition of both, though 'the unacknowledged legislators of mankind' did not generally lay down the laws for their own art, which was done for them by the learned critics and commentators. What is meant, therefore, by the birth of modern Gujarati poetry and criticism under the influence of English is that a different kind of both began to be written in Gujarat during this period of its literary history. Successive attempts at modernising Gujarati poetry aimed at giving it a form and approach of the kind obtaining in modern English poetry by weaning Gujarati poetry from its earlier preoccupation with religious themes and an impersonal representation. As England had to evolve different standards and adopt a different approach during the first quarter of the nineteenth century to evaluate and interpret its new poetry, since an old-fashioned Jeffrey condemning the new poetry of Wordsworth magisterially with a "This will never do" had become

an anachronism, this country had also to evolve new critical standards and values to do justice to the new poetry, which was fundamentally different in conception and composition from its predecessor. Since this new poetry itself was born of the contact of the West, it was but natural that the critical yardstick and eyeglass for its assessment should also come from the West, particularly, from England.

The new criticism which came into vogue in Gujarat during this period set its seal of approval on the work on Narsinhrao as the right specimen of poetry, for, somehow, it was then felt that true poetry or at least a better type of poetry could be only subjective in character. An outstanding critic, for instance, maintained that a subjective poet was superior to an objective one, presumably on the ground that what stemmed from the poet's own heart constituted more convincing and effective poetry. It is obvious that this over-emphasis on personal emotions in poetry was, as was the lyrical outburst of emotions during the English Romantic Revival in the context of the Augustan school of poetry, the outcome of a reaction against the earlier type of Gujarati poetry, which was generally impersonal in character. This reaction itself was, in large measure, prompted and encouraged by the type of English poetry and literary criticism with which the educated young writers of this period had come into contact. Both Narmad and Narsinhrao were deeply impressed by modern English poetry, particularly of the period of the Romantic Revival, which, in England, had suddenly released pent up emotions in a sharp reaction against the practice and precepts of the Augustan poets, who apparently stood in dread of their own emotions. If Narmad was the herald of this reaction and the first to lift Gujarati poetry out of its old grooves of objective representation, Narsinhrao was the first to experiment extensively with the subjective variety of poetry, where

the poet was expected, as in English lyrical poetry, to express his own emotions in his own person.

When 'Kusummala' was published, the time was ripe and the public ready for its reception. The book was hailed as 'an oasis in a desert'. Another critic, recounting his youthful days as a University student, testified to the 'wonderful impression' created by it on the young educated minds of the day and referred warmly to 'Kusummala' as revealing to Gujarati new realms of poetry, adding that if Gujarat had a Keats of its own, he would have done on reading 'Kusummala' what Keats in England did on first reading Chapman's Homer. Narsinhrao had set out, with his first publication, to acquaint the readers of Gujarat with the 'new and different' type of poetry written in England, 'not through dry criticism, but through illustrations' and his aim was 'to divert the poetic taste' of the poetry-reading public of Gujarat to that direction.

Though lyricism or the poetry of personal emotion was not something new to Gujarati poetry, the lyrical poetry of the English type, which Narsinhrao sought to introduce in Gujarati, was something essentially different from the earlier lyrical poetry in this language. Many mediaeval Gujarati poets wrote some poetry, which was both lyrical and subjective in character, but their emotions, for all their subjective origin, were generally restricted to some spiritual or religious experience. The earlier Gujarati poetry, both subjective and objective, was predominantly religious or devotional in content and sentiment. The new lyrical poetry of the English type, which Narsinhrao, and Narmad earlier, composed did not make religion its object of representation, but in keeping with the marked secular trend in the contemporary life of the country as a whole, concerned itself with secular themes and emotions. This

2. Vide, Anandshanker Dhruv: 'Sahityavichar', p.36.
lyrical vein, which was personal and secular at the same time, added a new note to Gujarati poetry. Since this was in conception, content, style and representation something essentially and practically unheard of in earlier Gujarati poetry, Narsinhrao, who presided over its inauguration, had also to improvise and illustrate its variety, to define its nature and analyse its essential elements, to evolve a new idiom and technique, in order to demonstrate its potentialities for the language and poetry of Gujarat.

In his five volumes of verses between 1887 and 1935, namely, 'Kusummala', 'Hridayveena', 'Nupoorjhanak', 'Smaransamhita' and 'Buddacharita', Narsinhrao handled a variety of subjects, forms and modes of expression. He composed narrative, descriptive and reflective lyrics and wrote a few songs, odes, dirges and a long elegy. Inspired by Wordsworth's naturalism and humanism and by Coleridge's romanticism and supernaturalism, the four salient features of the English poetry of the Romantic Revival - he wrote on nature, man and God in a distinctly personal vein. In his 'Kusummala' or 'the Garland of Flowers'(1887), the poet presented lyrics, which, in their themes, representation, exposition and style, followed closely the English model. A large bulk of these consisted of poems on nature, where the poet depicted nature from a characteristically Wordsworthian angle. There were also a few poems on love, where the poet sometimes sought to express his own emotions for his beloved, but mostly he kept the individual in the background and dilated on what he considered to be the true and the ideal nature of love. In his second publication 'Hridayveena' or the 'Lute of the Heart'(1896), the poet offered a mixed fare of subjective and objective type of poetry, where besides the lyrics on love and nature and poems on the social problems like the unhappy lot of young widows, two longer poems of the narrative type, called 'Khandkavya' also appeared in the collection as specimens of the objective variety of poetry. These narrative poems, which were based on the episodes derived from the 'Mahabharata' adopted a new
technique of representation, where the primary object was not to tell a tale, which was already well-known, but to depict the emotions of the chief characters and analyse the motive behind the action. Narsinhrao was here following the lead of Manishanker Bhatt, generally known by his pseudonym 'Kant', whose work would be reviewed later.

In his third collection, named 'Nupoorjhankar' or the 'jingle of the anklets' (1914), the poet revealed comparatively more maturity of emotions, ideas and expression. His outlook on nature and life underwent a marked change, under the stress of private sorrows and losses, which gave his utterances a ring of sadness and sincerity, turning him, in his own words, into a 'musical instrument, which finds sad music more to its liking'. His new approach to nature, which is once again not different from Wordsworth's own change of attitude, is enshrined in a poem called 'Toys'. The volume contains, besides an adaptation of E.A. Poe's 'The Raven', some poems based on episodes from the life of Buddha, subsequently forming as part of a separate collection, called 'Buddhacharita'. Narsinhrao's fourth contribution was an elegy of the English type, called 'Smaransambhita' or the 'book of memory' (1915), inspired by the death of his young son. Though the loss was deeply personal, the model for the elegiac expression of his grief and philosophic speculations was largely Tennyson, 'In Memoriam'. In his fifth and last volume called 'Buddhacharita' (1934), the poet collected all his poems on Buddha. Here, his source of inspiration was Sir Edwin Arnold's 'Light of Asia', a few episodes from which were either translated or adapted into Gujarati.

Narsinhrao was a highly self-conscious poet, who not only wrote poetry according to a pre-conceived plan, but also used the medium of verse to represent his conception of poetry and the poet. He described the stream of his own poetry as flowing from his heart, fancied as a mountain, running softly or swiftly at
different times, even temporarily lost in a desert, from where it was rescued by the stimulus given by a loving friend. 1 In another poem, entitled "A Poet's Happiness", 2 Narainrao likened the poets to flowers and poetry to their fragrance, suggesting that as the function of the flowers was to give fragrance, the function of the poet was to write poetry. But he added that the business of the poet was also to elevate man's minds by holding lofty ideals before them, which partly confuses what he had earlier stated, for it implies that the poet was not to rest content with his role of an inspired singer, but that he was a teacher of mankind—a theory very much after the heart of Wordsworth and, in his own way, also practised by Narainrao. Further, in a poem called 'Hridayveena' (Title-poem 'Hridayveena') the poet adopted his favourite image of a poet's heart as a 'veena', or a stringed musical instrument, which is played upon by some invisible hand. The same image is repeated in "A Poet's Heart", 3 where the poet's heart was envisaged as a veena played upon by nature. The poet added that poetry, being an inspired performance, could not be made to order. In his poem entitled 'Avataran' 4 the poet fancied the Muse of poetry as playing upon a 'veena', singing and dancing on the top of the Himalayas, her music being inaudible to all excepting the poet, who like a 'gramophone', records and reproduces that music. Similarly, in his critical works, he suggested that the poet was to sing of the deep and ever-lasting truths of life. 5 He also believed that poetry without artistic restraint was an unpardonable poetic licence. 6

There is nothing new in fancying the poet as a musical instrument, Mrs. Browning has done it beautifully in her 'A Musical Instrument'—or in visualising the Muse of poetry as descending 7 from her mountains—report, the Greeks had long

1. Vide, Dedication to Narayan Hemchandra, 'Kusumrama'.
2. Vide, 'Kusumrama', p.32.
back formulated it into a myth—or, in stating that poetry, being an inspired performance, cannot be made to order—Tennyson had stipulated that the poet, like the linnet, sang because he must. Narsinhrao’s observations might, nonetheless, serve to throw some light on his own concept and practice of poetry. The very fact that he deliberately and consciously adopted English lyrical poetry of the subjective variety as his model, at least in the major part of his poetic output, implies that he had also accepted its concept and principles. By its very nature, lyrical poetry is a spontaneous overflow of intense emotions from the poet’s own heart in response to an external stimulus like the beauty of nature or the facts of life. Narsinhrao gives an impression that that was also his own view as far as subjective lyrical poetry was concerned. When, further, he stated that the function of the poet, besides singing out of the fullness of the heart, was also to hold lofty ideals before his fellow-men, he was in the distinguished company of Wordsworth, who fancied himself to be nothing if not a teacher, and of Shelley, who liked to think of himself as a prophet and visionary. Once again, in imagining himself as a ‘delicate flower in the wood of life, whose fragrance was blown about the wind,’ he was with Shelley, who appealed to the West Wind to broadcast his thoughts among mankind to quicken a new birth. All this, in effect, amounts to endorsing the English ideal of lyrical poetry, as conceived and practised by the English poets of the Romantic Revival and Narsinhrao endeavoured to the best of his abilities to give a practical shape and form to this ideal in his own poetry.

Narsinhrao, who prescribed the English model for the evolution of modern Gujarati poetry, suggested the fourfold prescription of translation, imitation, adaptation and original compositions for the realisation of this objective.

3. Vide, ‘Ode to the West Wind’.
Narsinhrao's own works reveal that, like a good pastor, he practised what he preached in this respect. He translated, imitated and adapted several English poets and their works, besides making original efforts to write Gujarati poetry of the English type. It was, however, in his adaptations, like E.A. Poe's 'The Raven', Shelley's 'Cloud' and Cardinal Newman's 'Lead, Kindly Light', that he was at his best. His translations were generally poor, imitations largely unconvincing and his original efforts, after all, not so original as he honestly believed them to be. So saturated were Narsinhrao's mind, memory and heart with English poetry that he not only adopted its subjects and forms, but also its approach, imagery, style, exposition and technique of representation consciously as well as unconsciously. Echoes from English poetry seemed to haunt his memory and unconscious mind and they could be heard distinctly almost everywhere in his works.

Narsinhrao's entire poetic output falls into the two broad divisions of the objective and subjective types, of which the former being more or less traditional in character, is not relevant here. Since a very large bulk of his subjective poetry consists of poems on nature and love, towards both of which he adopted a certain definite attitude, his attitude and the poems on (a) Nature and (b) Love as embodied in his three volumes of verses, 'Kusummala', 'Hridayveena' and 'Nupoorjhankar' may now be reviewed in some detail, (c) his elegiac poem, 'Smaransamhita' being reviewed separately, in order to see how the influence of English poetry worked on him directly and indirectly in all that he wrote.

(a) Narsinhrao was pre-eminently a poet of nature and the first among the modern Gujarati poets to write so extensively and systematically on nature in the manner of the English poets of the early nineteenth century. Descriptions of nature,

some of them, indeed, very beautiful, were there also in the old and mediaeval Gujarati poetry, to say nothing of Sanskrit or Prakrit poetry, but generally they were either limbs or ornaments of a long poem and their representation was largely impersonal. Narmad was historically the first to give a separate poetic life to some of the scenes and sights of nature and describe his own response to their beauty or grandeur in a distinctly personal vein. He was also the first to adopt a sort of Wordsworthian attitude towards nature, without, of course, formulating it. Narsinhrao did his work more consciously and deliberately. He depicted the different aspects and moods of nature and his approach was characteristically personal. He tried, through his poems and comments on them, to formulate his attitude towards nature into a kind of philosophy, which, as the following pages would reveal, was derived from Wordsworth almost in its entirety. Narsinhrao presented nature, like Wordsworth, not only in terms of beauty and grandeur, but also depicted it, like Wordsworth, in relation to man and God. Again like Wordsworth, he looked at nature with eyes of a mystic in his poems, to peer through the veil of this mystery. Narsinhrao, like Wordsworth, also believed in the balm, joy and education which nature offered to her 'children'. Like Wordsworth, he was both a lover and a high-priest of nature. His official duties in the Ratnagiri and Karwar districts of Western India with its palm-fringed sea-line, cloud-covered mountain-ranges, sparkling streams and leaping water-falls, colourful spectacle of flowers and sweet choir of singing birds had given him an opportunity of observing nature at first hand, though it must be added that this self-acquired capital, as far as actual poetry is concerned, does not seem to have been put to as much use by him as it could have been. He was so dominated by the influence of some of the English poets on him, not only in his approach, but also in his emotions, ideas, representations and even imagery, that he could rarely look at anything in nature
except through Wordsworth's, Shelley's or Keats's eyes and he could hardly write anything on it without casting it in their moulds and draping it in their fancies, as his poems reviewed below would show. Narsinhrao's own experiences and observations of nature, thus, lost much of their individuality and, in effect, turned out to be, to a large extent, echoes and attitudes of the English poets, particularly of Wordsworth. Narsinhrao differed from the older Gujarati poets, who often contented themselves with merely registering and enumerating what they saw or heard in nature, but in trying, like Wordsworth, to see what lay behind the sights and sounds in nature, Narsinhrao not infrequently, pushed nature itself in the background by equating everything in it with something or the other in moral abstraction. There are, no doubt, moments of aesthetic pleasure in Narsinhrao's nature poetry, but as soon as he begins to reflect or philosophise on nature, his thinking becomes merely metaphorical, allegorical and didactic. Wordsworth was often didactic, but Narsinhrao seems to have out-Wordsworthed Wordsworth in this respect. This was as much due to his excessive moral earnestness as to his belief that poetry should emphasize the great Truths and eternal values of life. This would have been more than welcome if, like Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, he was able to poetise those truths, instead of presenting them as disembodied philosophic abstractions in a prosaic manner. It may be perhaps some consolation to know that Wordsworth was also prosaic in places, but what should not be overlooked at the same time is that his lapses were more than redeemed by his poetic achievements, which is generally not the case with Narsinhrao.

Narsinhrao looked at nature, like Wordsworth, as a living presence and not as a mere spectacle of beauty or grandeur, as the earlier Gujarati poets generally did. He was, indeed, deeply touched by its different aspects of beauty, sublimity and grandeur, but, like Wordsworth, he also tried to fathom its mystery
and present it in relation to man and God. Moreover, his representation of nature was not, as in earlier Gujarati poetry, impersonal or objective, but distinctly personal or subjective. He did not merely seek to depict nature as he found it, but also to describe his own emotions and reflections aroused by it. His canvas was, at least physically big, for it covered both heaven and earth and there was hardly any object or scene in nature on which he did not write. He wrote on lakes, mountains and rivers; on birds, and flowers; on dawn, evening and night; on the sky, clouds, fog, sun, moon and the stars, depicting also the varying moods of nature in different seasons. His heart was touched with joy at the sight of nature’s beauty, struck with awe and wonder at its grandeur and was stirred with thoughts ‘that lie too deep for tears’. Nature was for him a school of education, a shrine of worship and a link between man and divinity. He believed in the healing power of nature. He saw no antithesis or antagonism between man and nature or between nature and God. In fact, both nature and man were the handiworks of the supreme Creator, who presided over the entire universe. While nature filled him with joy and wonder in his youth, it took a sober colouring from his eye as he grew in years and experience.

To those who are familiar with Wordsworth’s poetry of nature and the philosophy implicit in it, it is evident that Narsinhrao’s attitude towards nature is strikingly Wordsworthian, not only in its broad outline, but also in all its details. Even the nature of the change, which Narsinhrao claimed had come over him in his attitude towards nature, was the very change, which Wordsworth himself experienced and expressed, particularly, in his two poems, ‘Tintern Abbey’ and the ‘Ode on Intimations of Immortality’. Narsinhrao was a conscious poet as he was no less a conscious commentator on himself and his poetry. He has observed, for instance, that his first volume of verse marked a stage when he evinced simple delight in the various beautiful objects of nature and that, in the course of time, his attitude
towards nature underwent a change, a stage reached in his third volume 'Nupoorjhankar'.

The initial approach and the subsequent change are defined by him in one of his poems, called 'My Toys'¹ where he states that the various beautiful objects of nature, with which he played as toys like a child in the childhood of his poetic career, ceased to give the former joy as he outgrew that stage of his development. This is not different from what Wordsworth has to say about himself:

'We are all of us told/ Of joys we used to know./ The rainbow comes and goes,/ And lovely is the rose;/ The moon doth with delight/ Look round her when the heavens are bare;/ Waters on a starry night/ Are beautiful and fair;/ The sunshine is a glorious birth;/ But yet I know, where'er I go,/ That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth.' ²

Narsinhrao was, likewise, aware of the beauty around him, but he could no longer see the things he saw before in the same light, for, as Wordsworth said,³ "a deep distress has humanised my heart". Even the sight of beauty made him sad.⁴ The sea sang to him doleful songs and the clouds reminded him of the darkening shadows of life. The poet finally learnt to look at nature, like Wordsworth, not 'as in the hour of thoughtless youth', but differently, which enabled him to hear 'the still, sad music of humanity'.⁵ This change either in the perspective or attitude, as in Wordsworth, did not forebode any severing of love between nature and the poet, but only added a sober colouring and a new slant to all that he had previously seen in nature. Nature then gave to the poet, as it did to Wordsworth, another gift of an aspect more sublime, 'that blessed mood' in which 'the burden of mystery' of all this unintelligible world was lightened.

2. Vide, 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality'.
3. Vide, 'Picture of Peel Castle'.
5. Vide, 'Tintern Abbey'.
6. Vide Ibid.
For Narsinhrao, the moments of unalloyed delight in the beauty of nature were very few and even that stage soon passed. Trying to probe into the mystery of nature and hearing 'the still, sad music of humanity' in it, a stage which followed next, tinged Narsinhrao’s poetry with a melancholic pensiveness, when even the sight of beauty plunged him into thoughts of sadness. In one of his poems, where the poet equated himself with a musical instrument, he made a forthright admission that sad songs were more to his liking than those of joy. In another poem, he visualised the world as a place where there was more of sorrow than of joy. Though this may apparently be the typical romantic alliance of sadness and sweetness, of shortlived beauty, youth and love, where 'but to think is to be full of sorrow', which evoked similar reflections from poets like Shelley and Keats, it was not, like Byron’s, a mere pose. What seems to have saved Narsinhrao’s poetry from being melancholic, pessimistic or depressing, is his philosophic beliefs, which enabled him to put the whole picture of life, including nature, into a cosmic frame. This cosmic perspective revealed to the poet stars as spelling only God’s glory in the sky, nature as but a manifestation of the divine, life after death and the whole universe a divine orchestration. Narsinhrao aspired to ‘mirror clearly whatever was beautiful in creation’, but he had some serious limitations as a poet, for instance, general lack of creative imagination, emotional response and originality of vision, exposed by his still more limited power of expression, which, to some extent, frustrated his earnest ambitions. Dr. A.B. Dhruv, while conceding that Narsinhrao’s chief distinction lay in his being a poet of nature, remarked that Narsinhrao’s eye was fixed only on certain regions of nature, his frequent descriptions of the dawn, sea, moonlight, stars and clouds tended towards monotony and

and significantly added that it was doubtful if Narsinhrao personally experienced the inexhaustible and eternal joy, which those forms of nature were capable of giving to the heart of man.¹

Narsinhrao's poetry of nature may now be reviewed and his poems examined in detail, in order to see how his attitude towards nature, outlined above, was reflected in them and particularly, how he was influenced by English poetry in his subjects, thoughts, feelings, representation and expression.

(1) Developing a contrast between the evanescent nature of the works of man and the permanence of the objects of nature in a poem called 'Patan as Seen From The Bank of a Lake',² the poet takes the old city of Patan as a typical illustration of his theme and observes that while the glory of the old city is gone, the lake still stands there in all its ancient glory. Again, in a poem, called 'Kalchakra' or 'Wheel of Time',³ the poet states that while Time has no effect on the objects of nature such as the river, mountain and sea, it plays havoc with the proud works of man, who vaingloriously boasts of his conquest of nature.

All these reflections remind the readers, who are familiar with English poetry, of similar melancholy meditation in Gray's 'Elegy', Shelley's 'Ozymandias' and Ralph Hodgson's 'Time, you old gipsy' and Wordsworth's 'Hart-Leap Well', where also the vanity of man's proud monuments and the might of Nature and Time are contrasted.

(2) Having said that Nature was not subject to deterioration or destruction, the poet, in his 'Ocean of Eternity',⁴ modifies his statement by adding that though the objects of nature are eternal and unaffected by Time, as compared with the works

¹ Vide, Preface, 'Smaransamhita', p.17.
² Vide, 'Kusummala', p.3.
³ Vide, Ibid, p.4.
⁴ Vide, Ibid, p.5.
of man, they are not absolutely so, since they too are finally submerged in the ocean of eternity. The poet adds that man is a momentary bubble on the stream of life, which, ultimately flowers into the ever-rolling ocean of eternity. If this part of the poet's vision of life bears traces of the influence of Addison's well-known 'Vision of Mirza', the next part wherein the poet states that the ocean of eternity is far off, but we may have a sight of that distant sea and hear its murmur, is undoubtedly inspired by the thought and imagery in Wordsworth's lines:

Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea' etc. 1

(3) The poet, proceeding from the concept of Time to Eternity and then to Divinity, states, in his 'Divine Temple and Inscription', 2 that if ancient inscription requires a trained eye to read it, the divine inscription of the stars, sun, moon, dawn and twilight on the divine temple of the sky also needs a special eye to decipher it. The poet adds that while the worldly inscriptions will some day be defaced, the divine inscription on the 'incomparable dome' of the sky will never be dimmed or defaced. 3 Here, the vanity of man's proud monuments is once again an echo of 'Ozymandias', while the bright dome of the sky is evidently an image derived from Shelley's 'Cloud' and 'Adonais'. It may be incidentally noted here that Narsinhrao's observation of nature is romantic, but without the precision of scientific truth, especially when he says that the objects of nature such as the river, mountain and the sea are not subject to the wear and tear of Time, when science maintains that even the sun and the entire solar system is not free from it. But, then, Narsinhrao was, like Wordsworth, a priest and not, like Tennyson, a scientific observer of nature. Narsinhrao's manner, which amounts to mannerism,

1. Vide, 'Odes on the Intimations of Immortality'.
of introjecting the idea of immortality into anything, is seen even in a simple
descriptive subject like 'A Crane Standing In a Lake', where, not content with meroe;
describing the 'snow-white' crane, standing in a lake under the 'big grey canopy'
of the sky, with the desert spread around without end, the poet fancies the crane
as ignoring the reality of the desert and fixing its gaze at the distant horizon.
The poet adds that he too would take a hint from the crane, ignore the painful
realities of the world and fix his gaze on the distant sea of immortality, which
is, once again, an idea derived from Wordsworth's 'Ode'. This is a specimen of
a nature poem, where the poet, not satisfied with depicting nature as he sees it,
turns every object in nature into a teacher and nature itself into a school of
education. This is, indeed, outdoing even Wordsworth, who was of course often
ready to learn from an old leech-gatherer, a skylark or a shepherd. This didactic
approach is also illustrated in a poem, called the 'Confluence of Rivers', where
the two rivers are equated with the joy and sorrow of life. His usual approach is
to look at some object in nature, personify or allegorise it and force it to yield
some moral lesson. For Wordsworth and Shelley, under whose influence Narsinhrao
wrote much of his nature poetry, nature was no doubt a living presence. Wordsworth
defied it and the myth-making power of Shelley is well-known. But Narsinhrao in
his attempt at showing nature as a living presence, begins and ends by allegorising
or personifying it and often pre-fixing the term 'divine' to everything, presumably
under the impression that thereby he was investing his poetry with a sense of
grandeur, sublimity and high idealism, as also saving it from being superficial,
trivial and pedestrian. Thus, the sky is a 'divine temple' the note evoked by

2. English Expression.
3. Vide, Shelley's image of the desert in 'Ozymandias'.
the cuckoo is 'divine', the dance of the stars is divine and the spectacle of the star-studded sky is a 'divine poem' needing only 'heaven-sent moments' for the skill to read that poem. In his 'Divya Tahooko' or the 'Divine Note' the poet, after describing the beauty of the thin clouds spread over the sky and the moonlight filtering through it (as in Keats's 'Nightingale') the whole city being quiet (as in Wordsworth's 'Upon the Wesminster Bridge'), suddenly hears, like Keats, a sweet note, which transports him not, as it did Keats, to 'fairylands forlorn', but to ocean of immortality, which is like grafting the moral philosophy of Wordsworth's 'Ode' on the aesthetic beauty of Keats's 'Nightingale'.

(4) 'An Evening After Rainfall' and 'A Morning After Continuous Rain' are obviously very romantic themes, affording ample scope for description, but what is actually done in the poems is that the beauty of an exciting natural scene is pushed into the background by the poet's anxiety to enforce a moral lesson that a man should, like the earth, bear the charge of the rain of adversity with cheer. In the first poem, the poet personifies the cloud (Shelley also did it) but not as a king, who lays siege to the citadel of the sun and envelops it in darkness. The cloud then releases its battery of rain, which the earth below suffers cheerfully. The poet would like to behave similarly when besieged by adversity in life. In the second poem, the poet actually attempts some landscape painting and describes the East as full of light, which pierces through the clouds, tinged with the colours of the dawn. But the poet immediately winds up his brief description by stating that the beauty of the scene is indescribable, which exposes the poet's very limited powers of description. He then takes to his familiar ground of moralising.

4. An echo from Matthew Arnold's 'Scholar Gipsy'.
and identifies the cloud with adversity and the sun with joy, forgetting, in adopting foreign symbolism, that in a tropical country like India, the sun is never a symbol of joy in the sense in which it is for a cold country like England and the cloud is never looked upon by the people of India, particularly the agriculturists who constitute a majority, as a symbol of adversity. The whole poem ends on a didactic note that when the sky of life is besieged with the clouds of sorrow, the sun of joy would come out and disperse them — a conclusion, which does not perhaps justify such poetical labour.

'An Evening in Spring', 'A Morning Time in Spring', 'A Morning Time in Winter', 'A Moonlit Night on a River', 'An Evening Time Among the Hills', and the 'Dawn' are obviously further attempts at depicting the beauty of nature in its varied aspects. In 'An Evening in Spring', the poet fancies the wind as 'sweeping' the floor of the 'jewel-studded' sky and wafting soft music on its wings, on hearing which the poet's heart overflows with joy. Here, if Shelley's Skylark is substituted for the wind, the whole fancy and its representation would not be found to be different from Shelley's. In 'A Morning Time in Spring', the poet pictures the sky as overrun by 'golden' clouds and wonders why his 'dull heart', does not respond to its beauty. It appears then to the poet that the modern man has lost the imaginative approach of his Aryan predecessors, who could visualise the sun as drawn in a chariot by the 'red' horses and who could hear the 'roar' of a lion in thunder. It does not require much ingenuity to see that this idea is an adaptation of Wordsworth's in his famous sonnet, beginning with, "The World is too

4. Vide, Ibid, p.70;
much with us, where the poet, after complaining that 'we see little in nature that is ours' exclaims,

'Dear God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn,
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.'

Evidently, the only change Narsinhrao has made here is to substitute the old Aryan for the old Pagan, as his moral approach would have it. The 'Dawn', on the poet's own admission, is based on a similar description in Shelley's 'Prometheus Unbound', - but Narsinhrao's too explicit representation, which leaves nothing to his readers' imagination, destroys much of the suggestiveness of the original. The stars, for instance, are just stars in Shelley and it is in the context of the sun 'their shepherd' that they are 'sheep' but Narsinhrao openly represents the stars as sheep and the sun as their shepherd. Similarly, Shelley's 'pale' stars become stars 'pale with fear' in Narsinhrao's poem and Shelley's single line, 'As fawns flee the leopard' is worked out in all its implications in four lines by the poet.

(5) In a poem, called 'Unconscious Agitation of the Heart' the poet depicts the evening as playing with the mountain-peak and the river gladly bearing the reflection of both on its bosom. The flowers and creepers are fancied as joyfully dancing with the breeze; only the poet's own heart is heavy with grief, preventing him from wearing a smile upon his face. It is not difficult here to see how this representation of the contrast between the joy in nature and the grief in the poet's heart is similar to that depicted in the first part of Wordsworth's 'Ode', where also the poet feels out of tune with the joyousness of nature, to him alone comes 'a thought of grief'.

'Sporting with Flower' sets forth Wordsworth's philosophy as implicit in his famous 'Ode', in almost all its details. Narsinhrao in a note, observes that man, by nature, is innocent, but worldly ties gradually take away from him his innate innocence. Disgusted with the world, the poet therefore turns to the flowers, representing as they do, in his eyes, innocence untainted by the evil influence of degenerate human society. The poet also wishes to pass a day with the flowers to forget his gloom and pain. The whole poem is compounded of impressions and echoes from different English poets and poems. For instance, in his belief in the innate innocence of man, the poet is obviously drawing on Wordsworth's philosophy as outlined in his 'Ode', where the whole idea of how 'heaven lies about us in our infancy' and how gradually man loses the 'splendid vision' by which he is attended, is beautifully developed. Again, when our poet refers to the corrupting and degrading influence of human society on noble souls, he is probably drawing on Matthew Arnold's reflections in his 'Scholar Gipsy', where he advises the Scholar Gipsy 'to fear our contact' and 'fly hence and run far away' from the contagion of human society. In his desire to spend his day with the flowers, the poet cannot fail to remind one of Andrew Marvell's 'Thoughts in a Garden', and in his desire to go back to nature to forget himself and heal his wounds, he is evidently subscribing to Wordsworth's approach to nature which is also endorsed in another poem, bearing self-evident title, 'An Antidote to World's Poison'. In his appeal to the flowers to consider him as one of them, though his face 'is wrinkled unlike theirs', the poet is echoing Herrick's appeal to the blossoms and Shelley's prayer to the West Wind to make him its lyre, 'even as t

flowers, unlike men of the world, 'show on their face what is in their heart' is merely an echo of the sentiments of the exiled Duke in the Forest of Arden.  

Narsinhrao's poem on the flowers called 'Karenas', when closely scrutinized, appears to be only Wordsworth's 'Daffodils' in Indian disguise. The 'Karenas' are 'smiling' on the bank of a river, they suddenly burst upon the poet's view in 'never-ending lines' and they are dancing, like Wordsworth's daffodils, with the breeze. The conclusion of the poem, 'On looking at the flowers, I began to wonder why man gave up the lap of mother-earth and forged fetters of worldly bondage for himself' needs no special comment to connect it with Wordsworth's philosophy in the 'Ode', which is rivetted to the 'Daffodils' in this poem.

Narsinhrao seems to be so deeply impressed with some of the English poems, particularly those of Wordsworth, that they haunt his fancy even in the most unsuspected places, of which 'The shores of the Ocean of Joy' is an instance. Here, the poet sees a 'fragment' of a cloud, wandering alone in the 'clear' sky. The poet then feels like 'jumping out of his body' and riding on its back to reach the ocean of joy. The poet is, here, obviously adopting the fancy in Wordsworth's 'My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky', substituting however the cloud for the rainbow. Incidentally, 'clear' sky, 'fragment' of a cloud, floating 'at will', 'leap out' of the body etc. are all more or less literal renderings of the English expressions into Gujarati.

Similarly, in his poems on the cuckoo and the nightingale, the poet, in one way or another, begins or ends his poems in the manner of Keats's 'Nightingale' or Shelley's 'Skylark'. The bird's note usually sends the poet's fancy flying,

1. Vide, Shakespeare: 'As You Like It'.
2. Vide, 'Kusummala', p.34.
leaving him, like Keats, wondering whether he was 'dreaming or awake'. He generally ends his poems, Shelley-like, with an appeal to the bird to teach him the secret of its song. Narsinhrao also wrote several poems on the Night in a romantically reflective vein, reminiscent of the poems on the same subject in English, particularly, of Shelley's invocation 'To the Night'.

(6) How deeply Narsinhrao was influenced by Wordsworth's nature poetry is once again clearly seen in the poem, called 'My Toys', which seems to sum up Narsinhrao's approach and attitude towards nature, including the changes which followed, as Wordsworth's own attitude, from time to time. In his note on the poem, the poet states how in his 'poetic childhood' he looked upon the different objects of nature as toys with which he delighted himself. This, he says, was the stage in his 'Kusummala'. Subsequently, however, he began to look at nature differently and his poetry grew grave in its music. 'The buoyant child' in him was lost and his place was taken by a 'grown-up' man, who heard then 'the still, sad music of humility' in nature. Death of dear ones and grievous losses suffered in his own private life compelled him to look differently on his former 'toys', which, incidentally, is one paraphrasing Wordsworth, who wrote in his 'Ode':

\[
\text{The clouds that gather round the setting sun,} \\
\text{Do take a sober colouring from an eye,} \\
\text{That has kept watch o'er man's mortality}.
\]

and Wordsworth's thought in 'Peel Castle':

\[
\text{A deep distress has humanised my soul}.
\]

(7) Narsinhrao used nature not only in what may be called his nature poetry, but also used it as a background in his poems on other subjects, such as love and social problems. In 'A Widow's Wail', the poet narrates, against the

background of nature, the story of a young widow, accompanied by her infant daughter, crying out her heart on a moonlit night on a river-bank in a wood. Here, the description of nature, which occupies the first twenty-four lines of the poem, is the poet's attempt at using the principle of the pathetic fallacy in a typically Tennysonian manner. The widow, in the poem, sending a message to her dead husband through the moon, asking him not to forget his own unhappy wife on earth in his heavenly bliss, is a peculiar mixture of Kalidas's cloud as a messenger of love, and of Dante Rossetti's 'Blessed Damozel', which visualises a similar communication between the lovers on earth and in heaven. In another poem, called 'A Betrayed Widow', where the poet acknowledges his partial indebtedness to Tennyson's poem 'Forlorn', he again uses nature as a background in depicting sympathetically the unhappy plight of the widow. The poem bears the evidence, in its use of nature for the purpose of creating the pathetic fallacy, of Tennyson's 'Mariana in the Moated Grange' and of the 'Lady of Shallot'. The widow's soliloquy, depicting her conflict 'to live or to die', is obviously in line with Hamlet's famous one. The poem describes a young widow, betrayed by a villain, standing on a river-bank, one dark night to immolate herself. She hears some 'divine' voice, urging her not to destroy herself, but the lady plunges herself into the river and kills herself. Here, the woman betrayed by a villain, dark night, river, suicide and the poet's attempt to enlist the reader's sympathy for her, run parallel with Thomas Hood's representation of a similar social theme in his 'Bridge of Sighs'. The same sympathy for the unfortunate outcastes and the oppressed of society is seen in three other poems on the widows, where the poet, like Thomas Hood, attacks the very concept of social justice, which denies human

considerations to these unfortunate victims of the tyranny of social customs and conventions.

It is evident from all that is stated above that Narsinhrao's poetry of nature bears a very powerful imprint of English poetry in general, and of Wordsworth in particular, in its choice of subjects, representations, approach and attitude.

(b) Some of Narsinhrao's poems on love may now be reviewed in order to see how the influence of English romantic poetry worked on him here as well. Narsinhrao's output on this subject is not very large. Moreover, his classical bent of mind and puritanical view of life would not let him sing unreservedly on this subject, except on its strictly moral and lawful aspect. There is, therefore, no passion or poetry of romantic wooing or phantasy, of heart-break, frustration or tragic misunderstanding in his work. If Narsinhrao is romantic in his love poetry, it is only in his romantic idealism. He emphasised through his poems the eternity of true spiritual love, which sees through death and looks forward to its continuation also in the other world. He also endeavoured to define his conception of true love in his poem 'Constant and Inconstant Love', where he saw in the loving pair of Indian birds called 'saras', the symbol of true love and in the wooing by wind of the bud that of the inconstant one. On the one hand, he would not touch any love which was ephemeral or inconstant or unrequited even to depict its brevity, inconstancy or pangs, he would not, on the other hand, deal with the physical aspect of even the constant and true love of his own conception. He seemed rather keen on establishing the idealism and sublimity of human love, which often tended towards generalisations without individual accent.

In his poem called the 'Ocean of Love' the poet visualises love as an infinite and eternal ocean, which covers the entire universe, there being 'nothing which is not covered by love'. While this, in its concept, is akin to Shelley's

concept of universal love, it differs from it in being merely abstract and impersonal. Examining the different aspects of love in a poem called 'Aspects of Love', the poet seeks to convince his readers that the sound emanating from a musical instrument, vocal chords of human beings and cuckoos, the murmur of the river and the wind, are all different forms of love, though by what stretch of imagination is not clear. The poet completes his list by adding the fragrance of flowers and the colours in a rainbow as variations of the same. Obviously, the poem bears more than a trace of the influence of Shelley, particularly of the poem where he has developed the idea that 'all passions, all delights feed the sacred flame' of love. Similarly, in a poem, entitled 'Love', the poet observes that though different kinds of flowers give different varieties of sweet scent, their sweetness is a factor common to all of them. The poet seems to establish, with the help of this analogy, that though love takes different forms, it is one in its essence. Enumerating the different kinds of flowers and identifying them symbolically, as did in 'Hamlet', the poet mentions a few flowers as symbols of paternal, maternal and fraternal love, but in adopting the rose as a symbol of sisterly love, the poet does not seem to have exercised enough discretion while subscribing to English symbolism and foreign images. The whole poem, besides being instinct with Shelleyan philosophy of love looks more or less like a paraphrase of Shakespeare's observation that love is a many-splendoured thing. The same Shakespearean theme appears again in a poem called 'Love Plays Many Parts', where obviously Shakespeare's fancy of the seven stages of man is mixed up with that of Wordsworth, where he depicts the child as a 'little actor', playing, as

2. Vide, 'One Word is Too Profane'.
5. In 'As You Like It'.
6. In his 'Ode'. 
he grows, different parts all through his life. The poem repeats an earlier fancy that love takes the form of a sweet sound in a cuckoo, murmur in the river, colours in flowers and the rainbow, moonlight in the moon, which is once again reiteration of Shelley without his convincing concrete technique. Shelley appears again in the poem called 'Love' where the poet seems to have 'improved' upon Shelley by making the conception of love more spiritual and moral.

(2) In a poem, called 'Agnihotra', where, on his own admission, he had adopted Tennyson's idea, Narsinhrao conceives of love as a sacred flame to be fed and tended reverently and watchfully. While this idea is implicit in the Gujarati word 'Agnihotra', it seems to have been adopted because it tallies so closely with Shelley's 'sacred flame', more particularly because of its 'sacredness'. Here, the poet speaks of married love and suggests that familiarity between man and woman, lawfully wedded, does not breed contempt for one another, but, like Tennyson's echoes of spiritual love, grows from more to more. Further, the poet visualises the world in its beginning as cold and dark, till the divine fire came down to warm it and illuminate it. This is evidently an adaptation of the Greek myth, eminently handled by Shelley in his 'Prometheus Unbound'.

(3) 'A Lovers' Bower' is a poem which shows probably the utmost limit in romanticism of personal love to which Narsinhrao could let himself go. Here, the poet, on looking at the entwined branches of the trees, fancies them as happily and eternally locked up in an inseparable embrace, unworried by the storms and thunder which the future may have in store for them. Here, as in his descriptions of the

2. Vide, ibid, p.38.
3. 'I long to prove
   No lapse of moons can canker Love,
   Whatever fickle tongues may say'. Vide, 'In Memoriam', Canto, XXVI
4. Vide, Tennyson's poem beginning with 'The Cataract leaps in its glory'.
streams and waterfalls in 'Bhor Ghat', the poet is, in all probability, adopting Keats's fancy from 'Happy Insensibility'. The lovers actually seen by the poet in one of the local gardens of Bombay, remind him of his deceased beloved with whom he wishes to be eternally locked like the branches of the trees he saw. After proceeding in this typically Wordsworthian reminiscent mood, which takes him in the retrospect to his happy past, the poet is suddenly seized with the despair that whereas the trees would ever be locked and green, earthly love does not last for ever and worldly lovers meet only to part, a conclusion reminiscent of Keats's melancholic meditation on the evanescence of love, youth and beauty in his 'Grecian Urn' and 'Ode to a Nightingale', put together. The poet then, like Wordsworth in his 'Lucy', finds consolation in the faith that the separated lovers would meet again in heaven and prescribed fortitude as an antidote to the pangs of separation. Thus resolved of his own conflict, the poet then does not envy the entwined branches of the trees he saw in the lovers' bawers even as Keats ceased envying the happiness of the nightingale whom he had envied before.

In a poem called, 'A Recollection of a Dawn in Summer', the poet, in a reminiscent mood, refers to one beautiful dawn when he and his beloved stood together before it, while the wind played with her stray lock of hair. This is one of the few poems in which the poet allows himself to express his own emotions with comparatively less restraint, even going to the extent of mentioning a kiss given to his beloved. Though theoretically Narsinhrao talked of the different aspects of love and presumably set out to depict the emotions of love subjectively in the English manner, he deals only with its idealistic and moralistic aspect and very rarely expresses the varied emotions of love in a personal vein.

2 Vide, 'Hridayveena', p.72.

A fancy from Keats's 'Grecian Urn', transferred, not very happily from the forms eternised by art to that of the forms in reality.
Finally, his long elegiac poem 'Smaransamhita', which was his 'In Memoriam' to his deceased young son, named Nalinkant, may be reviewed. Though Dalpatram and a few others in the past had tried their hands at the elegy of the English type, it was Narsinhrao, who may be said to have successfully demonstrated the adaptability of this form in modern Gujarati poetry. Obviously, this was something essentially different from the elegiac stanzas in old Sanskrit poetry as also from the dirges, which offer only limited scope for the expression of grief resulting from a personal loss. Narsinhrao follows the English conception of the elegy as a poem of lamentation or regret called forth by the death of a beloved person, accompanied by some mournful meditation and philosophic consolation. As Dr. A.B. Dhruv points out, Narsinhrao had Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' as a model for his poem, which follows the original not only in the title, but also in the art of the construction of the poem.

There could be no loss so personal and intimate as the death of a young son, which is the subject of Narsinhrao's elegy - Milton, Shelley, Matthew Arnold and Tennyson were lamenting the loss of only friends - and especially when the father is also a poet, the expression of grief is likely to be compelling in its intensity and sincerity. That this has been achieved only within the limits imposed by the poet's own mental and moral constitution, is evident from the poem, which is, by and large, admitted as probably Narsinhrao's best creation in verse. By consciously keeping the element of lamentation in the background, the poet wished on one hand, the personal note not to be too personal and, on the other, to see that his elegy should be far from being an eulogy of and a dirge on the deceased. The accent is on the mournful meditation, which in its philosophic

content, rises above the personal and becomes universal in its significance, as in Shelley and Tennyson. The poem also reveals how the burden of the unintelligible mystery of life and death is lifted by the poet's unswerving faith in God and divine dispensation, which fulfills itself in a variety of ways. This robs death of its sting and gives the poet strength to bear his loss with fortitude and resign himself to the inevitable as also to the will of God. The poet has made consider-able use of nature as a background in his elegy, which, however, is not an elegy of the pastoral type, like 'Lycidas' or 'Thyrsis', since the poet fancies neither himself nor the deceased as a shepherd. Narsinhrao's elegy, in its concept and execution, is nearest to Tennyson's 'In Memoriam', which was deliberately chosen as a model, especially because Tennyson's Victorian moral philosophy and faith in God, more logical than emotional, were in tune with Narsinhrao's own.

'Smaransamhita' opens with a quotation from Tennyson's 'Crossing the Bar', appropriately striking the keynote of the poem, the only strange thing about it being that the poet, who has suffered such a heavy and personal loss, should have the need to lean so heavily on someone else's representation and expression of that loss. Though the sincerity and intensity of the poet's own emotions may be presumed, the poem, as it is, reveals Narsinhrao's greatest shortcoming, which is, lack of originality in thought and feeling. He generally needs some extraneous poetic help to initiate him and start him off. This is ironically true of this elegy also, where if only the poet had looked into his heart and sung like the linnet, because he must, he would probably have had no need of Tennyson or anybody to guide him in the expression of his sorrow. The poem, from the beginning to end, is, in fact, full of echoes from different English poems and poets, some of which were politely described as parallels, incidental or accidental, by Dr.A.B. Dhruv in his

1. Vide, Tennyson, 'In Memoriam'.

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notes and annotations on the poem. Yet, the poem remains historically the first full and well-organized elegy of the English type in modern Gujarati poetry.

Since Narsinhrao's elegy is principally a 'mournful meditation', it may be interesting to see briefly what kind of meditation it is and how far he was influenced by English poetry in his representation. (1) The poet, through his poem, suggests that the whole universe, in its origin and working, is shrouded in mystery, impenetrable to man's limited intelligence and vision, but the burden of the mystery is at once lifted, if only man were to trust his high instinct and God - a proposition obviously not different from one in Wordsworth's 'Ode on the Intimations of Immortality'. (2) When the key of faith in God opens the door of the mystery of life and death, it would also be possible to see through death, which is not the end, but the beginning of another life. The ties of love, formed on earth, are not, likewise, snapped by death but continued in the other world¹ - a familiar tenet of Christianity, acquired by the poet through his Prarthana Samajist belief and also poetically represented among others, by Dante Rossetti in his 'Blessed Damozel'. These ideas are also found represented in Omar Khayyam, who spoke of a 'door to which he found no key' and who stipulated that life was like a flower that dies, never to blossom again. If the negatives of Omar Khayyam, are removed, it would not be difficult to arrive at the positives of Narsinhrao. (3) Apparently, death and mystery, pain and suffering, seem out of place in this creation of the All-Merciful God, but when deeply seen, they serve only to purify, strengthen and enlighten the soul. If death is another name for life to come, death itself lies dead,² - statements, which would take no reader of English elegies

¹ Vide, Tennyson, 'In Memoriam', Canto 3, St.58-59.
² Vide, Tbid, Canto,3, St.52-53.
including 'In Memoriam' and 'Adonais', by surprise. The poet's attempt to trace
'death is dead' to Tukaram, instead of to John Donne's 'And Death shall be no more;
Death, thou shalt die!' or to Shelley's 'Death is dead' seems to be an after-thought.
Tennyson even saw nature 'red in tooth and claw', but found consolation from the
realization that it performed an important function of creation. Swinburne, in his
'Forsaken Garden' and John Donne in his 'Death, be not proud', visualised death
itself as dead and not a few other English poets have challenged death not to be
proud of its terrors. (4) The poet looks upon the whole creation as a divine
harmony, the great impressario of which is God. Even the process of evolution is
presided over by Him. ¹ - beliefs based on the concept of 'the music of the spheres'
met with frequently in Shakespeare and Milton. Dryden also sang "From Harmony,
from heavenly Harmony, this Universal frame began" in his 'Song for St. Cecilia's
Day'. (5) The poet finally suggests that since God fulfills Himself in many ways,²
it is not for man either to question or merely resign to His will, but that he
should, in all good faith, say 'Thy Will be done!'³ - an approach, typically
Christian, taught by Prarthana Samaj, and adopted by Tennyson also in his 'In
Memoriam'.

While Narsinhrao's philosophic meditations, outlined above, reveal how the
poet was consciously or unconsciously influenced by similar meditations and
observations expressed by different English poets, it does not necessarily imply that
he set out deliberately to reconstruct his philosophy with pieces picked up from
here and there. The beliefs in God, heaven and immortality are more or less
universal and the philosophic probe into the mystery of life and death also cuts
across the barriers of time and place. Moreover, Narsinhrao here was handling a

¹ Vide, Canto 3, Stanzas 10-23.
² Vide, Canto 1, 3, St. 31.
³ Vide, Ibid, St. 3-4.
form, wherein mournful meditations and philosophic speculations formed a part of an elegiac tradition. Narsinhrao's was a very receptive mind and his poetic memory very impressionable. To this may be added his general lack of inventiveness which, for instance, drove him for inspiration to Sir Edwin Arnold for his poem on such a 'homely' subject as Buddha. 1 It is, therefore, not surprising that in representing his own grief in an elegiac form, Narsinhrao falls back on Tennyson's 'In Memoriam' as his model and that though the core of his philosophic meditations and speculations is typically Indian in their general articulation and he follows the English poets, with whose thoughts, emotions and expressions his poetic memory seem to be saturated.

'Smaransamhita' which is divided into Cantos with further sub-divisions into sections like 'In Memoriam' also follows the pattern of the English elegy in its formal lay-out. The lyrical and philosophic elements are fused together with the nostalgic reminiscences of the departed dear one and with the descriptions of nature in the English elegiac tradition. Finally, the peace that returns to the grief-torn heart through the larger philosophic perspective that the dead are not really dead but only form part of eternity or alternatively reach the feet of God is a consolation, which is poetically adopted in widely different philosophic approaches as in Shelley's 'Adonais' and in Milton's 'Lycidas' and Tennyson's 'In Memoriam'.

When one goes still closer to the poem and scrutinises it line by line, one finds how deeply Narsinhrao was influenced by English poetry in his thought, representation and expression. There is room enough only for a few such illustrations, which, nonetheless, would serve to substantiate what has been stated above in general terms.

1. In his 'Buddhacharita'.
The poet, at the outset, delineates the sea with its innumerable bright ripples as rising in glee and wearing a smile upon its face, which was there also the day before. The poet, who used to smile with it, cannot, however, bring himself to smile with it now, since a deep grief has lately seized his heart. Here, the influence of Wordsworth on the poet's thought, representation and expression would be obvious when compared with the following:

(i) 'Not for a moment could I now behold
A smiling sea, and be what I have been.'

(ii) 'There was a time when meadow, grove and steam,
The earth, and every common sight
To me did seem
Apparel'd in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not so now as it hath been of yore,
Turn wheresoever I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.
Now while the birds thus sing a joyous song
... ... ... ... ... ...
To me alone there came a thought of grief.'

When the poet ends his apostrophe to the sea by saying that though his heart is so full of grief that he cannot even express himself, he would seek relief by putting his grief in words, he is only saying, in a slightly different form, what (i) Tennyson in his 'In Memoriam' said, when he wrote:

'I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel;
... ... ... ... ...
But for the unquiet heart and brain
A use in measured language lies'.

and (ii) what Wordsworth meant when he observed in his 'Ode',

'To me alone there came a thought of grief;
A timely utterance gave that thought relief'.

1. Vide, (Canto I, 1, St. 1-6.
2. Vide, Wordsworth: 'Elegiac Stanzas suggested by a Picture of Peel Castle'.

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"Śaṃśyāsāṃhitā".
1. Vide, (Canto I, 1, St. 1-6.
2. Vide, Wordsworth: 'Elegiac Stanzas suggested by a Picture of Peel Castle'.

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When the poet ends his apostrophe to the sea by saying that though his
(2) Speaking of his dear son snatched away by death, the poet wonders whether he would ever get him back. He notes that the sun, which goes down in the sea, appears again the next morning, which is reminiscent of Wordsworth's observation in his 'Ode' that

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting."

Further, the poet speaks of life as an unequal contest between man and the unseen Power, a game of chess, where man moves his pieces and tries to save them, only to find them slayed by that Power. Here it is not difficult to trace the influence of the following lines from Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyam:

"'Tis all a Chequer-board of Nights and Days
Where Destiny with Man for Pieces plays;
Hither and thither moves, and mates and slays,
And one by one back in the Closet lays.'

(3) The poet, trying to reconcile himself to the fact of his loss, consoles himself with the thought that the old order goes yielding its place to the new, which is the law of the universe in its evolution. Here, it is evident that the poet has used Tennyson's observation almost in the same words -

(i) 'Old order changeth, yielding place to new
And God fulfills Himself in many ways.'

(ii) 'Our little systems have their day
They have their day and cease to be'.

(4) Trying to probe into the mystery of death, the poet likens it to a door, locked heavily, which he tries vainly to open with different keys. Here, the poet seems to be indebted to the following from Omar Khayyam:

'There was a Door to which I found no key;
There was a Veil past which I could not see.'

1. Vide, 'Canto I, 2, St. 7-11.
3. Vide, Canto I, 3, St. 31.
4. Vide, 'Morte D'Arthur'.
5. Vide, 'In Memoriam'.
6. Vide, 'Canto I, St. 39-41.'
Further, the poet assailed by doubts asks whether what is reduced to dust will be born again and the same voice of doubt tells him that since the soul is nowhere to be seen, since all that the religions say is self-deception, man should only enjoy himself. Here again, the poet is evidently using the familiar thoughts in Omar Khayyam, though only for their rebuttal.

(5) The poet's doubts are ended by another voice - of faith - which he hears and he sees his departed child in the divine temple, sitting at the feet of God. In an apostrophe to the child, the poet says that the child has realised the truth, which man on earth strives in vain to find, which is not different from Wordsworth's apostrophe to the child in his 'Ode' -

'Mighty Prophet! Seer blest!
On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find.'

Further, in fancying that his lost child is not extinct, but having played his part on earth, only returned 'home', by which \( \text{he means God or heaven} \), the poet is evidently adopting the Wordsworthian philosophy, outlined in his 'Ode', where he says:

(i) '....trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home!

(ii) 'Our souls have right of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither;
Can in a moment travel thither.'

(6) The poet, while submitting to the inevitable, wishes not merely to resign himself to the will of God but also to see no real antithesis between his own will and that of God, for to have a free will of his own would produce a discordant note, which would jar on the music of the universal law to which the creation moves. He should, therefore, let the will of God prevail. Here, the

1. Vide, Canto I, 5, St.48-52.
2. Vide, Canto I, 5, St. 63.
3. Vide, Canto II, 3, St. 40.
4. Vide, Canto III, 1, St.1-5.
poet is echoing Tennyson's thoughts in his 'In Memoriam', almost literally:

(i) 'Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine.'

(ii) 'And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves.'

Further, in saying that death is not the fulfilment of life, but a prologue and a step to further development, the poet, besides adopting Tennyson's meditation in 'In Memoriam', in general, reminds one also of Browning's words in 'Abt Vogler':

'On earth the broken arch; in the heaven the perfect round'.

(7) In imagining his lost son as always near him, though far away, the poet is undoubtedly guided by Tennyson's fancy in 'In Memoriam':

'Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice.'

Further, in referring to the distant ocean of eternal life on the other side of the dark shadow of death, the poet is once again adopting the Wordsworthian view in his 'Ode' that

'Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea,
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither.'

Finally, while observing that his lost child is neither lost nor absent from him, but ever present, and alive for him, the poet is following the tradition of the English elegy in its philosophic consolation, as for instance, in Shelley's 'Adonais':

(i) 'He lives he walks — 'tis Death is Dead, not he'.

(ii) 'Peace, Peace, he is not dead, he doth not sleep —
He hath awakened from the dream of life'.

2. Vide, Canto 3, 3, St.40.
3. Vide, Canto 3, 3, St.48.
4. Vide, Canto 3, 3, St. 58.
This brief review of Narsinhrao's poetry may be concluded with a remark that though his poetry, judged strictly as poetry, falls far short of his own ambitions and the readers' expectations, Narsinhrao seems to have succeeded in a very large measure in his chief aim of diverting the course of modern Gujarati poetry towards subjective lyricism of the English type. A contemporary critic who likened the poems in the 'Kusummala' to the 'artificial flowers from the West', was also among the first to admit that they were 'a successful attempt at demonstrating the poetic technique of the West'.

Though Narsinhrao set out with a determination to introduce the English type of modern lyrical poetry and even largely succeeded in doing so, his own actual performance, besides being generally sketchy and experimental in character, was in itself a rather poor specimen of what he was illustrating. He aimed at giving a lyrical expression to his own emotions in the manner of the English poets, like Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats and Tennyson, but his inherent poetic limitations, coupled with his classical bent of mind and his Prarthana Samajist moral approach to life, incapacitated him to a considerable extent in realising what he had in view. It seems that the great paradox of Narsinhrao's poetry was that he was a classicist at heart, who tried to write romantic poetry with his head. His themes were more or less romantic - the beauty of nature and the personal emotions of love - but his classicism robbed his subjective poetry of much of its subjectivity and his moral approach turned much of it into open didacticism. His poetry is often so cold, calculated and deliberate that it gives, not infrequently, an appearance of something intellectually arrived at rather than emotionally experienced. Whether this was due to the inherent lack of emotional response or

deliberate restraint is difficult to diagnose. Since the fundamental lack of emotions in a poet, who set out to write the poetry of personal emotions, is a little too harsh to contemplate, it may be conceded that this was due to the artistic restraint, which he consciously and severely brought to bear upon the expression of his emotions. This may perhaps be an extreme precaution against the earlier unrestrained and passionate outbursts of Narmad, but this restraint, which is both his strength and weakness, also gagged his mouth. There seems to be such a strict censorship of emotions working in Narsinhrao that whatever percolates through it is generally too weak to be effective in its emotional impact. The very conception of the English type of romantic poetry which Narsinhrao handled, is based on the twin principles of spontaneity and intensity of the poet's own emotions, neither of which seems to be very much in evidence in Narsinhrao's poetry. Moreover, Narsinhrao's representation is generally so literal and his didacticism so open and prolific that he could rarely see any object around him without equating it with some moral or intellectual abstraction, giving the appearance of algebraic equations or propositions in Euclid to not a few of his poems. If all art is, to some extent, artificial, Narsinhrao's appears to be more so. Manilal Nabhubhai¹ was perhaps a little too harsh in his punning while suggesting that the poems in 'Kusummala' were artificial flowers from the West. Their being Western could, of course, be no ground for complaint, especially when the whole country was enthusiastically imbibing so many ideas from the West. Their being artificial, in the sense that they had little poetic vitality in them, is however, too serious an indictment to be easily ignored. The poet himself had later admitted in some despair that 'his flowers were faded, the strings of his lute broken and the jingle of the anklets of his poetry

¹. Vide, 'Sudarshangadyavali', p. 833.
But in the historical perspective, Narsinhrao's achievements are neither mean nor small. Besides being a path-finder to the new realms of poetry, he introduced a rich variety of subjects and forms and gave new norms to modern Gujarati poetry, thus enlarging not only its scope but also opening new avenues and channels of expression and communication for the poetry of his language. English lyricism, which he planted, has since then taken firm roots in the soil of Gujarat. Though Narmad had made a beginning in writing nature poetry of the English type, it was Narsinhrao who, by writing on its varied aspects and moods, gave it 'a local habitation and a name' in Gujarat, by also formulating a definite approach to it. The work of casting Gujarati poetry into the English mould was indeed formidable and the difficult nature of the self-imposed task does, in a large measure, condone Narsinhrao's other shortcomings. On the technical side, his metrical permutations and combinations of both Sanskrit and indigenous metres; on the expressional side, his conscious care in the choice of suitable poetic diction - are all no small achievements to his credit. If Narsinhrao's actual performance looks more like a map than a portrait of modern Gujarati poetry, it is largely because he had few precedents to help him. Narsinhrao was creating a new poetic tradition with only the poetry in a foreign tongue as a model before him, which, at best, could give him a sense of direction and the gift of subjects, but not certainly the tools of expression, which he had necessarily to forge in his own smithy. Narsinhrao held up the ideal and model of English poetry before Gujarat and if his own intrinsic achievements was not commensurate with his own ambition, it does not detract from his historical importance. It was he who, through his conscious efforts and individual experiments, was largely instrumental in diverting the course of modern Gujarati poetry from its familiar channel into a new one.

1. Vide, his poem in reply to a tribute from 'Mitravaran', Narsinhrao's Diary, dated 5-5-34, p.50.