A change in attitude towards poetry, when Thakore's first volume of verse was published in 1917, could be seen more or less clearly, though not a little of what gave a special distinction to Thakore's poetry was yet to come and some of his contemporaries were still writing in a vein, which may be broadly described as subjective, lyrical and romantic, close in spirit and form to the English poetry of the early nineteenth century Romantic Revival. The change quintessentially outlined in Thakore's first volume, revealing a somewhat greater resort to extrinsic sources of poetic interest and a rather pronounced emphasis on thought-content, along with an increased use of the intellectual faculty, may perhaps be described as a kind of relapse of the classical approach, since it was definitely not intended as its revival.

Thakore, who graduated from the University of Bombay in 1889 (standing first in English) and subsequently worked as a Professor of History and Economics till his retirement from the Indian Educational Service in 1924, began writing poetry since 1888, though it was only in 1917, when he was past his forty-seventh year, that he collected his poems in a volume entitled 'Bhanakar' or Intimations, which was followed ten years later by another under the same title. The years between 1927 and 1950 produced more poems, which along with most of his earlier ones, he edited, annotated and published in a definitive edition in 1951, a year before his death. Apart from 'Gopihriday' or the Heart of a Gopi (1943), which was

an indifferent adaptation in verse of a mystical prose-poem by an Indian lady, Rehana Tyabji, 'Bhanakar' covering some three hundred pages of an extremely unequal performance, spread over sixty years and contemporaneous with three successive generations of Gujarati poets, constitutes Thakore's entire poetic output, barring, of course, some of the things which possibly await posthumous publication.

Composing painstakingly, believing in his own poetic creed with an earnestness usually given to crusaders, at no stage, like Browning with whom he had certain poetic affinities, a popular poet, because of the hard crust he offered both in substance and style, Thakore is another important landmark in the history of the impact of English poetry on modern Gujarati poetry. If his 'Bhanakar' on its very first appearance in 1917, despite its certain far-reaching changes in poetic taste, did not produce an electrifying effect immediately, as Narsinhrao's 'Kusummala' thirty years earlier had done, it was because the changes were not, and understandably could not be, as spectacular as when poetic traditions of the long standing topple down under the first onset or impact of a fundamentally different and powerful influence, resulting in an almost complete break with the past.

Thakore's contribution to the next stage in the evolution of modern Gujarati poetry on the English lines lies (1) in consolidating and extending the influence of English poetry; (2) in evolving something metrically closest to the English Blank Verse; and (3) in successfully transplanting the sonnet.

(1) When modern Gujarati poetry, since Narmad who first directly responded to the influence of English poetry, was exclusively occupied with the English type of subjective lyricism even to the extent of implying, as some critics actually did and most of the poets seemed quietly to acquiesce in, that it constituted the best variety of poetry, Thakore reacted sharply against this tendency and maintained that the exaggerated attention and importance bestowed upon subjectivity and
emotions in poetry tended not only to restrict the horizon and limit the scope of modern Gujarati poetry, but also to make most of it sentimental, tearful, spineless and insubstantial, especially when it generated into ego-centric and morbidly melancholic poetic effusions. Certain interesting exceptions apart, even what passed as reflective or meditative poetry was emotional in its appeal. Thakore, through his own poetic creations and literary criticism, sought to shift the emphasis from emotions to thought-content and intellect and objectivity; from the narrowly personal to the catholicity of poetic interests. Neither averse nor allergic to lyrical poetry as such, Thakore however would not subscribe to the view that lyrical poetry was the best or the highest among the poetic types where he differed from the Gujarati poets and critics, as also from Drinkwater, whom he found unjustifiably exalting the lyric and treating it as synonymous with poetry against the testimony of history. Thakore argued that 'there was no poetry without emotion did not imply that the lyric was the best variety of poetry'. Without denying the essentiality of the element of emotions in poetry, Thakore insisted on drawing a line between emotion and emotionalism. He believed that 'there was no art without identification with an idea or a thought' and that 'creativity consisted in organising the whole mental and spiritual process through the instrumentality of the intellect, which alone created highest art'. This led him to affirm that 'highest

poetry was not merely an outburst of emotions, but a stream of thought, and in a mood of challenge, offered even to prove, on the strength of the best specimens from world poetry, that what was called highest poetry was so by virtue of its thought-content or that it was not highest poetry at all.

Thakore's insistence, both in theory and practice, on the thought-content in Gujarati poetry has to be viewed in its historical context as a reaction against the predominance given to emotions and sentiments by Gujarati poets and critics immediately before him. Thakore himself ascribed this to the fact that almost from its inception and for the next twenty years or more, the University of Bombay had prescribed Palgrave's 'Golden Treasury', particularly its Fourth Book, as an English text, during which period young men in the colleges, who later took to writing Gujarati poetry, were acquainted with and attracted to the lyrical variety of English poetry, of which Palgrave had made a representative collection—a view, with which an outstanding critic, like R.V. Pathak, also concurs. Consequently, as Thakore has noted, 'there were imitations and adaptations of Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and of the poems in the 'Golden Treasury' and 'what entered into Gujarati poetry since Narmad by way of new subjects, sentiments, style, forms and outlook was derived from that branch of English poetry'. That Thakore was not opposed to lyrical poetry or even emotion in some measure has already been stated; what he resisted was (1) the general tendency to over-rate and exalt lyrical poetry at the expense of the other, according to his higher varieties of poetry and (2) the over-emphasis on emotions

at the cost of the thought-content in modern Gujarati poetry. Not only did he believe that it was only 'thought-dominated' poetry which alone constituted the peak of poetic achievements, but also that the less subjective a poet was, the more successful was his art, even suggesting that a true poet was one who created something new, profound and impersonal.

Thakore's attitude, as also the type of poetry he wrote, exemplifies a none too rare literary phenomenon of how poetic and critical reactions, in seeking to counteract an earlier trend, sometimes run from one extreme to another. Here, the history of English poetry and critical thought provides some interesting parallels and it looks as if the history of modern Gujarati poetry followed not only the broad characteristics of, but also the familiar pattern of action and reaction in English poetry, of which the alternate triumph and defeat of Classicism and Romanticism, in broad terms, are periodical manifestations. The history of modern Gujarati poetry is not long enough to exhaust all these possibilities and as yet to arrive at a stage when it can altogether discard these labels. Its first stage, which is some two centuries and a half behind that of English poetry, began only by about the middle of the nineteenth century when Harad, Marsinhrao, Kant and Kalapi imbibed inspiration from the leading poets of the English Romantic Revival and wrote, as they generally did, poetry surcharged with subjective emotions. With Nanalal entered also the influence of Tennyson, but it was mostly the lyrical side of Tennyson, which seemed to impress Nanalal, who despite all his earnestness to use poetry as a criticism of life, remained essentially Arnold's picture of Shelley - a beautiful angel flapping his luminous wings more or less in the void, using poetry as a vehicle of emotional

2. Ibid, p. 32.
idealism without much regard for form or thought-content. The neo-classical school of English poetry, with its dread of emotions and distrust of utopias, had brought in England the Romantic Revival. In Gujarat, the order seems to be somewhat reversed. The earlier over-emphasis on emotions brought, with Thakore, a reaction in favour of thought-content, form and impersonal outlook, which bear certain striking resemblances with the eighteenth century English neo-classicism, which adored the same qualities in poetry. It is also interesting to note that in the history of English poetry, at a later stage, this was what Matthew Arnold advocated, as Thakore did for Gujarati poetry.

"In the wide sense," says Saintsbury, "the debate between Classical and Romantic concerns the opposite attitudes adopted, of which the more important are - that poetry depends upon its subjects, that every kind of poetry has a prescribed form, that definiteness, proportion, exact solution of the problem proposed, are preferable to the suggestive, the vague, the incomplete or the irregularly beautiful". This happens to fit in generally with Thakore's conception of highest poetry, which he defined it as 'simple, perspicuous, profound, and well-proportioned', along with thought-content and objectivity which he considered as distinctions of highest poetry.

Thakore has unequivocally stated that his poetic conception was based on what he derived from the European critics and aestheticians, inclusive of Plato and Aristotle, whom he had studied under competent English Professors during his most formative period of life at the college and that what he had imbibed was so deeply ingrained in him that even fifty years of study and creation had entailed no change in that basic conception. While the Western or English origin of the poetic...
conception and inspiration is a fact more or less common to all the modern Gujarati poetry from Narmad down, what distinguishes Thakore from the rest of his contemporaries and immediate predecessors is his classical bias and an almost Aristotelian attitude towards poetry, which prompted him to place the epic and the narrative varieties above the lyrical. This may be partly due to the influence of the ancient Greeks for whom lyrical poetry in its modern sense hardly existed and partly due to the historical circumstances, when his reactions against the excesses of emotions in modern Gujarati poetry drove him back to the eighteenth century English neo-classicism or to, what Saintsbury called, the 'neotato-classicism' of Matthew Arnold 1 - all of which stemming from the same source. This was a transformation, if not exactly a revolution, of the poetic attitude adopted by the poets before Thakore and of this transformation Thakore was the most important single agent and leader. Without formally declaring himself as a Classicist, Thakore showed a clear bias for Classicism, thought-content and objectivity in poetry which, in practice at least, did not altogether banish Romanticism of a sort. This may be compared, in general, with Matthew Arnold's 'attempt to reconstruct the classical faith, taking in something, but a carefully limited something, of Romanticism' 2 and, in particular, with a considerable part of Arnold's poetic and literary creed, with which Thakore was well-acquainted 3 and probably also not a little influenced, since the resemblance between the two is fairly close. What is said about Matthew Arnold - 'a thorough classicist by sympathy and training, and with an admiration of the Greeks so strong that it sometimes led him astray, Arnold believed that all really great poetry is impersonal or objective (like the drama and the epic), in which the poet escapes from himself

and from the conditions of his own world, while subjective poetry, or the poetry of self-expression, necessarily and as such, belongs to a lower artistic plane, might almost have been written of Thakore.

This can be easily substantiated with a few illustrations from Thakore and Matthew Arnold. Thakore's statement that poetry is not mere emotions, but a stream of thought, which alone creates highest art, may be matched with Matthew Arnold's view that 'poetry attaches its emotions to the idea; the idea is everything' in poetry, 'which is thought and art in one'. Again, Thakore's admonition to the poet 'never to look for the subject in his own self' and his observation that 'the less subjective a poet is, the more successful is his art' are in poetic theory and practice very close to Matthew Arnold's view that the poet gives the best account of himself 'when he most entirely succeeds in effacing himself'. The analogy between Thakore and Arnold may be extended to the critical field where, like Arnold, to guide the poet 'through the confusion and to prescribe to him the aim which he should keep in view', Thakore wrote 'Kavitashikshan' or instructions on writing poetry; and again, like Arnold, 'to know how others stand, that we may know how we ourselves stand', Thakore wrote his 'Lyric' with profuse quotations from and translations of the best in English poetry with the same intention.

The departure which Thakore contemplated was one from the forms and kind of poetry, which most of the modern Gujarati poets before him practised, namely, poetry

of self-expression and luxurious emotions, rather thin-spun and verbose.

Dissatisfaction with this type of poetry, coupled with his classical ideal of poetry and his own constitutional and temperamental characteristics - rationalism, realism and agnosticism - determined the direction of his departure, namely, poetry dominated by thought and diction laden with meaning. So intent and conscious does Thakore seem to be on creating something new and different in poetry that the idea recurs with unusual frequency in many of his poems, e.g. 'Lovers of beauty are engaged in new poetic expressions, new technique, new rhythm in the

(2) If Thakore's first distinction lay in enlarging the scope of modern Gujarati poetry by emphasising the other aspects and constituents of English poetry, his second was in facilitating this evolution by providing for it, through his experiments, a suitable metrical vehicle. Proceeding from a conviction that no serious, thoughtful or highest poetry was possible within the existing metrical frame-work of Gujarati poetry, till it was first rid of its musical propensity and its rigidity of fixed pauses broken, he set out to effect certain reforms in Gujarati prosody in order to evolve free, continuous, unsingable verse like the English Blank Verse. It may be recalled that Naradam, who was fired with an ambition to write an epic of the English type, was the first to feel the want of such a vehicle and go out in quest of a suitable epic measure. Then, Nanalal, taking his cue from Naradam, joined the quest, but neither of them found adequate answer for it. Thakore, who was by temperament and training as well as by his acquaintance with the intricacies of English prosody, better equipped for the

task than either Narmad or Nanalal, found that the chief obstacles in the attainment of this objective were two - (1) the musical propensity of the Gujarati verse and (2) the rigidity of the fixed pauses in the metrical structures used in Gujarati poetry. Thakore wanted 'continuous natural verse free from the obligation of music like the English Blank Verse, which was unsingable and free'.

Old, mediaeval and even a large bulk of modern Gujarati poetry leaned heavily on the music of the numbers for its effect. Thakore who found 'Poor Gujarati poetry - a slave to music', stoutly opposed this musical tendency and set out to prove that music, despite its original association with verse, was not an essential or inalienable adjunct to poetry and was better left to the lyrical variety called the song. Quoting three passages, written in Blank Verse, from Milton, Wordsworth and Browning, Thakore sought to establish that highest poetry eschewed what is called music and yet arrived at a harmony of numbers, despite the fact that it could neither be sung nor chanted.

'The inspiration to recite and not to chant or sing poetry', says R.V.Pathak very rightly, 'came through the contact with English poetry', yet for a considerable time, most of the modern Gujarati poetry continued to be written in more or less singable verses. Since the constitution of the Gujarati language is fundamentally different from that of English, Gujarati poetry in its attempts to evolve an equivalent of the English Blank Verse, could adopt from it only its two main characteristics - the over-running of the lines by eliminating rhyme or the

1. Vide, 'Kavita Shikshan', p. 27.
final pause, and the variation of the pauses, by breaking the rigidity of their fixed positions in classical Sanskrit and indigenous Gujarati metres. Thakore demonstrated through his experiments that if Gujarati poetry was freed from the duty of being singable, the need for the traditional fixed pauses would be largely eliminated or overcome. The pauses then could be artistically manipulated and placed conveniently to ensure an uninterrupted flow of thought or meaning from line to line, thus even breaking the traditional stanza-pattern. Classical Sanskrit metres have no ending rhymes, but so music-minded did Gujarati poets seem to be that they introduced the ending rhymes even there. Thakore waged a relentless battle against this tendency.¹ Thakore felt that since Gujarati poetry had adopted the English punctuation, the advantage could be pressed further by having those pauses suited to the meaning, to facilitate the free continuous movement of thought and expression in verse. Justifiably asserting 'continuous run-on verse is my contribution to Gujarati poetry',² Thakore, through his elaborate experimentation with a classical Sanskrit metre called 'Prithvi', evolved something nearest to the English Blank Verse, by breaking the rigidity of its fixed pauses and doing away with the ending rhymes, thus permitting a sentence to run into a stanza or paragraph of almost any length.

While Thakore believed that there could be no highest poetry in Gujarati without having something approximating to the English Blank Verse, he was also aware of the fact that since English prosody was based on stress and accent structure, any attempt to write Gujarati poetry governed by accent, which was undetermined, was not feasible,³ and he showed that those who claimed to have done

this, did so accidentally or not at all. Thakore therefore sought to establish the reformed 'Prithvi' to do the duty of the English Blank Verse - 'the medium of highest thought in English poetry'. He felt gratified that a number of young Gujarati poets since then had adopted his invention, which was, in other words, a fair measure of its success and popularity.

(3) Not the least of Thakore's three main distinctions has yet to be noticed and that is the firm and decisive manner in which he, deriving his inspiration directly from English poetry, planted the sonnet in modern Gujarati poetry. It is perhaps a little surprising that while assaying almost all the lyrical forms, modern Gujarati poetry had not, till Thakore, exploited the sonnet to its advantage. It may be recalled that Kant had tried his hand at translating a few of Mrs. Browning's sonnets into Gujarati and made a few attempts at original compositions. But with an exception or two, he left these at less than fourteen lines or destroyed them, probably not finding himself quite at home with this very exacting form. Narsinhrao wrote a solitary one and that too late in life. Kalapi probably found the sonnet too small for his profusion of feelings and Nanalal's few attempts at it are nowhere near the mark. The net result of all these, however, was that while modern Gujarati poetry made considerable headway with the other English lyrical forms, the sonnet had curiously not taken root in Gujarati poetry.

Thakore claimed that he was chronologically the first to write the sonnet in Gujarati and that not only his friend Kant, but also a few others in Marathi language, had received their inspiration from him, whereas he had gone directly to the English source for his. Whatever the truth of the matter or the order of

precedence, the sonnet in Gujarati remains practically associated with the name of Thakore.  

In his long poetic career, Thakore wrote and translated a number of sonnets of the Petrarchan, Shakespearean and irregular types on a variety of subjects, of which 164 were collected and posthumously published in a separate volume (edited by Umashanker Joshi, 1953). The intellectual discipline as also the sense of form demanded of the sonnet, otherwise also Thakore's principal poetic assets, served him well not only in adopting it as the chief vehicle of his poetic expression, but also in adjusting the alien form to the requirements of the Gujarati language. The sonnet seemed to suit Thakore's poetic temperament so much that probably more than half of his best is found in his sonnets. At any rate, barring a few longer pieces, it is in some of his sonnets, that the best of Thakore's poetry is suggested and contained after the fashion of the oak in the acorn. 

Here, his range was truly wide. He wrote more than twenty sonnets on his conception of poetry, including two sonnets, in Wordsworth's fashion, on the sonnet; an equal number on love; double that number on friendship, old age and death - most of them belonging broadly to that variety called the subjective, while the rest include a large number on patriotism, two world wars, nature and the varied aspects of life, presented more or less objectively. 

In his essay on the sonnet, where he commented upon the different types and specimens of the sonnet, including the regular and irregular, and the sonnets by Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Keats, Matthew Arnold, W.H. Davies, Rupert Brooke, W.B. Yeats and Hasefield, quoting also the authority of T.W.H. Crossland's 'The English Sonnets', Thakore observed that it was good to have all of them in mind,

but it was improper to imitate any of them blindly while handling the sonnet in Gujarati. A life-long believer in experimentation, Thakore suggested also translations by way of experiment and discipline - he himself had done so - and maintained that since the peculiar structure of the Gujarati language made the adoption of all the features and characteristics of the sonnet as practised in England difficult, if not impossible, it may be necessary to write the sonnet in Gujarati without its usual rhyme-scheme and even without any rhyme. It was principally through Thakore's efforts that the sonnet was established in Gujarati poetry and Thakore's inspiration and models, for this as already stated, were English.

Thakore's handling of the other English poetic forms, such as the ballad, ode, elegy, dramatic lyric and the epic (of which there is only a fragment), as also the details of the influence of English poetry on his thought, expression and representation in his several poems is dealt with briefly in what follows:

(a) First in this connection comes a group of poems, where Thakore represented his conception of poetry in verse. While this is reminiscent of the practice of Horace and Pope, who sometimes handled the most obtruse critical questions in verse, which to some extent establishes the affinity between Thakore's poetic attitude and classicism of a sort, the actual representation and expression of that poetic ideal reveal here and there traces of the influence of a number of English poems and poets, both classical and romantic. In a poem called 'The Duty of a Poet', Thakore exhorts the poet not to look for the subject in his own self, but to observe the world without him, to identify himself with others, attempt the full gamut the human mind is capable of, and create something new, which is not ephemeral. This is a

poetic ideal, which perhaps even Matthew Arnold would not have put differently. On the same lines are his three poems, where tacitly using the Greek conception of the Muses, he seeks to represent poetry as the Queen among the arts. 1 In another poem, a sonnet, 2 Thakore through the imagery of a musical instrument, which serves as a symbol of the poet's heart, depicted as being surrounded by wilderness, symbolic of the state of the world in which the poet finds himself, suggests that in uncomgenial environments such as these, the poet's heart cannot be expected to sing, always and to all, cheerfully - which is Thakore's way of explaining why a considerable portion of poetry is sad, as in the Romantic poetry of Shelley, Keats and Byron and the earlier modern Gujarati poetry written under their influence. The poem, which stopped here in the earlier edition, was later enlarged into a sonnet, probably because he had by then overcome, what he called, the earlier streak, of Byronism, 3 and he would not ally himself with such romantic sentimentalism. Hence ten more lines were appended to the original four and Thakore proceeded to turn the tables on romanticism by saying that, though this was true in a sense, the true poet, even in the midst of storm and destruction, should not fail in his duty to notice the seeds of Spring or regeneration, which infuses a spirit of hope and cheer in the poet's totality of vision, which is essential.

Here, while the thought in the first part of the poem is not different from that in Mrs. Browning's 'A Musical Instrument', the thought in the second half, which contains the description of the whirlwind as a destroyer and preserver, is evidently inspired by Shelley's 'West Wind'.

On the theme of the immortality of poetry, 4 Thakore suggested that while everything in the material world was inexorably subject to death and change, Time

relentlessly destroying everything, only poetry was immortal — a sentiment exquisitely set forth by Shakespeare in some of his sonnets, with some variation by Keats in his 'Grecian Urn' and by O'Shaughnessy's ode beginning with 'We are the music-makers'.

Thakore's reflections on the mortality and immortality of different things in his poem called the 'Flute' where he wrote, 'Nations and oceans rise, swell, fall and rise again; poetry goes on for ever' can be adjusted to those in Hardy's 'In the Time of the Breaking of Nations', with only the emphasis shifted from agriculture to art. Similarly, the influence of Shelley's 'Ozymandias' and Gray's 'Elegy', in parts, can also be seen in Thakore's poem where he reflects on empires and dynasties rising and then falling into oblivion with only a marble, metal image or an old coin, falling into the hands of an excavator, as the only evidence of their existence. In a poem called 'Mahasarga' Thakore observes that a true poet does not rest content with dream as a dream, reality as reality, but on the basis of reality, creates something which rises above it. The author, commenting on this in a note, speaks of the poet's function as consisting in 'harmonizing the ideal and real, worldly, other worldly and romantic', which is an interesting instance of not only the influence of English poetry, but also of English criticism working on the mind of the poet.

A poem called 'The Poet's Thirst of Love', which Thakore describes as the only product of 'Byronic sentimentalism composed in early years, which is not destroyed', goes on to suggest that the poet's insatiable thirst for love remains ungratified, since he finds no object worth his love, with the result that the poor soul goes on pining for what is not. Here, though the sentiment is typically Byronic, 'All For Love', the thought and its representation are nearer to Shelley's lines on the 'Moon' with a veiled symbolism of the poet himself, who finds no object on earth worth his constancy, while the last line in Thakore's poem is a clear echo of Shelley's 'We look before and after and pine for what is not' (Skylark).

(b) Next, among the group of poems, classified by the author as 'personal', are poems on friendship, a shared age, sleep, some on the different birth-day anniversaries of the author and a few elegiac poems, which are self-evidently inspired by identical themes in English poetry, being practically non-existent in that form in old or mediaeval Gujarati poetry. Thakore's intimacy with Kant found expression in some of the poems addressed to him. One of them is designed as a reply to a poem by Kant, who had dedicated his poems to Thakore, seeking to answer the argument implicit in Kant's line, 'Accept these if you please in remembrance of time gone by'. Taking his cue from the line, Thakore observed that the experience of love was unforgettable and then proceeded in a personal vein to say, 'I am now lost in the hot sands of the desert; my eyes are singed; my senses are benumbed and I am unable even to open my heart to you'. Poetic utterances like these, typically romantic and subjective, obviously run on the same lines as in a number of those in Shelley and Keats, e.g. 'I fall on the thorns of life; I bleed' (Shelley) and 'My heart aches and a drowsy numbness pains my sense' (Keats). There is also implicit in the poem the romanticism

of love, under a cloud and of lovers divided by the wedge of misunderstanding, as in some of the sonnets of Shakespeare.

Another poem, a sonnet, entitled 'Free Showers of Love', which is typically Shakespearean in tone and sentiment, though not in construction, tells of the old letters from the poet's friend, going over which again, old memories are revived, many incidents recreated in memory and the poet feeling as if young again as he was then. This is particularly reminiscent of Shakespeare's sonnet -

"When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee . . .
. . . thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings,
That I scorn to change my state with Kings'.

and another, beginning with -

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thoughts
I summon up remembrance of things past,
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All loses are restored, and sorrows end'.

A poem called 'Fruitful Friendship' adopts the familiar conversational style, as in some of the poems of Browning and Mrs. Browning, and proceeds thus:

'Do not ask why I am silent; do not write (to ask) why I do not write;
Silence does not prove that the heart is dried up',

which is sentimentally close to Shakespeare's -

'0 never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to quality' etc.

and to some extent close to the following from Wordsworth's 'To a Distant Friend'

'Why art thou silent? Is thy love a plant
Of such weak fibre that the treacherous air
Of absence withers what was once so fair?'

An adaptation of A.H. Clough's 'Qua Carsum Ventas', called 'Brave Barks' seems to have been allowed to speak for Thakore's own feelings on his friend Kant's conversion to Christianity, which brought about an estrangement between the two friends, since Thakore did not see eye to eye with Kant on it. A sonnet, entitled, 'After Many Years' gives a poignant expression to the feeling in the heart, assailed by a sense of loneliness and sadness. 'O friend, oh heart, where are you gone? Life without you is meaningless for me. I know not what to do; I like nothing; I can't forget; the whole world appears dark. Men and animals mourn the loss for a time and then take to new companions. When most love in the world is superficial, to whom shall the heart turn for love?' are sentiments which bear a striking affinity with a number of Shakespeare's sonnets addressed to his friend, but especially with —

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\text{办 like a winter hath my absence been} \\
\text{From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year!} \\
\text{What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen,} \\
\text{What old December's bareness everywhere!}
\]

Thakore's poems on his friend generally fall in line with Shakespeare's sonnets on his friend and though Thakore said of himself that he was temperamentally unemotional and in poetry emphasized the predominance of thought, his poems on his friend reveals a trait, which perhaps could not be denied its right, even in the teeth of his poetic theory.

Along with these poems on friendship, there are others written more or less in a personal vein. One of them is a poem called 'Farewell to the Banyan Tree' where the tree stands symbolically for the happy days, as a student and a Professor,

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Thakore had spent at the Deccan College, Poona. The poem begins reminiscently with the time when he went there as a curly-haired youth and left as a grey-haired old man. With a sense of deep gratitude, he remembers how its multitudinous shade sheltered him like the tent of the cloud (reminiscent of Shelley's 'Cloud'), how it fed him like a nurse with its milk of love (reminiscent of Wordsworth's idea in the 'Ode'), which made him what he was. East and West to it were the hills with the river flowing by, where he dreamt his youthful dreams. In its morning, mid-day and setting sun, he found a hint for self-reliance, self-achievement and the light of self-experience. While receiving these gifts from it, he too may have per chance; the drama of life was folding up (Shakespeare's imagery) and he bids goodbye to it.

The poem, whose authenticity of experience cannot be gainsaid, may however be compared with some of the reflections in Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey', where the poet speaks of the river Wye almost in a similar vein -

'With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years'.

And further -

'And so I dare to hope
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was, when first
I came among these hills: when like a roe,
I bounded over the mountains, by the sides
Of deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led'.

In this 'personal' group, there are two poems on sleep, the one called 'Entreaty to Sleep', which is partly an adaptation and partly a translation of Wordsworth's famous poem on the same subject; and the other, entitled 'To Sleep'.

which is the poet's own effort in the same strain. But probably the best in this
category are the poems on old age, which coming as they do from the author's own
experience, are some of the most moving verses he wrote. Poems on an unusual
subject like it are all but rare in Gujarati poetry before Thakore — there is, of
course, a very interesting one by the mediaeval Gujarati poet Narsinh Mehta: 'Who
sent this old age? Why did it come when it was not called for?' etc. and even in
English poetry, apart from some written as a part of the drama of life through its
several stages, they are few and far between. Shakespeare's 'Seven Stages of Man'
in 'As You Like It', Coleridge's 'Youth and Age', T. Campbell's 'The River of Life',
Keats's 'The Human Seasons', Wordsworth's few lines on the same subject in his 'Ode
on the Intimations of Immortality' and particularly Matthew Arnold's 'Youth's
Agitation' and 'Growing Old' are some of them. But the sheer pathos of life,
prolonging beyond the strength and the will to live, is vividly portrayed by Thakore,
who rightly considered these poems as his special contribution. Eminently free
from any trace of morbidity, self-pity, whining or wincing, these poems are an
expression of a spirit undaunted by the prospect of death or the challenge of old age.
Like Browning in 'Rabbi Ben Ezra', Thakore in a poem called the 'Test' calls the
whole of life a test, the most trying of which being old age. Another poem, called
'A Picture of Old Age', a sonnet, vividly represents the pathos of old age, when
the old find 'nothing under their control—mind, body, hunger, thirst, sleep or
awakening' — often a picture of sheer helplessness, a butt of ridicule, an object
of fun or cold indifference on the part of the family, which is partly reminiscent
of Shakespeare's 'Sans everything'.

The greatest source of misery to the old, as depicted in another poem, is the loss of old friends and companions, which is comparable, to some extent, with the thought in Tennyson's 'Ulysses', where Ulysses finds life intolerable for the same reason. These reflections, in general, may also be compared with those in Matthew Arnold's 'Growing Old' -

What is it to grow old?
Is it to lose the glory of the form,
The lustre of the eye?
Is it for beauty to forego her wreath?
Yes, but not this alone.
Is it to feel our strength -
Not our bloom only, but our strength - decay?
Is it to feel each limb
Grow stiffer, every function less exact,
Each nerve more loosely strung?

It is - last stage of all -
When we are frozen up within, and quite
The phantom of our selves'.

What makes the miserable old age doubly miserable is the subject of another sonnet, which has an intensely personal, even autobiographical ring about it. 'To the Battered Body' is a most moving sonnet, where the poet, apostrophising his old battered body, as if addressing a faithful horse or companion, urges it to complete the journey whose end is not far off. The poet then observes, 'Companion of my long journey, I have yet a little further to go; to complete a thing or two; after which I and you would be free to taste the honey of rest'. Here, Browning's idea that old age is not for rest or inactivity; the resolve of Ulysses to strive, to seek and not to rest or rust in idleness, and Herrick's address to the Blossoms and Daffodils to wait a little longer and then they would go together - are also reflections more or less on the same lines.

In another poem, the poet observes that he had not hoped to live so long and get so much from life. He has not received blows sudden or heavy; he had not many friends, much wealth or anything; he bowed only to Truth and loved Beauty, which may be compared with the following lines from W.S. Landor (which, incidentally, Thakore had also translated,)

'I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;  
Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art;  
I warmed both hands before the fire of life,  
It sinks, and I am ready to depart'.

A few of Thakore's elegiac poems may also be examined here. This poetic form, derived in its modern sense from English, which had engaged the attention of almost all the modern Gujarati poets since Dalpatram, who wrote an elegy on his friend Forbes, urged also Thakore to express himself in it in a number of short elegies, few of which, however, reach the emotional pitch required of that variety. An elegy of Mahatma Gandhi, on Sardar Patel, and the one on Prabhashanker Pattani dealing with these individuals more or less impersonally as outstanding public men, mourning their loss to the country, are in line with the English elegiac poems of that type.

An elegy, experimentally cast in the form of a sonnet, on the death of the poet's friend Kant, interweaves a sense of personal loss with a philosophic consolation, usual in elegies like 'Adonais' and 'In Memoriam'. An elegy on Kent's

wife, also strikes a personal note while dwelling on her charm and the qualities of her loving heart without much philosophizing. There are a few more, but none of them achieves any special distinction, comparable with the finest in English poetry.

Exception may, however, be made in the case of a long elegiac poem, called 'Separation', inspired by the death of the poet's wife, which has, in parts, the depth and the pathos of an intensely moving personal experience. Described by the author as 'elegiac utterances', 'Separation' is not continuous elegy, but a group of poems of unequal length, dealing with the illness and death of the poet's wife. The poem opens with the poet's premonition that the illness of his wife is going to prove fatal. This is followed by a philosophic piece called 'Inability to Bear', where the poet, putting his unquestioning trust in the apparently inscrutable ways of God (as in Charles Lamb's 'The economy of heaven is dark', in 'On An Infant Dying As Soon As Born' and as in Tennyson's 'In Memoriam'), finds that his first duty is to console the crying young ones. In the piece which follows, the ailing wife implores her husband to give her no more medical relief, but only something which brings eternal sleep. The next two pieces depict the dying wife's regret that she was too late in her understanding of her husband and the lover's reply that dying as she is, she need not worry herself with such thoughts. After some more reflections on the futility of grieving and on the need for resigning oneself to the will of God,

since all life ends somewhere, it is man's to love and serve, the rest being in God's hands, which is philosophically near to Milton's observation in his poem 'On His Blindness' and Browning's in 'Prospect' and 'Rabbi Ben Ezra'.

It is in the section called 'Living Death', however, that the elegy proper, according to the author, begins. It opens with the poet's lament on his wife's death, but in the philosophic reflections which follow, the poet refuses to console himself with any spiritual balm of the conventional type, such as the immortality of the soul and the rest. The poet sees visions and hears the voice of his deceased wife by night and day, which he knows to be hallucinations. Yet he would not like to miss them, since they represent the memory of the dear departed, which is the only thing that lives after death. 'A Tear of Separation' is a lyric traditionally meant to be sung. Here, the poet says, 'I know not where to turn to pacify my heart. Clouds pour o'er their heart in showers and the wind frolics with them. Trees, flowers and the bright evening stir my memory; they are the same, but they look different since my beloved is gone', which may be compared with the thought in Wordsworth's 'Ode' -

'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;
Yet, I know, where'er I go,
That there hath pass'd away a glory from the earth'.

1. Compare, Swinburne's 'the longest river winds somewhere safely to the sea' in the same context.
After the reminiscent 'Happy Summer', follows a sonnet called 'Vigil', which speaks of the poet waking up at midnight, seeing the light of the moon reflected in circles over the chair and fancying the deceased wife to be seated there. The poet stands up, lights the lamp and finds the chair empty. This is followed by the description of peace that prevails at night when all life and movement are set at rest. The blue sky, silent and bright spreads over the blue sea and the heart, with all its passions subsided, is at peace. Here, the background of nature, breathing an atmosphere of tangible peace, is reminiscent of a part of Wordsworth's 'Upon the Westminster Bridge'. The poet finds that the peace has entered into his heart. The vision of peace described here is, with adjustments, the thought also in Wordsworth's 'Ode' — how the child is attended with a vision, which is lost as he grows and moves daily further from it, finding temporarily the glory departed from earth, which is in course of time recovered with the recovery of faith.

In the next poem, called 'Oblivion' the poet says that everything is ultimately swallowed up in oblivion. The picture fixed in memory grows dim in course of time and is finally obliterated, but the poet ends by saying to his beloved dead wife 'So long as I live, you too live', which is comparable with the following from Shakespeare's sonnet, 'To his Love' —

'So long as man can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and gives life to thee'.

The next piece called 'Speculation' has a note by the author, where he

4. Vide, Ibid, p. 188.
5. Vide, Ibid, p. 188.
observes that though Time is mighty, there are moments when a man can proudly claim that he has had the better of Time, which defeat even Time is forced to admit. The speculation about Time in the poem e.g. 'Time that creates and destroys everything',

'It is not only the body of man that is mortal, but also his experiences; all are swallowed up'.

'But love scores victory over death at least for a few moments' bears the imprint of thought in Shakespeare's sonnets, referring to Time, e.g. 

'Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks Within his bending sickle's compass come.'

In the concluding piece, which sounds like a Shakespearean 'Epilogue', the poet observes that he has depicted the triumph of love, which is both personal and universal, realistically. He hopes that his beloved wife's name would be immortalized in literature, which may be compared with Shakespeare's claim -

'That in black ink, my love may still shine bright'.

(c) A third group of poems, collectively called, 'A Day of Love' and classified by the author as 'dramatic lyrics', seeks to depict the growing love between the unnamed hero and heroine with the help of a few simple and significant incidents or episodes in their lives, without any special attempt to tell a story or draw the characters. Mostly cast in the form of sonnets, each of the nineteen pieces is designed as the dramatic utterance of the hero or the heroine, through which the history of their growing love, culminating in complete identity, is suggested. Unlike the elegiac 'Separation', which is largely subjective and fundamentally 'real',

5. Vide, Ibid, pp. 196-211.
this bunch of love-poems is 'absolutely imaginary', with Love in the role of the hero and the heroine, who do not even bear any name. If the idea behind the elegiac group of poems was to show, as the author states, man's tragic awareness of the finite nature of life, the one behind these love-lyrics is to emphasise the finite character of love, limited as it is by death. The author's original intention was to present this as a sonnet-sequence, in a rather conscious effort to register it as his pioneering attainment in the history of modern Gujarati poetry. As things stand, however, the poem is not a sonnet-sequence, though mostly in the sonnet-form.

Leaving aside the unusualness of 'dramatic lyrics' being presented in the form of sonnets, Thakore was here consciously adopting the English poetic form, handled with distinction by the English poets, the foremost among whom are Tennyson and Browning. Since Thakore is poetically closer in certain vital respects to Browning than to Tennyson, the inspiration may have come directly from Browning's dramatic lyrics and monologues, many of which are significantly concerned with love. It is also not unlikely that Thakore, in the context of his original plan of writing this poem as a sonnet-sequence, was consciously seeking to emulate the Elizabethan English sonneteers, including Shakespeare, who produced a chain of sonnets.

Thakore seems to have consciously or unconsciously combined the technique of the Elizabethan sonnet-sequence and Browning's dramatic lyrics, though the former are never classed as dramatic lyrics, since they make no pretence at dramatic objectivity and the latter are not presented as sonnets, since they are not intended as personal. It was, therefore, probably the imp of experimentation that urged Thakore to combine the two and present the dramatic lyrics in the form of the sonnets.

For all practical purposes, however, Thakore's poem belongs broadly to the category of the subjective lyric and probably his only motive in describing it as 'dramatic lyric' was to emphasise its 'dramatic' or objective aspect, as a precaution against its being taken too literally. Nevertheless, as it is not always difficult to see through the mask in both Shakespeare and Browning, it is possible to read in these 'dramatic' lyrics of Thakore a part of himself in thin disguise. Thakore's poem is dramatic in the limited sense that it is not materially personal or autobiographical, but it is strictly speaking not so, containing as it does some introductory observation or descriptions\(^1\) which obviously flow from the poet's pen, which is surprising in view of the fact that in a composition of this nature, the poet has obviously no loci standing. Moreover, the conversation reported in some of the pieces is not strictly dramatic, as it is, for instance, in Browning. These, however, do not detract from the poem as such, which, in parts at least, is beautifully effective.

The whole poem, which is divided between the utterances of the hero and the heroine, has a background, which is typically indigenous - an instance of how Thakore could appropriate impulses from abroad and domesticate them to give them a life of their own.

The poem opens with a sonnet, entitled 'The Dawn of Love',\(^2\) presenting the picture of the young beloved, standing before a mirror, surprised and clasped by her lover from behind. This is followed by another,\(^3\) where the lover, left to himself, dwells on his happy moments with his beloved. The next three sonnets\(^4\) depict the lovers' parting-moment, the beloved's goodbye, and the lover's insincere

\(^1\) Vide, 'Bhanakar', p. 197.
\(^2\) Vide, Ibid, p. 197.
\(^3\) Vide, Ibid, pp. 197-198.
\(^4\) Vide, Ibid, pp. 198-199.
thoughts of renouncing the world. But the lover soon repents and then begins to
grow spiritually. This change is represented symbolically in the next sonnet,^
where the lover offers his beloved a pure white flower as a token of his love.

The beginning, growth and consummation of love, which is the theme of the
poem, reaches a further stage of self-fulfilment with the birth of a son to the hero
and the heroine, which is dealt with in another sonnet^ and then in the lullaby
which follows,^ the sonnet-form is discarded. The next piece, which is again a
sonnet^ is an adaptation of Tennyson's 'As through the land at eve we went' from
the 'Princess' used here for the same purpose, namely, the lovers' quarrel which ends
suddenly with a reconciliation on seeing the grave of their child. 'The High-noon of
Love'^ is then reached in the life of the lovers. The rest of the poem, which
includes a sonnet on a beautiful lake,^ described in a style reminiscent of Wordsworth,
moves gradually towards the two lovers achieving absolute bliss through oneness.

(d) Among Thakore's poems, which are predominantly reflective, are such as
those on faith,^ and dejection.^^ These poems, some of them curiously addressed to
God, even when the subject is disbelief, which reminds one of a man saying, 'Thank
God, I am an atheist!', are expressive of the deep spiritual unrest, which also
found expression in Francis Thompson's 'The Hound of Heaven', Tennyson's 'In Memorian'
and Matthew Arnold's 'Rugby Chapel', with all of which Thakore was well-acquainted.

5. Vide, Ibid, pp. 204-205.
One of his poems, entitled 'Fill the Eyes with Rays', instinct with the fervour of faith and devotion, which addresses God as 'Father', bears an unmistakable imprint of Christian thought, probably a vestige of Thakore's own inclination to be converted to Christianity, which he ultimately overcame. There is, along with this, a translation of the well-known English hymn 'Nearer to Thee, my God!' These expressions of spiritual unrest and faith do not seem, however, to have formulated themselves into any definite philosophy in Thakore, who described himself as 'scientific-minded', and 'agnostic' like Matthew Arnold and a 'rationalist', which led him vehemently to denounce 'Blind Faith'.

Among these reflective poems are also some on death. One of them called 'Nature and Death', a sonnet, is based on the analogy between Nature and mother and argues that as a mother rocks her child peacefully to sleep, Nature should also do likewise to her children when tired, old and in pain. Here, the analogy between nature and mother, sleep and death is evidently Wordsworthian, as in his famous 'Ode', while the indictment of Nature as heartless is reminiscent of Matthew Arnold's 'Man and nature can never be fast friends' and Tennyson's 'Nature, red in tooth and claw'. The poem, however, emphasises the old tired man's wish for death, which he wants to be as peaceful as sleep, as in Keats's lines in his ode 'To a Nightingale' -

many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath.'

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7. Vide, 'To a Preacher', Arnold, op.cit., p. 32.
Another poem 'Invitation to Death', a combination of a sort, of Shelley's 'Invocation to Night' and Browning's 'Prospice', develops itself later on the lines of Browning's philosophy in 'Rabbi Ben Ezra' that death is not the end, but the fulfilment of life - a thought also negatively put in Tennyson's 'Lotos-Eaters'.

Thakore's long reflective poem called the 'Ascent', which opens with an English quotation - 'Up, up, and aloft!

Soar away into the undomed ever-resplendent Empyrean!' uses for its theme of the spiritual ascent the imagery of a stiff up-hill journey, reminiscent of the one in Christian Rossetti's 'Up-hill', which, incidentally, Thakore elsewhere had rendered into Gujarati, and adopts a philosophic tone, which is not different from the one Wordsworth did in his 'Tintern Abbey', Matthew Arnold in his 'Rugby Chapel' and Browning in 'A Grammarian's Funeral'. Though not presented, like Wordsworth's 'Prelude', strictly as a spiritual autobiography, it has more than a casual or superficial affinity with the 'Prelude', in particular, and Wordsworth's poems of like nature, in general. The poetic form of the poem lies uncertainly between an ode and a dramatic lyric, where the poet imagines his lonely hero as slowly and strenuously going up the tough ascent, wondering whether his companion still pursued or gave up the quest. The stiff ascent has turned back all his companions who, losing heart, wind slowly back to the plains below, stopping by a cool stream, resting on a rock, watching the streams in their serpentine course; isolated green villages and cottages; and the valley, rich with fields surrounded by woods, which may be compared with Wordsworth's -

When I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which, at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Among the woods and copses lose themselves'.
(Tintern Abbey)

This may also be compared with the following from Matthew Arnold's 'Rugby Chapel' -

'Friends, who set forth at our side,
Falter, art lost in the storm.
We, we only are left!
......... we strain on.'

and also -

'Ah, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them, the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
.............
Solo they shall stray: in the rocks
Stagger for ever in vain,
Die one by one in the waste.'

The ascending hero's disheartened companions urged him to recede with them, but 'to ascend and still ascend' was with him (as with Tennyson's 'Ulysses', who 'cannot rest from travel', 'the lights begin to twinkle from the rocks' and who is determined to 'strive, seek, find, and not to yield') a firm resolve. But as he ascends, leaving behind him the work-a-day world and -

'the unlettered plain its herd and crop;
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture!
.............
Thither our path lies; wind up the heights.'

(R. Browning: 'A Grammarian's Funeral')

- he finds hypocritical and selfish hermits, doctors, quacks and so-called celibates in the depths of degradation, trying to eke out a living from the gullible, where the vision is similar to that in the 'Rugby Chapel' -

'Such, so soulless, so poor
Is the race of men whom I see.
.............
.... the men of the crowd
Who all round me to-day
Bluster or grunge, and make life
Ridiculous, and dull and void.'

(Matthew Arnold)
The hero is reminded of a poet (namely, Byron) saying that everything is fine in nature excepting man. The sound of the temple-bells induces in him a feeling of deep distress and he wonders whether that was the only thing left of the religion of the high-souled Aryans. Then he reflects on the many vanished nations and religions and wonders if his own would bear the cross on its temples and mosques or be a godless one and meet their fate. He is overwhelmed with grief at that thought, which may be compared with Wordsworth's -

'When I have borne in memory what has tamed
Great nations; how ennobling thoughts depart,
........some fears
I had, my country! - am I to be blamed?
Now, when I think of thee, and what thou art,
Verily, in the bottom of my heart
Of those unfilial fears I am ashamed.'

(Palgrave's 'Golden Treasury', Poem 214)

Though disheartened, he ascends, praying to God for light. Soon he feels the peace, which assuages and heals his bruises. His faith is restored and in that chastened mood he reflects that while nations, empires, cultures and civilizations come and go, the Mighty Actor (Time) plays his part, but after all, the strings are in the hands of God.

The impact of English poetry - both direct and indirect - is evident in the representation of the sensitive reactions of a soul in the grip of a spiritual gloom at the degradation it watches all around. The rehabilitation of lost hope and faith through inexpressible travail of agony, though undoubtedly the poet's own, is reminiscent of similar expressions in the prose and poetry of the Victorian Age, when science and religion seemed to come into an open conflict, shaking the very foundation of man's beliefs, driving some to atheism, not a few to agnosticism and almost all sensitive souls to deep introspection. Thakore observed that the

inspiration under which this poem was written did not come from his friend Kant's conversion to Christianity, as is generally supposed, but from his own inclination to it in 1883, which he finally resisted three years later. He added that the hill and the ascent were merely symbolic, where his aim was to induce the thinking hearts to reflect on the depths of spiritual degradation into which some of the youths of the day had fallen.

The identity of thought, approach and representation between English and Gujarati poetry, as exemplified in Thakore's 'Ascent', is too evident to need any comment. One point, however, may be finally made. In a note on the poem, Thakore remarked that the divine peace that ultimately prevailed through the recovery of faith, 'cleansed the worldly dirt of a spiritual child, engrossed in illusions, which make him forget himself and his heritage.' It is interesting to note that Wordsworth ascribed the same qualities to Nature and traced man's spiritual recovery through faith in the same way.

(e) A few among the other groups of Thakore's poems may be mentioned here, of which the patriotic poems written by him form a sizable group by themselves. Opening a whole section with a translation of Scott's famous lines 'Breathes there the man', Thakore ranges over a wide variety of subjects, which are only remotely or nominally related to the love of the land, e.g. the poem entitled 'Agriculture', where the economic philosophy of the 'Deserted Village' with its emphasis on agriculture as the backbone of a country's economy seems to be applied to conditions in India. Thakore was not an active patriot in the usual sense of the word and hence his patriotic poems lack the fire or the fervour which distinguishes, for

instance, some of the poems of Narmad, who was the first to write on this theme, directly under the influence of English poetry.

Of the longer narrative poems, written by Thakore, quite a few of them\(^1\) are either acknowledged translations or adaptations from English, while a long narrative called 'The Episode of Damu Vakil'\(^2\) seems heavily influenced by Cowper's ballad 'John Giblin', with adjustments suited to local conditions. Three common factors tend to establish this influence fairly clearly. Firstly, both are based on the central incident that the hero in both the poems loses his hat - Giblin while riding an uncontrollable speeding horse, Damu in a speeding train robbed of his hat and trousers while asleep. Secondly, both of them go to their friend's place and get substitutes. Thirdly, both the poems aim at humorous effect at the cost of the comic hero. But while Cowper's ballad is free from improbability, Thakore's poem suffers from a very serious improbability of the 'rich' lawyer having only one pair of trousers with him, which urges him to pretend sickness, to make his journey from the railway station in an ambulance, and to steal his friend's bigger pair of trousers without exciting his friend's suspicion. The indifferent handling of the humorous theme tends to show that the author had very little humour in him, of which he himself seems to be aware, or very little grasp of the comic side of life. By and large, Thakore had little narrative gift and, in this poem at any rate, like Kent in 'King Lear', he can count as one of his qualifications that he could mar a tale in telling it. But it was his indomitable urge to experiment, which prompted him to try his hand at a variety of literary forms and styles, among which also may be included his several poems, presumably meant for children.\(^4\) These poems, however,

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are generally too heavy and obtruse for the consumers Thakore had in mind.

It was perhaps in the same spirit of experimentation that Thakore planned a long narrative poem, sometimes described as an epic, of which, however, a fragment is all that finally materialised. The original intention was to take 'some historical or pseudo-historical' story for which as a poetic type, Thakore believed as superior to the lyric.  

A part of the projected 'epic' called 'A Broken Twig' opens with an English quotation -

'For lairds will fight dames must weep'

which provides the clue to the whole poem and to the genre to which it properly belongs. The inspiration seems to be derived, as in Kalapi's so-called epic poem 'Hamirji Goel', from Scott's chivalrous romances and the poem proceeds on the lines made familiar by Scott's technique in many of his versified romances - the theme of chivalry, the call to fight for the country, the drum and the bugle, the young man and his ready horse, the young wife at home, farewell and good wishes, the relative claims of love and patriotism, old men talking of battles long ago in reminiscent mood, with young glowing faces in a circle listening with rapt attention - are all there. The Rajput chivalry, as a part of India's heroic tradition, comes to the author handy as a counterpart to Scottish chivalry. The interweaving of the two sentiments - love and war - so characteristic of chivalry tales and romances, are both present in Thakore's poem. Like any canto of Scott, which opens with a general introduction to the theme, together with the seasonal description of Nature, time and space.

2. Vide, 'Bhanakar', 1942 Ed. p. 44.
3. Vide, Ibid, p. 44.
place, Thakore's poem opens with the picture of the young heroine, as she lay alone on her bed at midnight, shedding tears. The hero had left her a few hours ago to face the enemy on hearing the drum, which beat, calling all brave ones to defend the country. The hero, descended from a warlike family, was young, brave and ambitious. He took leave of his beloved. He then jumped over his spirited mare and disappeared as his beloved stood watching him for long.

Since the poem was never completed, it is idle to speculate what form and shape it would have finally taken and it may best be left as Thakore's attempt at what appears to be a Romance.

Finally, a group of Nature poems may be taken. Among these, are his two poems on the river 'Reva'\(^1\) the three sonnets, depicting man and Nature in juxta-position,\(^2\) and a poem called 'Sargadarshan' or 'the vision of Nature'.\(^3\)

The sonnet on the river 'Reva'\(^4\) for which, like Wordsworth for the sylvan Wye, Thakore had a great childhood fascination, which remained with him for life, giving him some of the finest poetic moments and verses of his career (for instance, his title-poem 'Bhanakar' after which the whole volume is named,\(^5\)), seeks to establish 'Reva' as the symbol of Nature, which changes but never dies, something stable in an unstable world - at once reminiscent of Shelley's 'Cloud', which changes, but never dies and of Tennyson's 'Brook', which goes on for ever while men may come and go. The slender stream of Reva, flowing under the clouded sky, fills the poet's heart with joy and wonder at its ever-new, ever-changing face. Thakore's

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emotional approach to Reva (on whose banks he played as a child) is not different from Wordsworth's approach to Nature, in whose company he spent the best part of his childhood. The two sonnets, namely, 'The Creations of Nature and Man' and 'Man and the Grand Elements of Nature' are also both characteristically Wordsworthian in approach.

The long poem 'Reva', which opens with the English translation of Schiller's lines - 'Be you embraced, ye millions! I send this kiss to the entire universe!', is sub-titled 'ascent or the evolution of the individual from passion and care to peace', through selfless service of which the river is a symbol. Addressing the river, the poet says that he has always derived great solace and strength from her, since his childhood, when he heard her voice, identified himself with her and found his bruised heart and soul healed up. In his youth also, he always thought of her whenever he saw something grand or beautiful, for she had become a part of himself. In the years following, he was lost in darkness, but he opened his heart and learnt to think, not of self, but of others, among whom he mentions his beloved wife and parents. He loved his wife as he loved Reva, taking her with him over hills, rivers, sea and through the woods, seeking her company in poetry and beauty.

The closeness between these sentiments and approach to Reva and those of Wordsworth in a number of his nature-poems, particularly, his 'Tintern Abbey', if Reva is substituted for Wye and the poet's wife for Wordsworth's Dorothy, need not now be laboured upon, since he who runs may easily read.

This cross-section of Thakore's important poems reveals how the influence of English poetry worked on his representation, expression and style. That his very conception of poetry was fundamentally English has been admitted by him and his extraordinary acquaintance with English poetry and critical thought, neither of which was confined to any particular school or age, stands clearly revealed in all his writings both in verse and prose. The poetic forms he handled - ballad, ode, elegy, dramatic lyric, sonnet and the fragmentary historical romance in verse, as also the subjects he handled - love, nature, patriotism, friendship, old age, sleep, death and war - either subjectively or objectively, are all directly or indirectly inspired by English poetry in the form in which they are presented. His elaborate metrical experiments, aimed at evolving free, continuous, unsgable, run-on verse, which would ensure an uninterrupted flow of thought and expression in Gujarati verse, had the English Blank Verse as his model. The large number of English poems he translated or adapted, covered a wide range of selections from English poets from Ben Jonson to W.H. Davies and though these translations and adaptations generally leave much to be desired, they provided, as he always maintained, discipline and a very useful training-ground for the aspiring writer, as surely they had done to him.

Though he did not actually start with anything like a manifesto of his poetic programme, Thakore adopted and for the rest of his long poetic career never ostensibly abandoned an attitude towards poetry, which was partly a reversion to and partly an extension of the classical creed, to which he gave the name of 'thought-dominated poetry'. Up in arms against gush and mawkishness of narrow personal emotions, Thakore was most conscious in giving a sense of form to all that he wrote and in employing a severe kind of diction and versification, withdrawing himself scrupulously from any 'romantic', vagueness, looseness or softness. Impenetrably

1. Vide, 'Bhanakar', pp. 11, 28, 29, 103, 114, 122, 156, 163, 204, 211, 225, 226, 227, 229, 246, 253, 272, 277, 283, 287, along with those in a whole section called an assembly of poets' in his previous edition, as also in his lyrics pp. 69, 72, 83, 88.
hard like 'the back of a tortoise' in personal character, he deliberately cultivated in poetry a style, which has often been likened to the rugged, uncouth outside of a coconut, which is soft and sweet at the core. He eschewed, on principle, the looser lyric measures, which often began with a sigh and ended as a dribble. Intent rather on achieving a symmetry of form and thought in poetry, he found himself most at home in the sonnet, which in itself met his views better than most of the things he attempted, since the sonnet afforded him a happy compromise of matter and beauty of form, on which he had insisted almost from the outset of his poetic career.

If the distinction between the classical and the romantic, though real, is not so rigid as to make the two absolutely incompatible, the dichotomy or inconsistency, which is sometimes seen in Thakore's poetic theory and practice, disappears to a very large extent. Without formally declaring himself as a classicist, Thakore generally wrote, in the classical vein, poetry which was dictated by reason and informed by the intellect, as in his numerous reflective or meditative sonnets and poems, where thought predominated, yet there is not a little in him, which is eclectically romantic, as in his poems on love and friendship, where the voice of emotion is allowed to assert itself and the purely subjective source of poetic inspiration is not denied its legitimate due.

The bulk of his verse, including his sonnets, is not very large, consisting as it does of a solitary final volume, of which winnowed heap hardly more than a quarter is really good grain. Its inequality is partly explained by his fastidiousness, but principally by the irreprisable urge for experiments, which drove him to attempt many a thing, which the better part of valour should have prompted him to

avoid, for instance, many of versified statements on poets and poetry, where he was, like Pope, a mere wit; and most of his longer narrative poems, for which he had little aptitude.

Ignored and cold-shouldered for a time, slowly coming to his own ('That I received recognition slowly is well-known') Thakore persevered with what he called his 'creative experiments', ('If not for creative experiment, what's life for?') almost always turning out something provocatively new. His failures - and they were many - were, on the one hand, always redeemed by his high aim ('Not failure, but low aim is crime') and, on the other, more than offset by his success with the sonnet, which he firmly planted on his native soil and with the free, continuous, run-on verse like the English Blank Verse in Gujarati, which he legitimately claimed as his own distinctive contribution.

If, with his dogmatic insistence on the thought content in poetry, he seemed to be reducing poetry to almost an intellectual activity, and pegasus to the position of a mechanical horse, he was performing a historical necessity when modern Gujarati poetry was found largely wallowing in its luxurious emotions and was in the danger of falling into a rut. But he was too sensible to deny emotion its legitimate place in poetry and some of his finest poems, such as the magnificent 'Ascent', the beautiful 'Reva', the sublime 'Peace' and not a few of his sonnets hold the balance evenly between thought and emotions. Thakore drew liberally on English poetry and profited not a little by English criticism, of both of which he was a life-long and

an ardent reader. That these should affect his poetic conception and creation is no matter for wonder, since modern Gujarati poetry had been affected, in one way or another, by both, a long time even before he began writing. What distinguishes Thakore from other modern Gujarati poets who were also, in varying degrees, influenced by English poetry and criticism, is the fact that though Thakore knew probably much more of both than all of them put together, the influence of English poetry and criticism seems to have worked on him in a manner, which did not cripple his initiative but rather encouraged him in his own endeavour and experiments to arrive at something which, despite its open indebtedness to English poetry, existed in its own right and yet was closer in spirit to English poetry. Thus, the sonnet, run-on verse, emphasis on thought-content and the shift to less subjective approach as a reaction against the predominance of personal emotions in Gujarati poetry, are all easily derived from English poetry; and yet they are, as indeed they have to be, dressed up suitably to fit in with local conditions, which Thakore more or less successfully did. The influence of English poetry working on one poet then works through him on others, who follow him, and the direct and devious sources of influence, in effect, assume almost equal importance in the work which still remains to be accomplished. More than one critic has spoken of Thakore as the chief architect of the change that came over modern Gujarati poetry after 1930 and if at first he seemed to gain the ground by 'painful inches', he lived long enough to see the main silently flooding in.