The complex origins of modern Gujarati poetry, its minglings of native sources and English resources, give it different complexions from time to time, depending upon the proportions of the ingredients. Contemporary poetry has contemporary problems and these problems include not only those related to the subject-matter, but also those connected with its evolving form and expression. What was new in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Gujarati poetry began taking a distinctly English complexion was no longer new by the turn of the century and much less in 1930, when a new generation of poets, born in the first decade of the present century appeared on the scene with their first offerings.

If modern Gujarati poetry before 1930 was saturated with the influence of the Romantic and Victorian English poetry, it was neither slow nor reluctant to imbibe from new English poetry, beginning from T.S. Eliot in the period which followed.

For the first few years, however, Gujarati poetry seemed more or less content with consolidating what was already achieved in this respect. There is immediately no sudden cleavage between the old and the new; the old shades off into the new and the new into the old, resulting in a twilight before another dawn. The older poets - Nanalal, Thakore and Khabardar - continued to write till about the middle of the present century, but they had, without actually exhausting

themselves, few surprises in store for their readers. Nanalal continued to write in the romantic lyrical vein, while Thakore applied, what T.S. Eliot calls, the 'objective correlative' to it. Confronted with the two diverse trends of romanticism and eclectic classicism, of emotional exuberance and solidity of thought-content in poetry, the new poets attempted both, till the diversity of the trends was gradually forged into a new unity, which found room for both in a new synthesis of poetic sensibility, which took increasing recourse to Imagism, Symbolism and Existentialism.

Modern Gujarati poetry before 1930 was more or less a purely poetic movement, unaffected by local factors, beyond the social ones in its earlier stages. There was no major political or historical event in Indian life for decades, since the stream of Gujarati poetry, through Warsinhrao's deliberate attempt, was diverted along the English 'channel.' The First World War, which had affected English and European poetry so powerfully, was perhaps too far away from Indian shores to affect Gujarati poets psychologically to any appreciable extent.

Gujarati poetry of the 'twenties, through Nanalal, sang ecstatically of Spring and grappled romantically with its problems of ideal love and marriage in Shelleyan or Tennysonian vein. Thakore tried to bring down poetry from its romantic abode of subjective idealism by urging upon the poets to travel beyond their ego-centre and look around for subjects in a wider world. Yet, all these were purely poetic processes, which had very little to do with the time and place in which they were worked out, under the over-all supervision of English poetic processes.

But the case with Gujarati poetry since 1930 is different. A number of local factors then began to affect it inwardly and outwardly. Of these, the upsurge of nationalism and the impact of Mahatma Gandhi's ideology were the most powerful. Intense patriotic fervour and an acute national consciousness, very much in evidence in Gujarati poetry of the 'thirties and a part of the 'forties, made Gujarati poetry truly representative and contemporary, since it reflected
the spirit, mood, hopes and aspirations of the whole nation. Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of truth, non-violence and universal love then provided the much needed thought-content in Gujarati poetry, which in the hands of the earlier romantic poets had tended to be rather thin in texture and spare in substance. Gujarati poetry of the 'thirties was perhaps more concerned with what it had to say than with how it said it. It was poetry dominated by ideas, which made it largely occasional, almost topical, though not necessarily ephemeral. Gujarati poetry of the 'thirties, says a leading contemporary Gujarati poet and critic, was influenced in its ideas by Mahatma Gandhi and, in its form, by Prof. Thakore.¹ The ideas which inspired Gujarati poetry of the thirties were patriotism, humanism and Marxism - the very ideas, which largely inspired English poetry at about the same time. While Gujarati poetry of the 'thirties was very receptive in its ideas, in its form and expression it seemed to be content for about a decade with the form, which Professor Thakore had bequeathed to it, as a result of his ceaseless experiments with English poetic forms and metres - particularly the sonnet and the blank verse.

Yet, a distinct change in tone, perspective and values became gradually manifest in the new Gujarati poetry of the 'thirties, which was new, not only because the signatures were new (as in England), but also because the climate of opinion and the political and social setting in which the young poets found themselves were new, as in England, though with a difference. Mahatma Gandhi, with no pretensions to poetry, was indeed a force in contemporary poetry of Gujarat, as he was in varying degrees elsewhere, because he had affected, as few others had ever done, the young poets' mind and heart, along with the entire nation's spirit and

outlook. What the French Revolution in its earlier stages had done to the English poets of the Romantic Revival, the non-violent Indian Revolution, set in motion by Mahatma Gandhi, did to the young poets of Gujarat, for whom presumably it was a bliss to be alive and to be young the very heaven. It was a Revolution with a difference, which perhaps made all the difference. It induced in the young poet not only a vision of freedom and peace at home, but also all over the world, since his extended sympathy and enlarged sensibility wished to exclude nothing from their compass. Liberty, equality and fraternity found a new context and immediacy, and served as watchwords of a poetic programme, which also included a reorientation of social and economic values, with special attention to the Common Man. "The twentieth century", says J. Isaacs, "was being dovetailed into the nineteen, and striding across the join was the new figure who was to own the new century - the Common Man."

This is the common factor in modern Gujarati and English poetry. But there are also others. Patriotism is a plant that flowers on its native soil, but it could indeed be manured by fertilizers from abroad. The earlier Gujarati patriotic poetry in the hands of Harmad, H.H. Dhruv and Khabardar, came from the native soil, but the inspiration to sing, and sometimes even the musical score, was provided by English poetry of the same genre. Later Gujarati patriotic poetry of the 'thirties followed, with variations, the same tradition, illustrated, at its highest pitch, in Meghani, some of whose best poems were adaptations of poems originally composed in English. Humanism, a characteristic sentiment of the

Gujarati poetry of the thirties, induced by Mahatma Gandhi's solicitude for the poor, whom he had installed as his god, in expiation of the manifold sins of commission and omission heaped upon their heads by an unjust social order, could also be poetically traced to Thomas Hood, whose 'Song of the Shirt' was translated into Gujarati by Umashanker Joshi and whose 'Bridge of Sighs' is reflected and echoed in the works of many young poets of the thirties in one form or another. Lastly, Marxism, the ugly duckling of the Industrial Age and the economic extension of humanism, is almost universal in its ramification and is neither Gujarati nor English in its origin. Many of the young patriot-poets of the thirties went to prison and, somehow, came out of it as miniature Marxists and began writing poetry with pronounced Marxist leanings. It was not necessary that they should have read Marx, any more than their counterparts in England should have done so.

If, according to I.A. Richards, the poet is the point at which the growth of the mind or the most conscious point of the race in his time shows itself, new Gujarati poets since 1930, with their enlarged vision and widened sensibility, represent the most conscious point, not only of the race in their part of the country in their time, but also of the world consciousness, thanks to the rapidly advancing means of intercommunication, which enabled them to be contemporaneous with world movements in thought and feeling at large. The point at which this growth or consciousness of the mind and race shows itself in new Gujarati poetry is to be found in Umashanker Joshi's 'Vishvashanti' or 'Universal Peace' (1931),

1. 'Daridranarayan'.
which, as a critic put it, reflects 'the feeling of the entire age and the spirit of the whole nation'. Tracing the history of violence and war in a truly wide historical perspective, which takes within its span the history of ancient Greece and Rome down to the French and Russian revolutions the poem is conceived as an ode to the universal peace and its modern apostle Mahatma Gandhi, in tones reminiscent of Milton's Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity; of Wordsworth in its renewed emphasis on the harmony of all living beings in Nature, and of Shelley in its extension of the prescription of universal love as an antidote to universal war and strife. The poem, despite its overtones of optimism for an ideal which was defined though far from achieved, was timely both in its diagnosis and prognosis of a disease from which the world has not yet been cured. In less than a decade since the publication of the poem, the world was plunged into another war, compelling the disillusioned poet to write, in T.S. Eliot's vein, on the 'Spiritual Wasteland' and on 'Hiroshima' and on the Second World War where the poet saw the history of old 'Kurukshetra' repeating itself and man refusing to learn anything from past experience.

The non-violent war at home and the violent war abroad then induced a number of young poets to fall back upon and re-interpret the Kurukshetra in the 'Mahabharata' of which Sunderam's 'Karna', Umashanker's poems in the 'Prachina' and Mansukhlal

7. Vide, Umashanker Joshi: 'Vasantvarsha', pp. 91-93.
Jhaveri's 'Ashvatthama' in his incomplete series of epic poems are the most outstanding. 'In times of great change, stress and uncertainty', says Anthony, 'the past seems particularly golden, as in the first half of the seventeenth century under the shadow of the Civil War and even more so in that of the twentieth century'. But these were not just stories retold, but here the events and characters were represented and reinterpreted in modern terms and context, in form approximating to the Dramatic Monologue and the Idyll put together, and in its psychological insight closer to that variety in new English poetry, which was not a little affected by Freudian psycho-analytical probe into the hidden springs of action. The same approach, on a deeper level, is seen in a few other poems, such as, the 'Journey of the Ego' and in the mute exchanges between the two selves of the poet, who seems to watch himself impersonally and clinically. This psycho-analytical approach became more and more pronounced in new Gujarati poetry later on, though it need not be assumed that all the Gujarati poets had read Freud. D.H. Lawrence in 'Sons and Lovers' in 1913 had written a Freudian novel without having read Freud. As W.H. Auden in his fine poem on the death of Freud in 1939 said:

'To us he (Freud) is no more a person
Now but a whole climate of opinion'.

which means that Freud is now as important as Darwin or Karl Marx, even to those who have never read a line of any of them.

'An epoch', says J. Isaacs, 'is known by the catchwords it bandies about'. Universal peace, universal brotherhood and universal love were very much in the air in the 'thirties. These concepts, which in unintelligent hands became mere catchwords, despite the jolt of the outbreak of the Second World War, continued

to 'fascinate' the young Gujarati poets. One of them speaks of the sense of
fraternity, which binds men's hearts together all over the world, despite several
barriers dividing them, while another speaks of the 'Trinity' of Buddha, Jesus
and Gandhi and reads in the 'Eyes of Buddha' the message of universal love and
compassion for the distracted modern world. Yet another poet, juxtaposing 'the
picture of the age' with that of 'the world in tragic disorder' wonders whether
past sacrifices as symbolized by Christ's crucifixion would go in vain. A
possible solution to this tragic malaise is suggested by another poet, who maintains
that universal harmony, peace and understanding would be achieved when man ceases
to think of himself and identifies himself with mankind as a whole.

While all this poetry of, on, and about the 'Universal Man' may appear
to partake of a wishful dream and romantic idealism, the stern realities or
actualities of contemporary situation were not ignored. The poet was aware, like
Rousseau and Byron, that man who is born free is found everywhere in chains. He
is painfully aware of his own plight in his own country, where he is not free.
But this was also his hour of glory and self-fulfilment, when he could enlist
himself as a soldier and be ready to die so that his country might live, for

9A. Vide, Snehrashmi : 'Arghya', 'Bandhan', pp. 120-121.
they were all young in heart\(^1\) and there was around them an all-pervading vitality of a veritable Renaissance,\(^2\) when even corpses seemed to spring to life.\(^3\)

This was the new poetry of the thirties, true to the spirit of the age and may be summed up in terms of a title, which a contemporary poet gave to his collection of poems - 'Salutation to the Age'.\(^4\) India's attainment of freedom in 1947 also found these poets equal to the occasion and inspired some poetry of joy and relief.\(^5\) But this freedom, like the allied victory in the Second World War, had also its unhappy aftermath, when on the partition of the country, man revealed himself 'the dog beneath the skin' or an unabashed brute - burning, looting, raping, murdering his own neighbours in an orgy of violence,\(^6\) followed by another stunning act of violence, which ended in the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi in 1948.\(^7\) The sense of frustration, gloom and disillusionment which followed provoked the poet to ask if that was the freedom for which the country was fighting and waiting.\(^8\)

'I have been young, and now am not too old;
And I have seen the righteous forsaken,
His health, his honour and his quality taken,
This is not what we were formerly told'.\(^9\)

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4. 'Yugavanada' by Zaverchand Meghani.
"The First important thing about contemporary literature is that it is contemporary; it is speaking to us and for us, here, now. Judgment can only follow an act of sympathy and understanding, and to let our appreciation grow outwards from that which immediately appeals to us is both wiser and more enjoyable than to echo the judgments of others or to restrict and sour our appreciation by hastily attacking anything which at first seems difficult or irritating".

These are the concluding words of Michael Roberts' introduction to the first 'Faber Book of Modern Verse', which appeared in the 'thirties. Gujarati poetry of the 'thirties reflected sensitively, like a barometer, all that happened within and without, making it truly contemporary. It spoke for the age and to the age, there and then. But the poet of the 'thirties was not a politician, nor was all poetry political or patriotic. Quick on the heels of nationalism and humanism came Marxism, which became a very remarkable trend in the new Gujarati poetry of the late 'thirties and early 'forties, as in English poetry of Auden, Spender and MacLeish, a little earlier. Here sympathy for the poor and the under-privileged, which to begin with had issued from a sense of sheer humanity and charity, was then suddenly transformed into righteous indignation at their miserable economic plight.

"Thus, love of a country
Begins as attachment to our own field of action
And comes to find that action of little importance
Though never indifferent. History may be servitude,
History may be freedom. See, now they vanish,
The face and places, with the self which, as it could, loved them,
To become renewed, transfigured, in another pattern."

(T.S. Eliot: 'Little Gidding', III, lines 161-167)

1. e.g. Sunderam's 'Three Neighbours', vide, 'Kavyanangala', pp. 64-66;
'Bindki', Ibid, pp. 86-90; 'Vasuna', vide, 'Vasudha', p. 132; R.V.
Pathak's 'Summer Noon', Vide, 'Sheshna Kavyo', pp. 57-60; Umashanker
Joshi's 'Baap Dikro', Vide, 'Gengotri', pp. 72-73; Mansukhlal Jhaveri's
'Another pattern' for the new Gujarati poetry happened to be the Marxist pattern when several 'angry young men' began writing on the misery of the semi-starved and semi-naked, whose plight excited not merely their sympathy, but their wrath: those grape-like tears 'shaken from the wrath-bearing tree' were also balls of fire, or streams of lava. Thus, in one such poem the poet warns the oppressors and exploiters that the fire of hunger in the empty stomach of the hungry would burst before long into a conflagration, reducing all their palaces and gardens to ashes, till not a trace of them would be left. Another poem founded, according to the poet, on 'a thought in the Upanishads' and proceeding thence historically to Communism, forecasts a short future for a civilization, based on exploitation and injustice, which denies food to those who produce it with the sweat of their brow. Hungry, homeless, human beings, who have no place in society, are visualized as bricks lying helter-skelter on the streets, waiting for a master-mason to build them into a new structure. A discarded mango-stone serves the poet as a symbol of a human being, who is sucked, exploited and cast away on the street. 'We derive', says the poet, 'a new satisfaction from your (mango-stone) sight'.

In pure terms of poetry, however, satisfaction may also be derived from the fact that under the impact of this newly awakened social guilt-complex,

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1. 'Gerontion': T.S. Eliot.
reminiscent of that expressed in the poetry of that variety in England, Gujarati poetry stepped out of its old sanctuary of the romantic images of the cuckoo, clouds, moon and stars and came down to earth and its realities. 'Comfortable symbols from the literature of the past', says an English critic, 'the daffodil and the nightingale' cannot be used simply as talismans to ward off unpleasantness. This does not mean that a poet should deliberately load his poems with references to the factory-chimneys, turbines, slums, internal combustion engines and hydrogen bombs'.\(^1\) It is suggested\(^2\) that Eliot's eyes were turned to the garnered culture of the past; the young poets after 1930 looked to the future. The disease is at once psychological and economic. Auden calls in Dr. Freud and Dr. Marx; capitalist civilization is crumbling and disintegrating. Not indignation, denunciation, despair, anger or scorn, but rather compassion is the word in W.H. Auden's declaration -

\[
\text{'No man shall hunger. Man shall spend equally,}
\text{Our goal which we compel,}
\text{Man shall be men.'}
\]

New Gujarati poetry, maintains a poet, is not a snob\(^3\) and does not fight shy of even dirt, disease and ugliness. Social outcasts, who were generally also poetic outcasts, were then freely admitted into this new Gujarati poetry and, by and by, the beggar, scavenger, washerman, gobbler, carrier and the

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\(^3\) Vide, Umashanker Joshi: 'Gangotri', p.47.
\(^4\) Vide, Sunderam: 'Kavyamangala', pp. 51-52.
\(^6\) Vide, Umashanker Joshi: 'Gangotri', pp. 136-144.
\(^7\) Vide, Umashanker Joshi: 'Gangotri' an adaptation of Thomas Hardy's 'Carrier', p. 133.
shoe-shine boy, filled the poet's reception room and enjoyed his warm-hearted hospitality.

The one result of this 'progressivism' in new Gujarati poetry was the welcome return to realism and another, a by-product of it, the inclusion of apparently insignificant objects and subjects in the new poetry, which invested them with serious significance. With this, the pre-occupation with themes supposedly grand and sublime seemed to be relaxed and trifles light as air were then to the poetic mind weighty as the socio-political problems, which had agitated it. Thus, a feather, a broken watch, a slow passenger-train and even a dung-heap served the poet as a text for his commentary on life. The emphasis in this new poetry, as a contemporary poet suggests, was 'on the second, rather than on the first word'. Kalelkar commending Umashanker Joshi's vision of the 'Universal Peace' in 1931, had suggested that 'what was not possible to the lion was possible to the eagle'. A few years later, Sunderam in his poem depicted 'the eagle's sorrow' that all aerial flights ended only in a journey down to earth, since there was neither food nor shelter among the clouds. Having realized that fancy cannot cheat as she is famed to do, the poet was forced to admit that this world

was no land of dreams, but one of grim reality. New Gujarati poetry gives
enough evidence of this refreshing sense of realism, which is worked out through
familiar subjects like 'the pavement-sleepers' the Cashier in the Bank, poor
in the midst of wealth, the tree near the Bank, which ultimately gets into the
Bank as pulp for its currency-notes and 'Mother's Photograph' -

'Most near, most dear, most loved and most far,
Under the window where I often found her
Sitting as huge as Asia.....'

(George Barker : 'To my Mother')

-unable to accept the photographer's invitation to 'smile' before the picture is
taken, since she could not recollect anything in her life, which could induce a
smile upon her wrinkled face.

It is not difficult to see how new Gujarati poetry was beginning to use
these 'tremendous trifles' for symbolist purposes - more and more self-consciously
so, a little later, when the symbolists and imagists arrived in considerable
strength to capture its stage. Meanwhile, despite its concern with the human
predicament in what W.H. Auden calls, the 'Age of Anxiety', new Gujarati poetry
continued to find some leisure to stand and stare. Its good old lyrical apparatus
originally imported from England, turned out subjectively its poems on love and
beauty in lyrical forms, such as the song, sonnet, ode and elegy, which had cast
off their alien look long since. In this respect, contemporary Gujarati poet
is in the distinguished company of his counterpart in modern English poetry.

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5. Vide, Sunderaram : 'Kavyamangala', pp. 121-123.
A shilling life will give you all the facts:
How Father beat him, how he ran away,
What were the struggles of his youth, what acts
Made him the greatest figure of his day:
Of how he fought, fished, hunted, worked all night,
Though giddy, climbed new mountains; named a sea:
Some of the last researchers even write
Love made him weep pints like you and me'.

(W.H. Auden : 'Who's Who')

The poet was aware of the 'universal thirst for peace', but he was also aware
of the other 'thirst', which urged him to tell his beloved, 'I have loved you with
the intense thirst of the Sahara'. Love, the poet reminds his readers, has its
'eternal variations'; lovers' eyes have not met for the first time, nor are the
words on the lovers' lips new, yet what gives them distinction is the individuality
of accent.

'I heard the wild daws crake
In India's starving throat; whereat I knew
That Time upon the heart can break
But love survives the venom of the snake'.

(Alun Lewis : 'In Hospital : Poona)

Similarly, contemporary Gujarati poet could say, with C. Day Lewis, that
there was -

'No need to stop the ears, avert the eyes
From purple rhetoric of evening skies.'

(C. Day Lewis - 'Nearing Again the Legendary Isle')

The contemporary Gujarati poet wrote on Spring, Autumn, on the dawn; on the

evening and on the moon, striving to find new images for the moon. 'It seems as though the history of poetry in all ages is an attempt to find new images for the moon'.

When, however, contemporary Gujarati poetry sometimes allowed the owl to deputize for the poet, a 'terrible beauty', of almost Hopkins' conception, was born. 'The poet of the terrible', who said, 'Not light alone, but darkness also reveals, and is a part of beauty', spoke in a poetic idiom different from Wordsworth's owl or Poe's 'Raven'.

'Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies'
(N.H. Auden: '1st September 1939')

- from which it could be awakened by an owl or shaken by the 'Whirlwind' like Shelley's 'West Wind' (to which Sunderam's poem on the 'Whirlwind' is very much indebted).

'The word within a word, unable to speak a word,
Swaddled with darkness. In the juve
 Came Christ the tiger'.

(T.S. Eliot: 'Gerontion')

Though swaddled with darkness, the word could, however, conjure up the vision of darkness in the terrifying - beautiful image of the 'Midnight', which the poet conceived as a dancer 'terrible and beautiful'.

The whole of Eliot's 'Waste Land'

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reflected the chaos, which confronted Europe. Its material was chaos, but in itself it was not chaotic. So with the new Gujarati poetry, whose material was sometimes night and darkness, but in itself it was not dark: it was an attempt to make darkness visible.

'The heavy burden of the growing soul
Perplexes and offends more, day by day;
Week by week, offends and perplexes more
With the impertinence of "is and seems"
And may and may not, desire and control
The pain of living and the drug of dreams
Curl up the small soul in the window seat'.

(T.S. Eliot: 'Animula')

The Gujarati poet of the 'forties, finding the contradiction of a 'Gandhi here and Hitler there', carried his heavy burden of 'is and seems', of 'may and may not' and, perplexed and offended at the grandiose talk of 'humanity and the actualities of the world', was sometimes inclined to choose a window-seat and sought 'defence in the depths'.

'Afier such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
And issues; deceives with whispering ambitions,
Guides us by vanities. Think now
She gives when our attention is distracted,
And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions
That the giving famishes the craving. Give too late
What's not believed in, or if still believed,
In memory only, reconsidered passion'.

(T.S. Eliot: 'Gerontion')

Gujarati poetry of the 'forties, unlike that of the 'thirties, had no mission. One of the poets (Prahlad Parekh) was engaged in 'looking out of the window' (Bari bahar'), 'closed for years', while another (Rajendra Shah) opened

his first volume of verses with a poem, which suggested that his poetry had no special purpose behind it, while yet another (Harishchandra Bhatt) launched upon his journey to the 'dream-land' (Svapnaprayan). What happened to English poetry of the 'forties then happened to Gujarati poetry, when engaged in its 'vision and revision', it sought refuge in New Romanticism and individualism.

The change - significant and remarkable - has however to be viewed in relation to the socio-political purpose which had dominated the poetry of the 'thirties in Gujarat, as in England. Great social, political and historical changes were indeed taking place at home and abroad, but of these there is hardly any trace in the Gujarati poetry of the 'forties. It is not that the poet was blind or indifferent to what went around him; wide-spread disillusionment, frustration, loss of faith, spiritual unsettling, the 'pain of living', and a deep-seated psychological unrest - the aftermath of war with its world-wide repercussions - drove him, as it did the English poet, rather to seek 'defence in the depth' of their inwardness from a sheer sense of fatigue or disillusionment or both. From the sternness of inexorable actuality of things as they were, he retired into his private cell and though he sometimes felt 'lonely' and 'isolated' he seemed to derive comfort from the vision of a thousand worlds, which opened before him as he 'closed the door on the world'. He is painfully aware that 'people are miserable in the world', but he does not know how he could 'put that into his song'. His one prayer to the sea is to teach him 'to forget the world'.

He leaves 'the world of reality to enter the world of dreams'. He arranges his poetic feast under 'the bower of the sky' and drinks his joy from 'the glasses of the stars'.

'The optimist builds himself safe inside a cell, and paints the inside walls sky-blue and blocks up the door and says he's in heaven'

(D.H. Lawrence : 'The Optimist')

Perhaps, the poet, who looked 'out of the window', was an optimist in one sense and a pessimist in another, but he was known to be an active participant in the Indian national struggle and to have suffered privations, of which however there is little reflection in his poetry, though all his privations, on his own assurance, were stored 'in the depth of his heart'. Seeking defence in the depths had its advantages as also its limitations. Achieving a wide range of Keatsian sensuousness, which resulted in the 'poetry of the eye, ear and nose', it was severely limited in its range of poetic forms, restricting itself generally to the shorter lyric or the song - even the widely patronized sonnet being almost conspicuous by its absence. The poet moves in the world of winds, birds, green grass and in the world of his dreams with his beloved, resulting in poetry, which seeks to capture elusive, and evasive emotions that could find little outlet in the poetry, seized with a purpose.

'The evening air comes cold, The sunset scatters gold, Small grasses toss and bend, Small pathways idly tend Towards no certain end.' (Robert Graves : 'An Evening Mood')

The poetry of Rajendra Shah appears to tend 'towards no certain end'. His heart is evidently not set on contemporary events, momentous and moving though they were. It is not that the poet has developed a 'thick skin', but he seems to insist, with Edmund Blunden, that -

'Touched with a certain silver light
In each man's retrospection,
They are important hours; some others
Seem to grow kingfisher's feathers,
Or glow like sunflowers: my affection
In the first kind finds more delight'.

(Edmund Blunden: 'In My Time')

This may seem something of a Romantic escape, but actually it is not an escape, but an 'inscape' and 'intress' — not perhaps in Hopkins's sense of the terms which he has nowhere defined, but in a general sense of inwardness. As Edmund Blunden asked, who can challenge the poet why he lives in 'this or that'ward of his experience', or argue with him if he insists that 'the way to live is not to dissect existence'? ²

With his clothes stained with dust (to suggest that he is not one living in a glass-house), the poet wanders through the pathless wood, freed from bondage, 'embraced' by the perfume of the flowers, thrilled by the note of the cuckoo, losing himself in all and, in the balance, always finding himself the remainder. ³ The poet is not now a man with a message or a mission; he is out 'merely to wander' and explore. ³³⁸

'From the dark mood's control
I free this man; there's light still in the West...
No longer the loud pursuit
Of self-made clamours dulls the ear, here dwell
Twilight societies, twg, fungus, root,
Soundless, and speaking well.'

(Edmund Blunden: 'The Recovery')

2. Vide, Edmund Blunden: 'The Recovery'.
³³ Vide, Ushanas: 'Prasoon', p. 111.
The poet is not either alone; he has the more congenial company of the mountains and woods, of the 'cool leaves unshaken by the wind', of the deer 'nibbling at the grass', and even of the 'undulating beauty of the snake' in the wood, giving him a feeling of -

'A spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone'.

(Robert Frost: 'The Tuft of Flowers')

The poet now finds a joy and seeks his recovery in a world, which is sensual and beautiful.

'Beneath the accustomed dome
Of this chance-planted, many-centuried tree
The snake-marked earthly multitudes are come,
To breathe their hour like me
..........his glory yields'
Imaginings that slay; the safe paths curve
Through unexalted fields'.

(Edmund Blunden: 'The Recovery')

This is far away from the exalted themes of dying for the country or canvassing for the idea of the oneness of the world and man through humanism or Marxism.

It is a poetic journey from the oppressive guilt – complex to -

'A strain of the earth's sweet being in the beginning
In Eden garden.......
..... and worthy the winning'.

(G.M. Hopkins: 'Spring')

In another poem, the poet seeks light 'from darkness', but if the light fails, he would not feel lost, for he would then build his own dream – palace.

The dream and the awakening might cancel one another, but re-awakening would be no less beautiful than a dream.

'What if a dam of a doom of a dream bites this universe into two, all nothing's only our hugest home; the most who die, the more we live!'

(\textit{E.B. Cummings : 'What if')

The dream has changed its content and connotation in modern poetry. The technique is sometimes that of a fairy-tale, fable, an allegory or a reverie, rarely of a direct statement. Inwardness, which was previously spiritual, takes more and more the colouring of modern psycho-analysis. The main thing, however, is that 'an individual - ordinary average individual - is selected to represent the predicament of mankind in the particular circumstances under consideration, and the reader is invited to identify himself with that individual'. It may be Eliot's Gerontion or Prufrock, or Cummings' 'Cambridge Ladies', or Empson's 'Old Lady', or even Robert Graves' 'Great-grandmother' which is not the same thing as the reader identifying himself with Hamlet or Othello. In 1925, I.A. Richards published his 'Principles of Literary Criticism', which was principally a psychological and neurological study of poetry. In 1930, William Empson, his disciple, published his 'Seven Types of Ambiguity'. In modern Gujarati poetry, B.K. Thakore lived long enough to read and comment upon the Imagists, T.S. Eliot, Robert Graves and Empson's 'Seven Types of Ambiguity', but his own poetry does not reflect any of these psychological problems or subtleties. It was only towards

the end of the 'forties and the beginning of the 'fifties that these began gradually to emerge in new Gujarati poetry in its movement towards Symbolism and Imagism. Then it was that the poets began closely examining the 'meaning of meaning' and found that the logical one was only one aspect of it, which had served its purpose in the poetry of direct statement. A well-chosen Symbol or a well-mounted Image then often served the purpose of thought or idea in poetry. Even the idea itself is an Image.

Thus, in one of the poems called 'The Last Years of Life', the poet (Rajendra Shah) uses the cart, moving convulsively on the uneven dusty village-road, to represent symbolically the state of the mind of an old man, who was on a sentimental journey to his home-village, where he had spent the best years of his life. The poem is one of the finest specimens of symbolism in its modern English sense. On the old man's arrival, the old familiar faces brightened up with a sense of good old neighbourliness; the busy women-folk cast a glance and returned to work in the kitchen, the old dog smelt the feet and disappeared; the lock at the door, closed for years, cried as the key turned in; the doors creaked on their stiff rusty hinges; the air pent up within the room rushed out like a spirit released; the old cot hanging by the wall revived the picture of the dead father, who had slept on it; the cob-webbed window in the garret, through which in the past, moonlight had filtered in, brought in a flash the memory of the first night of love - these are not mere descriptions to be dismissed as realistic pictures, suggestive of the poet's 'minute observation'. All of them are 'dynamic pictures', or Images which fall coherently in the

Images and Symbolism are not new to poetry. They are found as far back as in the poetry of the Indian 'Upanishadas' and in Dante, John Donne and Shelley, among others, elsewhere. The conscious use of these, however, in a self-contained poem began, as is well-known, in France, England and America with the Imagist and Symbolist movement only in the present century. New Gujarati poetry, especially of the post-Independence period, also directly or indirectly under the influence of modern English and American poetry, has with it a number of younger poets, whose poems are Images and whose Images are sometimes true poetry. Hard, precise and concrete Images, which came to be increasingly in vogue since then, did not require intricate and elaborate poetic forms, or the metrical aid of the classical Sanskrit variety, necessary perhaps for poems with a message or a logical meaning. The old English poetic forms, such as the ode, elegy, and the long lyric, are hardly in evidence and even the sonnet is very sparsely used, excepting by the elder poets, who are still actively participating in this new poetry. This trend in contemporary Gujarati poetry is in keeping with the trend also in contemporary English poetry. The modernists were in revolt not only against the spirit of Romantic poetry, but also against its forms. Years before, Bridges had declared that in English poetry rhymed verse and Miltonic, Blank Verse were exhausted. As Bridges' prediction found an exception, later on, in W.H. Auden's rhymed 'New Year Letter', exceptions are also available in contemporary Gujarati poetry in this regard. But, by the large, there is now a marked preference for rhythmic patterns in place of old metrical ones, and for shorter utterances in place of longer ones.

New Gujarati poetry of the last ten or fifteen years is sometimes attacked for its uneven lines, without rhyme or syntax and for its obscure and inflated references to dingy houses, crowded streets, asphalt roads, sewage, drainage and death. Among the 'cynical definitions', collected by an English writer, are those relating to 'Meaning', which is defined as 'the conveyance of precise ideas by means of language, now abandoned in poetry'; 'Metre' as 'something that went out with Tennyson'; 'Rhyme' as a 'primitive jingle'; and 'Obscure' as 'profound'. New Gujarati poetry of the present time had to face all this cynical criticism. But the peculiar difficulties and complexities of modern life seem to demand a new approach and technique in modern poetry. Eliot had shown in his essay on the Metaphysical poets, in 1921, why these would be not only different, but also difficult.

One of these difficulties is, what Eliot has called, the 'dislocation of sensibility', or in terms of psycho-analysis, the disintegration of the human personality. One result of this 'dislocation' was that poetry, in trying to assimilate the fragments in all their complexity, itself often became fragmentary. Eliot speaks of 'a heap of broken images' and, towards the end of his 'Waste Land', of 'these fragments I have shored against my ruins', at the same time declaring that -

'last year's words belong to last year's language,
And next year's words await another voice'.

(T.S. Eliot: 'Little Gidding')

The charge of ugliness and obscurity, which is commonly levelled at contemporary poetry, both in England and Gujarat, is partly founded on the use of such specifically modern imagery as railway crossings, engines, expresses, bus stops, and atomic bomb, but more on the break-up of traditional forms and whatever one means by 'poetic diction'.

Gujarati poetry of the 'fifties is distinguished from the earlier one by its large scale use of Imagism and Symbolism, as also by its return to the socio-economic questions related to human predicament in general. Among the poems in Rajendra Shah's second collection, published in 1957, are those two significantly entitled the 'Mirror' and the one on the 'Lizard' which belong to the Imagist tradition in English and American poetry. The 'Mirror' where the poet, standing before a mirror, asks his ego to shed its vanity, is obviously reminiscent of Ezra Pound's technique -

'The ant's a centaur in his dragon world. Pull down thy vanity, it is not man Made courage, or made order, or made grace, Pull down thy vanity, I say pull down'.

(Ezra Pound : 'The Pisan Cantos')

while the other on the 'Lizard', pouncing suddenly in the quiet of the night on an insect on the wall, bears a very close resemblance with the image of the killer 'Pike' in Edmund Blunden's well-known poem. The lizard and the insect on the wall are both images and symbols, suggestive of the relentless struggle for existence in modern civilization. The city and the city-man has rightly come to be a symbol of this malaise. In a poem, called 'The Story of To-day', the poet presents, in effect, the picture of Eliot's 'Waste Land', of Auden's 'Culture' and of D.J. Enright's 'aspirin and culture', where 'pyjamas are sold for a rupee and a quarter and twelve biscuits are available for a dime, if one has a dime'. Yet, the pyjamas fail to induce sleep which they promise. 'The noise of horse-hooves on the asphalt

road, blaring noise of radios, seeking to entertain, the room stuffy and noisy, like a stomach, filled in with ill-cooked food, cats crying over the roof; the night devoid of peace or rest and a new dawn, merely announced by the change of date on the next morning paper¹ - all this is not only symbolic of the restlessness in the heart of the city of Bombay, but also of that at the heart of modern culture.²

Directness of statement and regularity of syntax are generally avoided in the Gujarati poetry of the present time, which reflects its 'dislocation', 'disintegration' and inner disturbance in its semantic disorder, aside, internal monologue and whispered utterance within the brackets. A poem entitled 'I am broken and scattered', by Umashanker Joshi³ speaks of this modern malaise of disintegration, in an attempt to show where it hurts. In a poem, entitled 'The Path Turns' by Niranjan Bhagat⁴ the poet takes the sky, with a heap upon heap of clouds on it, as a symbol of the mind, which lies silently in stupor, like Eliot's picture of the evening, spread out against the sky 'like a patient etherised upon a table'.⁵ In another poem, he finds 'a dry leaf, without touch of spring, wafted in from somewhere' as an eloquent symbol for the modern man, uncertain of his origin and end. Another poet likens himself to 'the ghost of the dead moon wandering over the desert of darkness'.⁶ One of the younger poets speaks of the scalding heat of the summer noon, which rushes on blindly everywhere, not knowing where, and which is finally swallowed in the boa-constrictor-like mouth of darkness. All these, in effect,

². Vide, Jayant Pathak: 'Sanket', p.3.
⁵. 'The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock'.
are attempts to represent symbolically the dark night of the soul, and the lack of light or sense of direction are symptomatic of the modern poetic sensibility, which sees no coherence or clarity at the centre of life. In a situation like this, the poet has 'new pains of living, but no new fancy'. He is, therefore, even reluctant to call himself a poet.

Eliot in his 'Gerontion' wrote —

'I have lost my sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch,
How should I use them for your closer contact?'

Hiranjan Bhagat speaks of this 'contact between man and man' and adds that, as far as he is concerned, it resulted in 'an experience of doubt, faith or compromise at different times'. Characteristic of this approach is his poem, where he extends his hand in friendship with a stranger, where a cordial hand-shake is obviously used a symbol for fellow-feeling in a new context. 'Everywhere there are crowds of men, without individuality, name or form, moving like shadows of death in cities, where the snake sneaks under flowers', throwing the poet into doubt whether men wear their 'faces or masks'. This is the modern poet's world. Man has lost his moorings; 'he is an exile in his own country'; 'the house where his letters are delivered' is not truly his home.

'They house is a decayed house,
And the jew squats on the window sill, the owner' 

(T.S. Eliot: 'Gerontion')

4. Vide, Niranjan Bhagat: '33 Poems', p. 44.
'Do I really live here?', asks a modern Gujarati poet in a similar vein and goes on to suggest that the house where he receives all his letters has a space of a postal envelope, with a window like a postage stamp, from where the sun has never seen him, where he cannot see himself in a mirror even in broad daylight, without the help of artificial electric light, which reveals to him the world in which he lives — artificial flowers in the vase, medicine-bottles on the shelf, used blades and a heap of books under an evening newspaper. 'We know', says Lawrence Durrell, 'that house as a symbol stands for more than four walls and a roof. A house means property, succession, home and family order.' The sense of homelessness is the sense of isolation and a feeling of being an 'island' in a world-order, which has broken down. 'Men are close together like words in a sentence, without a meaning; there is no difference between one and the other; all of them are alike like the several thousand printed copies of a newspaper.'

In the present century, the chief poetic concern is with the human predicament and its preoccupations are shown by the frequency with which one talks of frustration, bewilderment, maladjustment, disintegration — the cruelty, violence, sadism and an all-pervading sense of anxiety, and in the background, a feeling of guilt, sin, humiliation and despair — never faith, hope or charity. These are all symptoms of a psychological and spiritual malady, not confined to a number of unhappy and disturbed individuals, such as we find in all epochs, but a collective malady. It is not confined to England alone; it is a world sickness.'

This 'collective malady' or 'world sickness' is very much reflected in the Gujarati poetry of the 'fifties up to the present time. It is something which the centre cannot hold'. That is probably the reason why poetry looks eccentric. Its ego is splintered, its coherence is gone, all that remains is distraction - a 'heap of broken images'. In England, Edith Sitwell, the poet of 'The King of China's Daughter', became the poet of 'Still Falls the Rain', in the air-raids of 1940, and of 'The Shadow of Cain', in the Atomic Age. In Gujarat, Umashanker Joshi, the poet of 'Universal Peace' became the poet of 'Hiroshima', accompanied by a number of younger poets, who also wrote on this atomic anxiety and nightmare. Truly, the malady is 'not confined to England; it is a world sickness', expressed sometimes in sombre colours of Existentialism. Symbolism, very much in evidence both in new English and Gujarati poetry of the last few years, is an attempt, through a subtly articulated pattern of metaphors, to offer some facets of contemporary sensibility and Existentialism. Shattered nerves and neurosis manifest themselves in symptoms of a deep-seated inner dislocation and bewildering contradictions. There is recovery through poison, death in life, 'no' in 'yes'.

Freud in his analysis of the 'death-wish' had suggested that mankind is 'half in love with easeful Death', and in so far as the death-wish is in conflict with the 'life-force', it has become a potent ingredient in the anxiety of the present age. Eliot had reminded this century of it -

'Webster was much possessed by death,
And saw the skull beneath the skin'

1. Vide, 'Vasantvarsha', pp. 91-93.
2. Vide, Miranjn Bhagat: '33 Poems', p. 23; Priyakant Maniar: 'Ashabda Ratri'.
Suresh Joshi: 'Pratyanchal', p. 28, p. 41. p. 19,
In Modern Gujarati poetry, earlier poets like Harainhras had declared death itself as dead, later R.V. Pathak, S.G. Betai and Umashanker Joshi wrote philosophically on death, but the approach is growing more and more psychological rather than philosophical in the younger poets.

In a collection of poems significantly entitled 'Prateek' or the Symbol, one of the younger poets speaks of a cow, a mere heap of bones, chewing the cud of death in the grassless pasture and of the 'Nails' on the Cross, which stirs an old ironsmith to reflection how the nails, meant for building came to be used for destruction.

'Still falls the Rain -
Dark as the world of man, black as our loss -
Blind as the nineteen hundred forty nails
Upon the cross.'

(Edith Sitwell: 'Still Falls the Rain')

The cross and crucifixion, and the 'Blood that flows from the starved Man's hung upon the Cross' is no longer either Christian or English. 'The same thing repeats itself', says a poet, 'wherever there is a Cross' and the 'cross' need not be made of wood and nails; it may be a junction of two asphalt roads, forming a 'cross' in a modern city, where man is butchered like a buffalo, carrying 'a number-plate', under a city transport bus, speeding along a busy thoroughfare. The bus, packed with passengers, speeded away and only a spot of blood was left on the street. 'Still falls the same rain of blood that fall on the field of blood - 'Kurukshetra - in the past'.

The above illustrations tend to show how in poetic technique and sensibility Gujarati poetry of the present time move almost step in step with contemporary English poetry. If, there is little in common, for instance, between a poem by Shakespeare or Milton and Dylan Thomas or Martin Seymour-Smith, there is little in common, in these respects, for instance, between a poem by Narzad or Narsinhrao and Priyakant Maniar or Nalin Raval, who are writing at present. Not only has the poetic sensibility undergone a fundamental change, but its style and representation have also undergone a revolutionary change. Most of the present-day Gujarati poetry is symbolic, where the directness of statement and syntactical regularity have replaced the formal patterns and logical sequence of earlier poetry.

'We cannot revive old factions,
We cannot restore old policies,
Or follow an antique drum

......
What they had to leave us - a symbol;
A symbol perfected in death'.

(T.S. Eliot, 'Little Gidding')

'But in this death at last I knew
The living of a perfect grief....

(Martin Seymour-Smith : 'Green Wall my Grave')

This 'living of a perfect grief' in present-day Gujarati poetry sometimes takes the tints of grief, despair and dejection of Existentialism.  

'O grave, O grave when will you let me sleep?'

(Martin Seymour-Smith : 'Green Wall my Grave')

In a collection, entitled 'Wordless Night', which is not descriptive, but symbolic, a present-day Gujarati poet, hints at the complexity of existence and the pity of it, through the symbolism of a leper, striving to hold a thing tightly

in his hands without fingers eaten up by leprosy. Another poet speaks of life as 'a sentence between the two brackets of birth and death, without a sign of interrogation or exclamation and neither of rest nor rhythm'. The distracted poet wanders alone, 'in the night on the city-road, paved with thoughts, through electric lamps, watching his own shadow, that lengthens, shortens and tortuously adapts itself to actuality as if he sees his own motion-picture'.

The bone, which is a recurring image in modern English poetry is also frequently used in the present-day Gujarati poetry with the same symbolic implication. The poetic style, like the life it represents, is bare to the bone. Wordsworth could speak of the 'mighty heart of London' lying still in the early dawn at least, but the modern poet finds no peace either at the heart of the city, or at the centre of his being either by night or day. One of the poets asks 'Where is poetry'; another says, 'I am not a poet', neither of whom need be taken seriously at his word. True, there is 'the pain of living', there is 'disintegration', there is 'dejection' but the poets are able to make poetry out of these, which is a more significant thing. This may not be the type of poetry of formal beauty and coherent meaning, to which one was accustomed. The old poetic ways of looking at man, god

and nature no longer obtain to-day in the present-day Gujarati poetry. Longer
lyrics of leisurely exposition and explicit meaning or message have mostly given
way to images and flashes, realistically, surreallyistically or symbolically. In
texture, the present-day Gujarati poetry, like contemporary English poetry is a
poetry of nuances; in structure, it is a balance of tensions and conflicts, at
worst, an incoherent fragment; at best a Picasso-like picture, which stirs the
imagination and shakes the centre. There are suggestive overtones and undertones
of implication lying parallel with the surface meaning, which is often wrapped
round with the seven layers of ambiguity. In following Mallarme's doctrine that
to name an object is to do away with three-quarters of that delight in a poem,
which consists in unravelling it by bit, present-day Gujarati poetry prefers not to
name an object or specify its subject. If it is too often riddled with riddles,
it is with Paul Valery, who insisted that poetry must always remain a riddle. ¹

'...if the world were black or white entirely,
And all the charts were plain,
Instead of a mad weir of tigerish waters,
A prism of delight and pain,
We might be surer where we wished to go'

- But

'All we know is the splash of words in passing,
And falling twigs of song'.

(Louis MacNeice : 'Entirely')

Between the middle of the nineteenth and the middle of the twentieth
century lies the whole path of modern Gujarati poetry, as it turned and changed,
ever since it came under the impact of English poetry. Present-day Gujarati
poetry reads very much like contemporary English poetry. English poetry has still
a pride of place in the University curriculum and most of the present-day Gujarati
date poets maintain an almost up-to-date contact with English poetry. It is well-known
that groups of young poets meet every week in Bombay, Baroda and Ahmedabad, when

they not only read and discuss their own works, but also seek to keep abreast of
the latest developments in contemporary English poetry. Modern Gujarati poetry,
which leaned rather heavily on English poetry in the initial stages, when it
came under the impact of English poetry, is now no longer imitative or derivat^.
Yet the influence abides. There is now no need to investigate the dreary chains of
influence, where one can show that one writer copied another in literal detail,
but only for the more fascinating chains which link one poet in Gujarat to another
in England, whom he may not even read, but whose ideas vaguely apprehended or
even misapprehended may have served as catalytic agents for his own development.
Thus, and only thus, one could explain the striking resemblances between
contemporary Gujarati and English poetry - its Imagism, Symbolism, Existentialism,
rhythmic patterns in place of the metrical ones and its semantic disturbance and
whispered utterances, its splash of words in passing and falling twigs of songs.