The neo-humanistic approach made by Amulya Barua in his new poems may rightly be called Progressivism. Amulya in his poems advocated the cause of social progress and fought for the liberty of the "injured and the insulted". He had a leaning towards the Marxian dialectics and welcomed a change in the social structure. Amulya viewed with concern the sad plight of the prostitutes, the coal-miners and the vagrants and pleaded for a better social order for them. He learnt with great dismay that the common people suffer only because of the exploitation of the capitalist gentry. In his poem Vesya (The Prostitute) Barua, has levelled his charge against Raisaheb Sarma, Khan Bahadur Ikbal and E.A.C. Phukan for inducing the prostitute to run her trade. The degenerated morals of the high class of the society has backed the growth of the brothels. The inequality of the distribution of income makes one class richer and the other poor. To relieve herself of her poverty and the deadly hunger the prostitute has been compelled to seek shelter in the tyrannies of the capitalist exploiters. The poet has vividly drawn the pathetic picture of the Vesya.
She is now ready to sell her body made of common clay of earth, She turned a danseuse, a 'sexciting' sinful prostitute, Leaving aside the cowardice vanity of self-prestige; She has selected for her a definite way of life. But it was not easy for her. For her trade, she required the a, b, c, of the psychology of sex propagated by the great psycho-analyst Frued and Havlock Ellis; Some training in the art of abortion and contraception. She needed some ideas of Vatsyayana's Kāma-sūtra, for the gaits and pauses of her love-drama. She needed a thorough training in the Oriental dance and music; and a set of musical instruments like the tānpura.
Some red-bottles of
Red sealed XXX Rum
and a quota of lovely perfumes
from the Bengal chemical
and a few sky blue sarees
brought from the 'Kamalālaya.'

All these preparations are not for her personal satisfaction
but for the satisfaction of others. Her existence is wholly
for others, for others' brutal pleasures. The economists
declare that they are indispensable for the present day soci­
ety and the editors of the daily papers declare with pride
that only in one city, Calcutta, they have only 45,000 of
them (the prostitutes). And, with her body, which is her only
capital, she collects revenue from the demoralised profiteers,
the tax-superintendents and the causin of a minister and the
tea-planters. She is to delight all to earn a morsel of food.
The only thing that remains for her is her naked self, sacri­
ficed at the alter of capitalist exploitation.

*** You have nothing,
Simply you have an embrace of a feeble arm,
A lack-lustre smile,
and the hypertensive sexuality,
of a naked body.
You are an universal lover,
mechanised in this age of machines.
Who says that you are a bāraṅganā (a prostitute)?
A prostitute never you are,
but an ideal heroine (a Vīraṅganā)
in this twentieth century;
In the war of the destitute labourers
against their capitalist exploiters
in an hour of strategy and revolution.

Amulya Barua in these lines echoed the Marxian cry of class-struggle. He has given the impetus to the suffering humanity to fight against the capitalists. Barua welcomed a change in the social structure. He did not like to see man's inhumanity to man. In an equally bold voice Amulya advocates the protest of the poor coal-miner against the capitalist force under which he has groaned painfully. He has sacrificed himself in the dark cavities of coal mines to earn profit for his capitalist lord, but for himself he has earned simply his broken dreams and lost aspirations. Amulya believed in the necessity of a revolution; like the Marxists he saw that the class-struggle is inevitable and only a revolution could shape the things in the right order. In his poem Viplab (The Revolutionary) the poet has declared firmly:
"We have immense faith in men; we are looking for the coming of the red-sun in the east, in the near future." At the same time he has declared his hatred against the rotten, foul-odoured, unhygienic state of the society and called for an immediate change. The country by Amulya Barua's time was a slave country, it had to witness every sort of British oppression. And further the nostalgic atmosphere created by the military men stationed at Assam during the second world war made the poet sick. These military men made every sort of oppression upon the innocent Assamese people. Moreover, the fear of a possible atomic bombardment made the people neurotic. A great famine took the north eastern India and especially undivided Bengal where lakhs and lakhs of people perished of hunger. The currency was devalued; prices soared high and because of feeding of the soldiers, the food-stuff ran short. The profiteers and black-marketeers found a paradise for them at the cost of the innocent Assamese people. His young mind noted all these things with concern and saw its possible solution only in freedom and communism. He could not tolerate the luxurious existence of the few privileged capitalists. He dreamt of a new and emerging India full of equality and justice. In his poem Bhāratir mukti svapna (India's dream of freedom) the poet has said
that a new future for the country is immanent. But Amulya did not live to see his dream materialised. Exactly, one year prior to the India's gain of independence (18th August, 1946) he was brutally murdered by a section of communal rioteers in Calcutta, in a room of his College hostel. The poet who dreamt of equality and freedom of man from all barriers social, religious, political and economic, fell himself a victim to communal disturbances.

At the instance of Munin Barkakati, Amulya began a study of the continental modern poets, like T.S.Eliot, Ezra Pound and Baudelaire. These poets widened his vision and he had a guidance to the proper use of poetry for the society. The crisis of faith and the conflict of science and humanity worked strongly on him. The ideal of continental poets helped him in chalking out a new form for starting a new dialogue. And from these poets he learnt the art of building the structure of reality on the ground where the high dome of romanticism stood with pomp and grandeur. Amulya in his adolescence and early youth wrote poems imitating his seniors of the romantic school. These poems easily reflected the happy influence of Ganesh Gagol, Jatindra Nath Duara, Ratnakanta Barkakati and Dimbesvar Neog. Amulya had an intimate personal contact with Jatin Duara which naturally
prompted him to follow his footsteps. But due to his study of the continental realist and an awareness regarding the changing social order and the nausea of industrial civilization once for all, brought forth a progressive strain to his poetry. Amulya Barua's poetry ran on inflated prose sequences. He wrote a disillusioned language caring little for rhetorical representation. The language of hunger and protest, though bold, is yet very simple. Amulya practised simplicity but in spite of their simplicity the words exhibited boldness. A strain of satire too is present in his words. His diction sometimes turns very powerful. We quote below a few of his bold expressions which betray his power of narration and the pointed pathos and satire they bear.

(i) Kṣudhār kṣay roge yāk til til kai khāi niḥṣeṣ kāri diye, = One whose life is corroded bit by bit by the consumption in the form of hunger.

(ii) Āndhārār niśāt prabhūr aisvāryya candukar viśvāsī praharī; Poharat durbal, nispeṣit, ghṛṇit prabhū-bhakta dhekura (kukur). = They are none but the faithful dogs, weak, repressed, despised and incapable of facing light; in the dark night they guard with earnestness the treasure-chests of their masters.
(In the poem 'kukur', from which this stanza is quoted, the dogs symbolise the proletarian, repressed, down trodden and ever engaged in enhancing the interest of the capitalists, but unable to rise against their exploitation.)

(iii) Samājat nīti-vicārar paṭā-dhol kōbovā barmū-riyā sakalar gopan caritrar tāi ye kaṣaṭī sīl. (Vesya)

= She is a touch-stone to the private character of those (so called) leaders who blow torn trum-pets of moral teachings in the society.

(iv) Mādyā pāyī jantu svāmī,

= The drunken animal husband.

(v) Topanir parā utāḥa alas cintār ekāp garam chāh.

= One cup of hot tea in a moment of languid thoughts immediately after a sleep.

(vi) Mōr bhagna abhipsār ka'lā dag.

= The black black shades of my broken desires.

Amulya Barua's poems however, lacked in grammatical neatness and the technical perfection peculiar to the contemporary poetry.

Bhava Prasad Rajkhowa, who like Amulya Barua first experimented with romantic love-lyrics, later turned a pro-gressive and wrote a few poems of distinction and merit.
Hi vidrohi vidhava (The Revolting Widow), Mutia (The Porter) Rickshawala (The Rickshaw puller) and Paricay (The Introduction) are the products of rich calibre. The young widow, revolting against the rigours of social and religious discipline is now ready to find a new path for her. She boldly asserts: Whom shall you blame, O the society, if I choose my own path? (Kāk bāru duṣibī samāj, mai yadi vāci lao nija-rei path). The sad plight of the porter and the rickshaw puller has also drawn the sympathy of the poet. The poor cultivator too, has not escaped his attention. The Assamese cultivator, suffers from high tax (including land revenue), debt, disease, hunger and poverty. But in spite of his hard labour, he gets very little in return. The unequal distribution of the products makes him poorer and the master, for whom he tills the land, richer. He feeds others with the products of his hard toil but keeps himself starved:

Dība Ṽage epheri māṭir-khājanā apār
(Kintu) kimān phacal pāo nibicāre tār
Pindhivale nāi phaṭākāni, vemārat kata hay hāni
Rui dio: dāi lai yā: dukhar talit hoā sukhar sambhār,
Asikhsit khetiyak paricay eyei āmar. (Paricay)

= We are to pay for a small land a big revenue,
(But) How much we earn, nobody cares to know;
We don't have even the rags to wear,
We sustain so much of loss through diseases;
We plant the seeds, others reap the harvest,
The happy harvest of our sorrowful toil;
We are illiterate cultivators, that is
our only introduction.

Bhavaprasad too could well-discern that the inequitable
distribution of production leads to social injustice and
economic disparity. But unlike Amulya Barua he has not made
any strong propaganda for the poor and the economically
exploited; he remains contented with the vivid portrayal
of their economic distress. But, in the sphere of social
injustice, Bhavaprasad, like Amulya Barua, believes in the
necessity of a rebellion and inspires the young widow to
revolt.

In respect of metre Bhavaprasad follows a rhymed
sequence and occasionally tries his pen at making the free-
verse.

The call for a revolution was too fervent in the
poems of Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla. Jyoti Prasad had a progres-
ssive attitude towards life and society. A master artist,
Jyoti Prasad could visualise that a change in the social
sphere was inevitable. He had noticed that without a
revolution, things could not be set at right. The call for a revolution is given also through his songs. He too supported the necessity of class-struggle and sympathised with the people who were groaning under ignorance, poverty and social repression. A mad peasant, a drunken tea labourer, the freedom seeking volunteers, a tea-girl, and the like found representation in his poems. A peasant has gone mad because of his property being auctioned by the maujadar (i.e., the petty commissioner who collects land-revenue in Assam) due to his failure to pay the land-revenue in time. The poet puts the following words in the lips of the mad peasant to represent his deep seated sorrow and hatred:

\[ \text{Irikaṭi mirikaṭi bāhar śalā} \\
\text{Dhar, dhar mahāri kalai palā?} \\
\text{Khejenāke khejenā} \\
\text{Khejenāke khejenā} \\
\text{Rejena Rejena — gītān — tītān} \\
\text{Nīlām, nīlām, nīlām} \\
\text{Mor cakupānī kākno vilām?} \\
\text{Krok, krok, krok} — \\
\text{Maujādārār barpeṭṭo dhorok.} \]

The bitterness and hatred of the peasant towards the maujādar (the revenue officer) is well portrayed in the very line —
Maujádārar barpetṭo dhorok (literally the big belly of the revenue officer should burst with a bang). The economy of expression, musicality of the words, their potentiality for evoking the appropriate image and the satirical strain of these lines are really commendable.

Jyoti Prasad's concept of revolution had double aspects. First, his revolution indicated a revolt against the foreign rule; secondly his idea of revolution embraced the whole sphere of society. He wanted to free man from all sorts of social and economic inequity, from the repression of the bourgeoisie exploiters and capitalist tyrants. In his poems we find him making a promise to give history a new turn. Jyoti Prasad thought that through the medium of arts the people could be easily awakened to start a revolution and thereby to change the hackneyed structure of the society. He had immense faith on the power of the people. His political ideology leaned towards Gandhism first but later on it switched over to Marxism. Siding with the people, Jyoti Prasad warned the self-interested hypocrite leaders and told them boldly that their end has come.

*** Mahājanatāi
Mahāsaktir mahāsandhān pāi
Bukut bāndhile,
Cakravarty sata samrātar
Visvā viyapa nava arjunar
Prthivir eke pradaksinār
Sva-pranōdīt
ātmanihita bala.

Hera svārtha-kṣamata-artha lubhiyā andha
Mai jāno tāi janasevakar mukhā pindha,
Yi tyāg karile tinigun lābh pāo
Āgduvāredi tāke tāi
Pāc duvāredi gai
made-bhāte bhoj khāva.

Rāstrānītīr
Samājānītīr
Rājānītīr
Arthanītīr tor
thāi de phopolā jnān,
Janātā pūjār bhāo di, bhāo di
nedekhuvābī
ghrāṇita tor ahaṃkārar netṛtvaḥbhimān,
Janatāi tor svarūp ciniche
Sāvadhan, Sāvadhan.

Jyoti Prasad loved the youth of the country. He inspired them to march forward to procure freedom, liberty and
equality. He has written as many as ten poems making a call to the youth. For him youth and revolution are the two sides of the same coin. Revolutions and changes, according to him are the historical necessities. He believed that only the rays of a new sun, which symbolises new political and social order, could help the people to fulfil their high cherished dreams.

The new sun to-day
With its new-rays
Decorates the new-world;
The new life of the new people
are awakening
a new philosophy is coming
This new gāyatrī is echoing and
re-echoing in different lands,
Sing to-day, the new song of equality.

Jyoti Prasad had a fine sense of metrics. He devised a new sort of paused rhyming with unequal number of syllables and letters. And for his choice of words, there was no parallel. He often used words of Sanskrit origin but he could nicely combine it with the language of the common speech. Jyoti Prasad had the power to bestow his words with emotional climax, intellectual effect and word-music and his words can
express more than they mean as evidenced by the lines and phrases like the following:

(1) Sailaja payodharā piyussalilā suradhuni gāṅgā.

(ii) Bāje rudratal
Nāce mahakāl
Abhinava tāṇḍava

(iii) Asuriya sabhyatār pārasya vīlās.

(iv) Kāṭā sūtārei īngrājkhanar hāt-bhāri bāndhī tham.

(v) Mai āji navalok kuṅjar bāhini
Jana-gana-jaga-man tīrthagāmīni.

(vi) Mai
yantrayugār mohān mantra lam
Man vimānār mayēi sārathī ham
Vijulī rathar mahārathī mai
Jīvanar raṇjīt,
Bidārim mai samājtantra
Rachim natun mānava-tantra
Vījñān svargajīt
Mai jnānār indrajīt.

Dhirendranath Dutta (1920-1972), who accepted Marxism as his political ideology introduced the spirit of freedom for the working class. The poet understood with great sympathy the poor plight of the working class. The oppressed
The working class suffers not only economically but spiritually too. "Only the philosophic materialism of Marx has shown the proletariat a way out of that spiritual slavery in which up to now all oppressed classes have been sleeping. Only the economic theory of Marx has explained the actual situation of the proletariat in the general structure of capitalism." Dhiren Dutta in his poems tried to make the working class disillusioned and to make them aware of the spiritual slavery. In his poem 'Kath Misrir Ghar' (The Carpenter's house) the poet has nicely drawn the picture of a Carpenter half-fed and half-clothed groaning under exploitations of the capitalistic system of society. He furnishes the houses of the elite with the furnitures made by his own hand; the big leaders sitting in the luxurious easy-chairs sings songs of love, while the carpenter lives with an empty stomach. The poet has made a call for action to these suffering proletariat. Time has come for the carpenter, the black-smith, the brass-metal worker to assert their own right and to undo the prevailing darkness.

*** Uthā mistry kahār, kamār
Āndhārār ses āhil tomār
Boā adhikār nī bāhu vale
nīje karā karmār
kāth misrir ghar.
The protest against a bourgeoise dominated society is voiced high in the poetry of Ajit Barua (b 1921). Ajit Barua is confident of the birth of a new world where the sorrows and sufferings of the working men will be no more. Miseries of the unfortunate and the deprived who toil without adequate recompense for the well-being of the rich and the fortunate have moved him profoundly and in his poems 'Nāturi' (The Hammer) and 'Tikha' (The Steel) the poet has assured the working class of an end of the old rotten structure of the society.

By hammering the red steel
The modern man sets the foundation
Of a new age. ****
The modern man knows
What for the steel rusts,
He declares the death of the barriers of the old society;
The modern man knows no escape,
He knows the value of labour
He will set the steels in liberty to close the past, for ever.

Ajit Barua's poetic career was brief; but his contribution to the progressive school is solid and undeniable.
Abdus Sattar (b 1920) joined these progressive modernists by a few of his new poems. Sattar began his trade in poetry in imitation of the romantic predecessors. Later he changed the strain of his poetry and successfully took to representation of the destitute and the down trodden. His poem O.K. reflects the misfortune of the poor section of society in a touching and suggestive manner. With the coming of the American soldiers the word 'O.K.' become very popular also in Assam. This word began to be used in season and out of season as an expression of ease and approval. Abdus Sattar makes use of this word as a satire against the snobs of the contemporary society. The poverty of the man on the street and the luxurious life of the privileged few and their utter indifference to the sorrows of the people, is the chief theme of the poem, 'O.K.' :-

An old woman
With three day's continuous starvation,
dried up to the bones,
Paused like a skeleton.
Death had waited by her side.
Noticing a grand-officer, passing by
in expectation of a voice of sympathy,
a morsel of food,
Or a pice from his pocket
She wailed to him:
"Babu, I have no food for the last three days";
She could speak no more.
With a smile the Babu replies, 'O.K.'.
The Babu disappears in the distant crowd,
His own life is a life of endless
happiness and luxury.
And in her heart,
her unintelligible O.K. echoes,
Then what?

She has nothing more,
A skeleton : unfed
A skeleton : oppressed
A skeleton : lying by the road-side,
Like the black pitches of the pitched roads,
Her life is a strange harmony of
Poverty and oppression;
(Oh, the unfounded O.K.s)
Nothing is left to her
If anything left
That is surely the 'O.K.'.
The poem gives a vivid picture of hunger and evokes the image of a typical victim of a famine and it is of some historical importance to note that this poem was actually composed in 1943. The year that saw the notorious Bengal famine, caused by the utter indifference and selfishness of the horders and the like, symbolised by the unperturbed Babu of the poem.

Among other poets with a definite bent of progressivism, mention may be made of Siddhesvar Tamuli (b 1963). His Yugar Āhān (Call of the Time, 1951) poems very aptly illustrate his social consciousness and eye for a revolutionary future. Like his contemporaries Siddhesvar too began his poetic career with the making of romantic verses but later he switched over to the progressive trend. His sympathy like most of his contemporaries is directed towards the downtrodden humanity the Coolie, the ice-cream vendor and the prostitute (Nanir Putala). The poem Coolie records the poet's neo humanistic vision. This poem is important not only for its content but for form also. Coolie is built on pun and irony. The very word Coolie is full of pun (śleṣa) primarily it denotes the cuckoo and nextly a tea-garden labourer. The poet has aptly placed the labourer Coolie side by side with the bird Coolie. A fine sense of contrast between the two high lights the poem. The hungry Coolie (labour) resentfully
tells the bird Coolie (cuckoo) his sad plight of hard toil and frequent starvation.

"You too are a coolie (the cuckoo)

You leave in utmost happiness

leading a glorious life;

I too am a coolie,

but I die of starvation.

I labour hard breaking my sinews,

my sinews run like the coils of a machine,

my body shudders

and in return of that hard toil,

I get the most minimum wage

my hard toil is assessed by their grace;

With that little money

I cannot get two feeds for myself.

Poverty swallows my whole being;

The remuneration I get is worth of an hour or two of my labour,

But my surplus labour, my hard toil build the high structure of capital to the exploiters.

We toil hard but receive no gain

The capitalist masters pause with luxury

Over the wealth gathered by us.
Tamuli, with his Marxian ideology could guess the role of surplus value in amassing capital in the hands of a privileged few, which was at the root of all class-struggle.

The progressive idea in poetry got a further careful representation in the poems of Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, Syed Abdul Malik, Keshav Mahanta, Hem Barua and a few others, of whom more detailed discussions are given in the subsequent chapter. They developed further trends of modernity along with progressivism and as such they belong to an entirely different school.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Amulya Barua, born at Jorhat in 1922, was the eldest son of Pramod Chandra Barua. He passed B.A. examination in 1945 and proceeded to Calcutta and got admitted in the Calcutta University for doing M.A. in English and Law. Unfortunately, he was killed by communal rioters on 18th August, 1946 in his hostel. He began his poetic career by writing in the romantic strain, under the influence of Ganesh Chandra Gagoi and Jatindranath Duara. He also edited an anthology of Gagoi's poems: Rupajyoti. He and a
few others organized the Radālī Corā, a forum for literary discussion. This Radālī Corā used to discuss the contemporary trends in literature. As gathered from Jatinarayan Sharma, Amulya’s romantic outlook happened to be replaced by a progressive outlook as a result of his study of the western progressive poetry to which he was initiated by Munin Barkatakī. At that time there was a sweeping change over the social climate of Assam. The poet with his progressive outlook started brooding over the ills of the society. The scene of a fight between a dog and a man for a piece of bread (ruṭī) in a dust bin in front of the Bisturam Barua Hall at Jorhat in 1943 impelled the poet to write his much appreciated poem Kukur (The dog). War affected Jorhat and the famine-torn Calcutta made Amulya pensive over the plight of the society. He easily got attracted towards the life of the common man, his hard toil and sorrows, and wrote a big number of poems. A manuscript collection of his poems named Acinā (The Unknown) was ready for the press during 1946. But with his killing, the manuscript was also lost. At our insistence the Deputy Commissioner of Police, Calcutta made a search for the manuscript of Amulya Barua’s poems; but sadly, in spite of their best efforts,
the manuscript could not be traced out. Nanda Talukdar has recently compiled and published a collection of Amulya's published poems with the title Acinā. But in this collection all his published poems are not included. Amulya Barua wrote poems in English too. Amulya was a serious student, he had a deep study of the contemporary poetry. Marx and Freud were his favourite authors.

3. Ibid., p 61
4. Ibid., p 62
5. Ibid.,
6. Ibid., p 63
7. Ibid., p 66
8. Ibid., pp. 69-71
9. Ibid., p 67
10. Ibid.,
11. Ibid., pp. 82-86
12. Ibid., preface
13. The nausea of the industrial civilisation too, ailed the poet. Industries widen the difference between labour and capital and thereby endangers social harmony.
14. Acinā, p 75
15. Ibid., p 73
16. Ibid., p 65
17. Acinā, p 65
18. Ibid., p 63
19. Ibid., p 70
20. J.N. Sarma (ed.): Ādhunik Asamiya Kavita, pp. 94-95
21. Ibid., p 95
22. Vide, Luitar Parar Agnisur
23. Amongst his songs 'Na Jovan i Hind' and 'Visva Vijayi nava Jovan' speak eloquently of a rebellion.
24. Vide, Luitar Parar Agnisur
25. Ibid., pp. 162-63
26. Ibid., pp. 13-18
27. Ibid., pp. 234-235
28. Ibid., pp. 184-190
29. Ibid., p 27
30. Ibid., p 52
31. Ibid., p 55
32. Ibid., p 59
33. Ibid., p 167
34. Ibid., p 208
35. Ibid., p 188
36. Lenin. Vide, Capital ed. by Max Eastman, p 11
37. Ādhunik Asamiya Kavita, pp. 67-79
38. Ibid.,
39. Ibid., p 17
40. Ibid., p 105
41. S. Tamuli: Yugar Āhvān, 1951
42. Ibid., pp. 13-14