

Tagore and Gujarati



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Cover:

**A sketch by Ravishankar Raval published in *Visami Sadi*
Tagore addressing 6th Gujarati Sahitya Parishad – 1920
(L to R: C. F. Andrews, Rabindranath Tagore, Hargovinddas Kantawala)**

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Preamble

Celebration of Tagore's 150 years has provided me with a unique opportunity to delve into the realm of Gujarati literature. For those who are surprised to read this statement I must inform that my familiarity with Gujarati literature can at best be termed as acquaintance.

The first opportunity to deal with Tagore and Gujarati literature was provided by a seminar organized by the Literary Club of Asiatic Society in Mumbai in December 2010 where one session was devoted to Tagore in Gujarati, Marathi and Tamil. My next opportunity to explore further was provided by Natya Shodh Sansthan, Kolkata in January 2012 where I had to talk about Tagore the playwright and his impact on Gujarati theatre. Finally, in May 2012, Eastern Regional Office of Sahitya Akademi, Kolkata, organized a seminar on Reception of Tagore in Indian Literature, where Gujarati was one of the many languages of India which were given a platform. It was at this venue that I came to learn about a seminar organized by National Library, Kolkata, in January 2011, when Tagore's impact/influence on 13 major Indian languages was discussed. Proceedings of this Seminar have now been published under the title of *Nameless recognition: Rabindranath Tagore and Other Indian Literature*.

While a littérateur of the stature of Tagore can both inspire as well as influence litterateurs of other languages, it would be desirable to begin with the distinction between 'inspiration' and 'influence'. Not being an academician I may be allowed to proceed in my own layman's approach which perhaps, follows a rationale as perceived by common sense not fine-tuned by professional or academic training.

Human mind is subjected to events and emotions within and without. Each of these events and emotions act as a stimulus to the accumulated experiences stored within. An extract of these leaves a seed dormant in the psyche. At times, at some future moment, for

reasons beyond my comprehension, these seeds sprout.

Occasionally, the fresh sapling takes a striking resemblance to the original plant - like a child to the parents - and at other times it shows only streaks of the original or appears as a new incarnation of the original. This I believe is the difference between influence and inspiration.

In order for literature or a poet of one language to influence literature or *littérateurs* of another language there are at least two prerequisites. The original language must have a long and rich past over which it has evolved and accumulated a substantial harvest of literature produced by contribution of numerous stalwarts. Secondly, the original language must be prevalent within the society of the target language, either due to geographical proximity or due to social or political factors promoting use of original language amongst the natives of target language. At given times in history, French as the original language and English as the target language or English as the original language and Bangla as the target language would be a good illustration where the above prerequisites were met. Where such a situation does not exist it is not fair to expect major influence of a poet of one language on the literature or *littérateurs* of the target language as the poet in his original is accessible only to a few who are familiar with the original language. However, a great poet of one language can inspire *littérateurs* of the target language even through good and meaningful translations.

Umashankar Joshi makes some significant observations on this issue in opening lines of *Rabindranath and Gujarati Literature*, a talk he delivered in Santiniketan on August 9, 1961:

How does a great writer influence his contemporaries? Perhaps he influences most by his artistic integrity, by his artistic stature. Rabindranath's work was to his countrymen a revelation of the truth that no matter in which language one wrote one was called upon to write world literature, i.e. what would be literature by world standards. Rabindranath stood before the world as the greatest Indian poet since Kalidasa. For Indian writers he became at once the image of

a supreme artist and the symbol of what India stood for. For them he was more an abiding source of inspiration than a temporary influence, more like a Himalayan peak than a passing storm.

Rabindranath contributed to the cultural climate of India and even when any direct influence of his work cannot be traced, it is not possible to miss his presence as an important cultural component.

As far as Gujarat is concerned, Rabindranath was lucky in having no imitators, who more often than not parody the master. Tagore's influence has been more on the mind of Gujarat than its literature.¹

This is indeed a poetic and succinct rejoinder from an eminent scholar to what I have stated earlier and sets the tone for what to expect when one searches for Rabindranath in Gujarati.

The papers I presented at different venues referred to above have been suitably amended to reduce overlapping portions to a minimum. Apart from that they appear as presented. *Before Rabindranath and Umashankar Joshi and Rabindranath Tagore* are subsequent additions and are incorporated here as they seem to add to the subject on hand.

What follows is not the result of an exhaustive or comprehensive research undertaken by a scholar. Like all my Tagore pursuits, this was undertaken for personal pleasure, in this case, at the instance of some well meaning friends, who believe in seriousness of my efforts. One can describe this as a semi-systematic presentation of what I came across during my quest of Tagore in Gujarati. I think this would provide a good starting point for those who wish to pursue this thread in greater detail.

With this preamble, I would like to present Rabindranath and his creativity as perceived in Gujarat and Gujarati.

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¹ Source: Typescript of an unpublished talk.

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Before Rabindranath Tagore

While Rabindranath had visited Gujarat in 1878, as a 17 year old, on his way to England, he really *arrived* here in 1920, when he was invited to the 6th Gujarati Sahitya Parishad. His literature had preceded him with a few translations following soon after the Nobel Prize in 1913.

However, contact between Bengal and Tagore family had begun much earlier. Available records indicate that with the appointment of Satyendranath Tagore (1842-1923), elder brother of Rabindranath and the first Indian ICS officer, in Ahmedabad in 1865, an era of close contact between the two states lying at the two extremes of the Indian subcontinent began.

Socio-religious reformist movements such as Brahma Samaj in Bengal, Arya Samaj and Prarthana Samaj in western India also played a role of catalyst in this unusual and exceptional drama which led Satyendranath to pronounce that

I am not so fond of climate of Gujarat but amongst Gujaratis there are many for whom I have a soft corner in my heart. Whether language or peculiar social customs, there are many similarities between Gujaratis and Bengalis - as if a portion of Bengal is annexed to western India.²

Mary Carpenter (1807-77)³ presents a lucid picture of the Gujarati society in 1866 and vividly describes her experiences as well as the state of affairs as far as women were concerned. It is interesting to note what Satyendranath Tagore wrote in her book at the end of her stay with him in Ahmedabad:⁴

² *Amar Balyakatha o Amar Bombai Prabas*, Satyendranath Thakur, Indian Publishing House, Calcutta, 1915, p. 167. Translation, mine.

³ An English educational and social reformer who had met Raja Rammohan Roy in England and had been influenced by his philosophy. She had met Satyendranath Tagore when he was in England studying for his Civil Service examination and had come to India at his initiative.

⁴ *Six Months in India*, vol. I, Mary Carpenter, Longmans, Green, and Co., London, 1868, p. 81-82.

‘It is not for nothing that India has been placed under the British rule. It is impossible to think that her destinies have been ruled by a blind unsparing Fate, or that it is for the glory and power of England alone that such a wonderful bond of connection has been established, by an inscrutable Providence, between the two countries, separated from each other by half the world, and a whole world of ideas and feelings. There is one hope, one intense conviction from which no true patriot can escape—that is, that England and India are to be a mutual blessing; that our country, once famous in the world’s history, is destined to be helped out of her present degeneracy and utter stagnation. And is there no reason for this hope? and are there no data to base this conviction upon? What was India a few years ago, and what do we see around us? We see a marked progress, brought about by the influence of Western civilisation. We see a nation domineered over by caste and idolatry—a nation of which the men are completely enslaved to custom, and the women kept down and tyrannised over by the men by dint of sheer physical strength, which they cannot resist—a nation which has long ceased to be progressive, and of which inertia and stationariness is the natural condition. Even this nation, opening its eyes to the enormous evils around it, is gradually waking to the influences of the bright light of thought and knowledge, before which millions of false stars are fading away. India sank down under the weight of the accumulated corruption of ages; foreign influences were requisite to rouse her. These are being felt through her length and breadth. A steady though slow progress is perceptible. The tyranny of society is slowly succumbing to the gaining force of individuality and intellect. Superstition is losing its strongholds one after another. Ceremonial observances are being replaced by true principles of morality. There are many things still wanting, hideous defects still to be remedied; but let us work each of us individually, and hope for a brighter future. May India be grateful to England for the blessings she has been enjoying under her benign rule! May England feel that India is a sacred trust and responsibility which cannot be thrown away!’

‘Ahmedabad. October 14. 1866.’

This is certainly not a polite observation meant only for the ears of a representative of the ruling class. This was the true belief of the reformist educated Indians of the day. The sentiment is beautifully echoed in a poem by a Gujarati poet, Dalpatram (1820-98).⁵ Opening lines of his poem titled *About Favour to India* reads:

*Gone are vengeance and jealousy, gone are repressors,
Beyond the castes and creed, the society enjoys harmony;
Look, even the poor goat is safe, none to pull its ears,
Considering this to be a favour divine, now rejoice India.*⁶

Indeed, this is what Rabindranath was talking about at the end of his life, in his famous lecture, *Crisis in Civilization*, delivered on his 80th birthday. Looking up to the British and the Western civilization with anticipation and expectation was the prevailing attitude of the intelligentsia of the day.

Satyendranath Tagore first arrived in Ahmedabad in 1865 as Assistant Judge. Recollecting first impressions created by Satyendranath and his wife, Gyanadanandinidevi, Narasimharao Divetia⁷ (1859–1937), son of Bholanath Sarabhai, writes:

When I was a child, Satyendranath had arrived in Ahmedabad as an Assistant Judge. As yet he had not come in close contact with my father. A funny memory of those days is worth noting. He used to go out with his wife in an open carriage. Gujaratis were not familiar

⁵ A Gujarati poet, encouraged by Alexander Kinlock Forbes – responsible for founding of Gujarat Vernacular Society – to pursue and develop Gujarati language. He was also the father of Nhanalal, a great poet of Gujarati in the early 20th century. It should be noted that Dalpatram had written poems about Mary Carpenter as well as Satyendranath Tagore. On December 31, 1869, Mary Carpenter had addressed a meeting at Himabhai Institute, Ahmedabad. Dalpatram was requested by the audience to recite a poem. His poem was acknowledged by Mary Carpenter from Bombay on January 13, 1870. In this poem he had even mentioned the name of George Peabody, an American philanthropist who had helped Mary Carpenter in her work in England. On the eve of his departure for England on a furlough, Satyendranath Tagore was greeted at the bungalow of Premabhai (nagarsheth) by the eminent citizens of Ahmedabad on September 13, 1878. Again, at the request of the audience, Dalpatram had recited a poem in which he claims that Dwarakanath Tagore was the 28th generation of one Narayan Bhatt! Source: *Dalpat Granthavali* -3, Op. Cit., p. 27-29 and 36-38. (It may be noted that Narayan Bhatt is mentioned in the opening chapter of *Rabindra Jibani*, Vol. 1 by Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyaya.

⁶ *Dalpat Granthavali* – 3, Kavishvar Dalpatram Dahyabhai, ed. Chimanlal Trivedi, Gujarat Sahitya Academy, Gandhinagar, 2001, p. 109. Translation, mine.

⁷ Narasimharao Divetia (1859-1937) was a Gujarati poet, linguist, prose stylist and a critic. After retiring from Government service in 1921, he joined Elphinstone College in Bombay as a Professor of Gujarati.

with the new dress adopted by Bengali women. (Since Bengali women observed the custom of purdah, their traditional dress consisted of a simple saree with a sheet covering the top. This would not cover the body properly and hence, would not be decent enough in public. The modern women of the time would wear a saree and a blouse – all arranged in an interesting fashion – but expose the right hand.) Seeing this one of our old hands came and told us all, ‘the new judge goes out in his carriage with some theatrical person.’⁸

This was the period during which *Dharma Sabha*, predecessor of *Prarthana Samaj*, was active. In 1871, *Prarthana Samaj* was founded under the influence of *Brahma Samaj* of Bengal. In 1876, Satyendranath returned to Ahmedabad as a Judge. Bholanath Sarabhai, the moving spirit behind *Prarthana Samaj*, came in contact with Satyendranath Tagore, who had been helping his father, Maharshi Debendranath, in activities of *Brahma Samaj* even before he went to England in 1862. The two became good friends. Satyendranath lectured at *Prarthana Samaj* meetings and the two collaborated on *bhajans* to be incorporated in *Ishwar Prarthana Mala*, first published in 1875.⁹

A cursory study of 11th edition of *Ishwar Prarthanamala* published by Ahmedabad Prarthana Samaj in 1977 and *Brahmasangeet* published by Sadharan Brahma Samaj in 1993 reveals at least seven instances of lyrics by Ganendranath, Jyotirindranath and Satyendranath having been translated partially or completely into Gujarati.¹⁰

Narasimharao Divetia writes:

During this period Bholanath and Satyendranath began working together to translate Bangla bhajans into Gujarati. Satyendranath would convey the meaning of Bangla songs which would be transcribed by Bholanath. Next Satyendranath would sing original

⁸ *Smaranamukur*, (2nd edition), Narasimharao Bholanath Divetia, B.A., Gurjar grantharatn Karyalaya, Ahmedabad, 1954, p. 91. Translation, mine.

⁹ This was Volume 1 which consisted of Chapters 1 to 15 only. Source: *Ishwar Prarthana Mala*, ed. Vinodini Nilakanth, Prarthana Samaj, Ahmedabad, 1977, (11th edition), p. 2

¹⁰ For details see Annexure 1.

songs and on that basis Bholanath would create a Gujarati song in that style. . . . One finds the influence of Bangla traditions in these songs. This can be attributed to Satyendranath's lack of mastery over Gujarati language and Bholanath's negligence towards the finer details of that language.¹¹

Satyendranath used to lecture at *Prarthana Samaj*. Narasimharao describes these lectures:

The lectures delivered by Satyendranath were striking and on such occasions there would be a large audience. People would see this Bengali foreigner dressed in a jacket and trousers, with uncovered head with curiosity, wonder and awe. My elder brother, Bhimrao, had written an article in English about his first lecture and the same was published in a weekly called 'Hitechchhu'. He had described these feelings of the audience in that article. The audience used to be amazed hearing this teacher's - who looked like a foreigner - pronunciations of Sanskrit and hymns of Vedas, which resembled those of Brahmins who had studied on the banks of Ganga. I recollect a sentence of that article which said something like this, giving a lucid description of the lecture.¹²

Bholanath visited Satyendranath as well as his father, Maharshi Debendranath in January 1877. In a letter written to his friend, Mahipatram Rupram¹³ he described his detailed impressions of the *Brahma Samaj* and its activities in Kolkata. About Debendranath, he says:

We were to have left Calcutta on 26th, but Mr. Tagore (Satyendranath) asked me to stop for a day more as his father was expected that night. So I stopped one day more.

The following day I had the pleasure of seeing Maharshi Devendra Nath, who is really a venerable old gentleman. He knows Upanishads

¹¹ *Smaranamukur*, Op. Cit., p. 92. Translation, mine.

¹² *Smaranamukur*, Op. Cit., p. 91-92. Translation, mine.

¹³ Mahipataram Ruparam (1829-1891), an educationist, activist and reformist. He was also a great support to Bholanath Sarabhai in *Prarthana Samaj*.

very well. Besides he is a good Persian scholar. I had a talk with him for about two hours. His age is about 63. I asked him to go to Ahmedabad with his son Satyendra Nath. He said he would think about it.¹⁴

Both of them became such good friends that Bholanath would accompany Satyendranath when he would visit towns around Ahmedabad for work. As indicated in diary of Bholanath, they would attend meetings of *Prarthana Samaj* in those towns and both of them would address the meetings.¹⁵ Narasimharao also mentions a visit to Vadtal when Satyendranath and Bholanath were together.¹⁶

Another entry in his diary dated 17th September 1878¹⁷ reads:

Wrote a letter to Satyendranath in Mumbai with the following shloka of blessings:

सद्धर्मवृत्तिरखिलेश्वरभक्तिरस्तु
दीर्घायुरस्तु धनधान्यसमृद्धिरस्तु १
भूयात्प्रयाणसमये भगवत्प्रसादात्
शान्तानुकूलपवनश्च शिवश्चपन्थाः १¹⁸

It was in early 1870s that one Narayan Hemchandra (1855 -1904)¹⁹ had come in contact with Bholanath Sarabhai. In May 1878, when Debendranath was staying in Chandannagar²⁰, Narayan Hemchandra had gone there to meet him.²¹ Once again in the summer of 1882, when Debendranath was in Mussourie, Narayan Hemchandra went there to meet him. An interesting account of this

¹⁴ Bholanath Sarabhainu *Jivancharit*, Krishnarao Bholanath, Ahmedabad, 1888, p. 121. Translation, mine.

¹⁵ Bholanath Sarabhainu *Jivancharit*, Op. Cit., p. 52.

¹⁶ *Smaranamukaur*, Op. Cit., p. 93.

¹⁷ Satyendranath was to leave for England along with Rabindranath on 17th September 1878.

¹⁸ Bholanath Sarabhainu *Jivancharit*, Op. Cit., p. 181. Translation, mine.

¹⁹ Narayan Hemchandra was a Gujarati writer, translator and poet from Bombay who had learned Bengali from Nabinchandra Roy, who had propagated Brahma Samaj in Punjab and had subsequently come to Bombay. Gandhiji met Narayan Hemchandra in England and has devoted an entire chapter of his autobiography to him. He had written more than 175 books and had even translated Jyotirindranath Tagore's play, *Ashrumati*, into Gujarati.

²⁰ *Rabijjibani*, vol. 2, Prasanta Kumar Paul, Ananda Publishers P.Ltd., 2002, p. 27.

²¹ *Hun Pote*, Narayan Hemchandra, Gujarat Sahitya Academy, Gandhinagar, 2001, p. 220.

meeting appears in his autobiography, *Hun Pote*, (I, Myself). Excerpts from the same are quoted below to illustrate his keen observations and intimacy between the two:

As I was approaching his (Debendranath's) bungalow, I saw a man on the street wearing a headgear like that of an Ismaili and a large woollen cape. A sepoy was holding an umbrella above his head. I saw him from a distance. Immediately I went near him and offered my pranam. . . Talking with each other we proceeded to his bungalow. . . . Debendranath sat on a chair under a tree. I sat near him. . . . Debendranath asked the sepoy to call Shastri. A slim, blue-eyed . . . queer looking Shastri appeared. I felt as if his eyes were betraying his ill intents. . . . At twelve lunch was announced by a bell. Maharshi Debendranath Thakur, Priyanath Shastri and I sat down at the table to eat our meal with knife and fork. I sat at the table to eat with knife and fork for the first time. Everything was in British style. Table was covered with a high quality white cloth. There were napkins, silver knives and forks. Food was served in best china plates. Rice and dal were kept in the best china plates used by the British. Glasses were of glass. For the first time I saw such British practice in the home of a native. I was really surprised to see such British customs being followed by a 70 year old man known as a Maharshi and who believed in ancient Hindu religion. Rice, dal and vegetables were served first. Debendranath served rice. The butler brought dal to which we helped ourselves. This was followed by vegetable to which also we helped ourselves. . . . I would observe both and hold the knife and fork as they did. I could not eat fast. . . . Then the plate was changed. Another plate was brought. . . . Then milk was served in silver bowls. . . . Then we were served almonds and cardamoms instead of pan and betelnuts. . . . We were talking while eating. We had to talk loudly as Maharshi is hard of hearing. After food we sat in the verandah. At one Debendranath went to his room. . . . At half past three he came out. . . . I asked him questions pertaining to religion. He answered them. In support of his statements he would sing some Sanskrit shlokas and ghazals of Hafiz and explain them. . . .

Once while talking about a major change in his life, he said, 'when I was young I was like any other rich child with bad habits and my

friends were also like me. . . . I loved my grandmother. I never disobeyed her. When she grew old she told me that she would give me something nice at the time of her death. I was anxious to know what she would give me. She fell seriously ill. I felt that the time of her death was approaching. I started remaining close to her and started wondering what she would give me. When her health deteriorated as per the custom of Bengal she was kept in a hut near the bank of Ganga because it was believed that one reaches the heaven sooner if one dies on the banks of Ganga. I also went with her. She was put on a bed. I sat near her. Seeing the beautiful fields around, the sight of water, chirping birds, I was wondering who must have made this beautiful sight. Just then my grandma raised her hand and rotated her finger around. As I was thinking about the creator of this beautiful sight she raised her finger and I felt that God is everywhere and you should trust him, he bids well for man. I thought this must be what she wanted to give me. Looking around, I was overcome with joy. I had never felt such happiness before. My grandma died. After cremating her, I came home. . . . and slept in a room. I was very anxious to feel the joy I had felt earlier. Being unable to feel that joy I cried a lot. For three days, lying in the bed I kept thinking about how to get that feeling of joy once again. I do not recollect if I ate anything during those three days. On the third day I got up. My friends had come. I asked them what they wanted. I gave someone some nice things; to someone else I gave nice pictures. By giving I experienced joy. But it was not the same joy that I had experienced earlier. Then I started to read books about how to experience the joy I had experienced earlier. It could not be found anywhere. In my father's table there was a book by Kant given to him by an English man. The English man had written that this book was worth reading, so I started to read the same. I found a great solace. Kant became my guru. I learned a lot from that book. I experienced the joy I had experienced earlier. Since then I gave up bad habits and got involved with prayers and meditation of God.'

At another time Devendranath told about himself, 'my father, Dwarakanath Thakor was very wealthy. He had acquired the land at Raniganj by his own cleverness. At present, coal worth lacs of rupees is mined from that land. That land was ours. He also had a large business with England. An Englishman was the manager of our firm.

Turnover was in lacs of Rupees. When my father, Dwarakanath went to London, he spent a lot of money and became known as Prince Dwarakanath. Some times there is a loss in business. My father also incurred loss. He created a trust for the wealth he had inherited. In the meanwhile he died. The creditors thought that from the balance wealth they will be able to recover 25 to 30% of the amount due to them. Being happy with whatever they could salvage they started to prepare for sale of the property my father had earned. I came to know about it. It was not fair of my father, Dwarakanath Thakur, to have deprived the creditors by creating a trust of the inherited property. My father died a debtor and I must repay that debt. By that time I had become a follower of the path of religion. I could not bear this injustice. I started to hear the conflict between fairness and unfairness within myself. Fairness said that whatever is due must be given. Unfairness said that you do not have to give because you are not responsible for that. If you give, you will be a pauper. All your luxuries will disappear. Fairness won. I decided that even I become a pauper it does not matter, I must be just. I called all the creditors and told them about the trust and told them that all that belonged to them. I will repay the debt of my father by giving that. Hearing this the creditors were amazed. They thought that they have not come across such a son. If he is prepared to become a pauper he is a religious person. We should not snatch away all that he has but recover gradually. They said you may repay our money gradually. After that I put restrictions. In my father's time daily snacks were worth 40 Rupees. I reduced that to 4 annas. I cut down the expenses significantly. In a few years I repaid the entire debt. I came to know that my father had promised a donation of Rupees One lac to a school for deaf and dumb in London. I immediately met that obligation. Repaying as much of my father's debt as I could I am really happy today.'²²

In late 1882, Narayan Hemchandra translated and published ten lectures by Debendranath on Brahma Dharma and half of the

²² Hun Pote, Op. Cit., p. 261-262, 265-267. Free translation, mine. A deliberate attempt has been made to retain the flavour of the original author's colloquial style of writing.

printing expense was born by Bholanath Sarabhai. In January 1883, he again went to Dehradun to meet Devendranath.²³

Narasimharao had joined as Assistant Collector in the Revenue Department in 1884.²⁴ In September 1885, when Rabindranath visited Satyendranath in Sholapur²⁵, Narasimharao was also posted there. For all the six years that Narasimharao was in Sholapur, Satyendranath was also there for most of that period.²⁶ In *Smaranamukur*, Narasimharao notes many anecdotes describing their friendship with each other. It was during this stay that the two families came in intimate contact with each other. He writes:

There was hardly a day when he did not visit us. . . . We first came to know about Bengali music during this period. Satyendranath's daughter was an accomplished violinist. But we heard Bengali vocal music for the first time when Satyendranath's brother Ravindranath visited him. Hearing that one experienced आनन्दसान्द्रोलयः. The singer was our Ravindranath. (three years ago I felt that that old mellifluousness of his voice appears to have diluted).²⁷

In December 1885, Debendranath had come to Bombay.²⁸ Narayan Hemchandra describes:

I heard at Bholanath's place that Maharshi Devendranath will come to Ahmedabad tomorrow. . . . On the same day I went to Palanpur to fetch him. Maharshi Devendranath had come to Palanpur in a special first class coach. . . . Met Maharshi in the coach. . . . The train arrived; the coach was attached to the train. . . . At Ahmedabad station Maharshi was received by Bholanath, Mahipatram and other members of Prarthana Samaj. . . . I had to leave for Bombay on the next day to hire a bungalow for Devendranath. . . . We got off at Bandra, which is 10-12 miles away from Bombay on the seashore. . . .

²³ *Hun Pote*, Op. Cit., p. 282, 283.

²⁴ *Narasimharaoni Rojanishi*, Narasimharao Divetia, ed. Dhansukhlal Mehta and Ramprasad Bakshi, Gujarat Vidyasabha, Ahmedabad, 1953. p. 11 of editorial.

²⁵ *Rabijibani*, vol. 3, Prasanta Kumar Paul, Ananda Publishers P. Ltd., 1987, p. 16

²⁶ *Smaranamukur*, Op. Cit., p. 95.

²⁷ *Smaranamukur*, Op. Cit., p. 94-96. Translation, mine.

²⁸ *Rabijibani*, vol. 3, Op. Cit., p. 41.

We saw a few bungalows but none was vacant. One unfurnished bungalow on the seashore was vacant. . . . Finally we hired that bungalow. . . . Maharshi arrived the next morning. . . . I used to come from Bombay everyday for a couple of hours. . . . In a short while another bungalow nearby was available. That was rented.

Satyendranath came to visit his father. . . . He is religious, simple and compassionate. I talked to him about religion and music. . . . At the time of annual function of Samaj (Prarthana) Devendranath donated 50 Rupees. Once he gave a dinner to the members of Samaj and I had organised the same. . . . Priyanath had to go to his native place so Maharshi asked me to stay with him. I stayed in Bandra for a month. . . .

In a short while, Ravindranath, younger son of Devendranath, came to meet his father. Ravindra is one of the first rate poets of Bengali. His poetry is very nice. He has written many books. He is learned, simple and religious. I was engrossed in talking with him. His speech is very sweet. He wears his hair long. . . . There is a glow on his face. Everyday I used to talk to him about different aspects of literature. I learned a lot from him. Maharshi's photographs were taken by Born ek Sperd (Bourne and Shepard?) in Bombay. . . .

While I was staying in Bombay I heard about the sickness of Rao Bahadur Bholanath Sarabhai. His son, Narasimharao alias Nanubhai, stayed with Hiralal on his way from Sholapur to Ahmedabad. This was my first introduction to him. . . . I learned from Hiralal that Bholanath passed away on 11th May 1886. I conveyed the news to Maharshi. He is very sorry. After a few days Narasimharao came to Bombay on his way to Sholapur. When he went to meet Maharshi, I was also there. Maharshi conveyed his regrets and consoled him.²⁹

Describing the last days of Bholanath Sarabhai, Krishnarao Bholanath writes:

. . . former Pradhanacharya of Adi Brahma Samaj, Maharshi Devendranath Thakur arrived in Ahmedabad. At that time Maharshi delivered an outstanding talk at Prarthana Samaj. During the talk, at

²⁹ Hum Pote, Op. Cit., P. 335-338, 341-342. Translation, mine.

his instance, Bholanath had sat with him on the altar. Seeing these two great persons sitting on one altar was a pleasure unprecedented. White apparels of both were symbolic of sacred deeds and intents of both. On this occasion, in company of Maharshi, Bholanath became more devotional. Maharshi left for Bombay on February 1.^{30,31}

Bholanath Sarabhai was mourned not only in Gujarat but also in Kolkata. *The Interpreter*, Kolkata, of June 1886 and *The Indian Messenger*, Kolkata of 23rd May 1886, carried obituaries to him.³²

Narayan Hemchandra became a very dear friend of Narasimharao and stayed with him in Sholapur for quite some time. He describes an encounter with Satyendranath:

One day all of a sudden I felt like going to Bombay. I had very little money with me. I had given some money to Narasimharao for safe keeping. He did not return to the bungalow before departure time of the train. I was very keen to go. I felt I must go to Bombay. I prepared to leave. The servants and sepoy urged me to leave after Narasimharao returned. I decided to leave and I left. Arriving at the station I found that Satyendranath was there. I borrowed five Rupees from him and took the train.³³

He had gone to Kolkata once again and met Maharshi in late 1888 or early 1889. His observations about Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar are worth noting:

Translation of Bankimchandra Chattopadhyaya's Vishavriksha was being printed in Bombay. I went to see him. I told him that I wished to translate his book. He said that until I know how well you know Bengali I will not permit you to translate. So I did not mention about Vishavriksha. I asked if recommendation of Satyendranath would do. He agreed. I met Satyendranath in Kolkata. He introduced me to his

³⁰ Bholanath Sarabhainu *Jivanacharit*, Op. Cit., p. 202. Translation, mine.

³¹ There appears to be some confusion between the two sources referred to, regarding the dates reported for Maharshi's visit to Ahmedabad. Maharshi might have come back to Ahmedabad for a short visit from Bombay.

³² Bholanath Sarabhainu *Jivanacharit*, Op. Cit., p. 28-29 of Parishisht.

³³ *Hun Pote*, Op. Cit., p. 349. Translation, mine.

wife and his Barrister friend, Pal. He praised me a lot. I told him about recommendation note on Bankimchandra Chaterjee. He immediately wrote a note. I took the same to him. Bankim babu appeared to be an arrogant person. He read the note. Then he became greedy. He said, what will you give me. If you give me some money I will give you permission. A Hindi translator gave me this amount, what will you give? I told him not a penny. Very few books are sold in Gujarati. I write for pleasure. There is no income in that. How can I give? He declined. Leaving all grace aside I left without a salute or namaskar. Such was the attitude of the famous Bengali author. People say that he was very greedy and a scoundrel all over. He did not have a son so he appointed his daughter's son as his heir. Bankim babu is no more. I have imitated many of his novels in Gujarati. ...

When I was in Kolkata I used to meet Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. I have not seen anyone in Gujarat who was as compassionate as he was. There is no Gujarati, Bengali, South Indian or Madrasi as noble as him. I think it fit to state here that the person who is called Maharshi by the Brahma Samajis is also not as compassionate as Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar. I appreciate the virtues of both. But the compassion of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar is more than that of Maharshi. There are more philanthropic persons. They spend a lot of money. But that is to show the people, to earn fame and to imitate. You see such examples everyday in every city, small or big. Today Honourable Ranchhodlal Chhotalal builds a fountain near Manek Chowk, give it a name. tomorrow a large hospital is built, install a huge board. . . . everywhere philanthropy draws applause from people and so compassionate deeds are performed. But Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar is not like that. He works because of genuine compassion within. Hence, I call him Dayasagar (ocean of compassion).³⁴

In October 1889 Narayan Hemchandra left Bombay by steamer for a visit to Europe. He had collected several reference letters from eminent persons of the society. One of these letters was written by Satyendranath:

³⁴ Hun Pote, Op. Cit., p. 381-382. Translation, mine.

I have known Mr. Narayan Hemchandra for some time and have always admired his simplicity of character, his zeal and devotion to duty, and habits of close application and industry. A Gujarati by birth he has not thoroughly mastered the Bengalee language and has translated several standard works of Bengalee language into his own language. He is desirous of embarking for England to acquire knowledge of English and to improve himself generally. I wish him every success.

*Satyendranath Tagore
Bombay Civil Service.*

Calcutta, 24th September 1889³⁵

In 1901, when Anandshankar Dhruv (1869 – 1942)³⁶ launched his monthly magazine, *Vasant*, the first issue carried a poem by Satyendranath, translated by Krishnarao Bholanath on the first page. This was translation of the song composed in 1867 for Hindu Mela.³⁷

Narasimharao met Satyendranath on two more occasions. Satyendranath was to preside over the Theistic Conference held in Surat in December 1907. Narasimharao specially went to Surat to attend the Conference so that he could meet Satyendranath. At that time Satyendranath introduced Narasimharao to Pherooshah Mehta. In summer of 1913, on his way to Darjeeling, Narasimharao visited Satyendranath at his Kolkata residence.

All this camaraderie that was inspired by the catalytic impact of religious reforms and appointment of Satyendranath in the Western India gradually vanished as the religious reform movement took back seat and the main actors disappeared from the stage one after the other.

Satyendranath retired in 1897 and returned to Kolkata. Narayan Hemchandra passed away in 1904 and Maharshi in 1905.

³⁵ *Hun Pote*, Op. Cit., p. 428, 407-408.

³⁶ Author, philosopher, educationist and critic. President of Gujarati Sahitya Parishad, 1928. Acharya and pro vice chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, 1919-1936.

³⁷ *Puratani*, Gyanadanandini Devi, Ananda Publishers P. Ltd., 2012, p.

Looking back at this period one feels that Narayan Hemchandra was the unsung hero. Even in the *manapatra* given to Rabindranath by Sahitya Parishad in 1920, he is acknowledged to have been the first one to introduce Bengali literature to Gujarat.³⁸ While all others are noted in the writings of both the languages Narayan Hemchandra lives by his writing alone and in the writing of Narasimharao Divetia and Gandhiji. In Gandhiji's autobiography, his eccentricity and simplicity catch the readers' attention rather than his contribution to religious reforms and the role of a link that he played between the two states lying at the extreme ends of the subcontinent. Even in Gujarati literature his name has not attained the stature that he deserves. Perhaps this is due to the uneven quality of his works and his own unique and strange ways of doing things in the name of what he believed in.

Despite such strong personal bonds the relationship between the two languages did not or could not flourish because none of the languages were used as an official language of the state or society like English was in Bengal. After a low tide in the first decade of the 20th century one finds resurgence in the linguistic exchange after the Nobel Prize was awarded to Rabindranath in 1913.

³⁸ *Amadavadama Ravindranath*, ed. Nirajan Bhagat, Image Publications P. Ltd., Mumbai, 2003, p.27.

Tagore in Translation

Rabindranath Tagore, the colossus of Bengal, the sculptor of modern Bengali culture and creator of the spoken Bangla of today, is indeed the most internationally known litterateur of India. Is he the most translated Indian author also? Talking about Gujarati, the answer would be yes as well as no. Yes, if you take into account the number of his works translated and no if you look at the proportion of his collected works translated. The anomaly arises due to unusually large volume of his works and hence, one can safely say that he is indeed the most translated Indian author in Gujarati.

For an average Gujarati, the name Rabindranath Tagore is associated primarily with Bengal, Nobel Prize, *Gitanjali*, Santiniketan and *Jana Gana Mana*. His most known work in prose would perhaps be *Kabuliwalla* and in verse, undoubtedly, *একলা চলো রে*. *Kabuliwalla*, because it was a part of the text book at school and *একলা চলো রে*, because of its association with Gandhiji as well as an excellent translation by Mahadev Desai, Secretary of Gandhiji, which retains the Bengali melody also. Indeed, *চিত্ত যেথা ভয়শূন্য*, is known to a Convent educated Gujarati through *Where the Mind is without Fear*. An equally appealing Gujarati translation of the same is yet to appear! On the other hand, a free translation of the same by Gujarati poet, Niranjan Bhagat, set to music by Surendra Jetley is being used as a school song by Rachana School of Ahmedabad since 1964. Unfortunately, this version is not published in any of the poet's publications and hence, virtually unknown.

Before proceeding further a note must be taken of the paper titled 'Rabindranath and Gujarati Literature' by Shri Bholabhai Patel, published in *Rabindranath Tagore: A 125th Anniversary Volume*, published by Government of West Bengal, in 1988. The same scholar has prepared an exhaustive bibliography of Tagore in Gujarati which was appended to *Ravindra Purvacharit* by Nagindas Parekh published by Gujarat Sahitya Academy, in 1997. A tabular presentation based on this bibliography is presented in Annexure 2.

The 1997 bibliography lists publications under 5 different categories viz. autobiography(5), verse(20), plays(24), novels and collection of stories(82), collection of essays(14) and miscellaneous(13) – a total of 158. 22 titles of Tagore have been translated by more than one translator. Of course *Gitanjali* has been a favourite with the Gujarati translators, as it is likely to be the case with other Indian languages. However, it must be noted that most of these are translations of the English *Gitanjali* and not the Bangla one – as a matter of fact, most Gujaratis, and perhaps, most readers across the world are not even aware of the existence of two distinctly different *Gitanjalis*. Hence, I humbly insist on referring to the English volume as the English *Gitanjali*. In spite of the popularity accorded to *Gitanjali* due to the publicity associated with the Nobel Prize, the first Tagore title to appear in Gujarati was not *Gitanjali* but *Chitrangada* and *Viday Abhishap*. It was translated by Mahadev Desai and Narhari Parikh and published in 1915. Next was *Chokhervali etale Ankhani Kani* by Dhanshankar Tripathi in 1916 along with a collection of essays under the title of *Samaj* by Maharinishankar Sharma. The first translation of *Gitanjali* by Manibhai Desai³⁹ appeared in 1918 as did *Rajarshi* by Jethalal Dave. In 1919 Ambalal Purani translated *Reminiscences*⁴⁰ as *Sansmarano*. In the same year a translation of the English *Gitanjali* also appeared. 1920s and 30s saw a few more translations. From 1940s onwards Tagore translations appeared in larger numbers and continued till the 1960s. Subsequently, till today, the numbers of fresh titles has decreased, however, reprints, abridged editions and regrouped collections/anthologies have been appearing regularly. This could be due to the fact that most of the important works were already translated by 1960s.

It is also worth noting that in the initial period, it was not the noted names of literature who were translating Tagore. This was perhaps due to the fact that they did not know Benglai and those who did, were not acknowledged litterateurs.

³⁹ 'The translator has claimed that the translation is from original Bengali, though in prose.' Quoted from *Rabindranath in Gujarati Literature* by Bholabhai Patel, *Tagore : A 125th Anniversary Volume*, W. Bengal Government, Kolkata, 1988, p. 48.

⁴⁰ English translation of Tagore's autobiography: *Jibansmriti*.

Nagindas Parekh is perhaps one person who has done more than all others combined to bring Tagore in Gujarati and to Gujarat. His first translation, *Pujarini ane Dakghar* appeared in 1932 and his biography of the early years of Tagore – *Ravindra Purvacharit*, on which he was working since 1950s, appeared in 1997, after his demise in 1993. In between he translated and published more than 20 titles of Tagore writings, two important titles of Abu Sayeed Ayyub – *Adhunikta O Rabindranath* and *Panth Janer Sakha* – about Tagore. He had studied Bengali in Gujarat Vidyapith and Visva Bharati under the guidance of Rabindranath Tagore himself. He, in turn taught Bengali to such eminent litterateurs as Umashankar Joshi, Ramanlal Soni, Bhogilal Gandhi, Rajendra Shah, Bholabhai Patel, Anila Dalal and others. In the later part of the paper we shall be talking about Umashankar Joshi and Rajendra Shah – both highly acclaimed poets of Gujarati who were recipients of the prestigious Gyanapith award.

All his other students have translated Tagore but Ramanlal Soni should be taken a special note of. Of the 82 titles of novels and short stories that have appeared in the bibliography referred to above, 28 are by him. His first translation appeared in 1945 and he continued to translate Tagore for the next more than 40 years. Nagindas Parekh credits him for translating more Bengali books – not Tagore alone – into Gujarati than anyone else.⁴¹

Bholabhai Patel, who spent an year in Santiniketan in early 1980s, has translated *Char Adhyay*, contributed to translation of songs in *Gitapanchashati* and edited two anthologies – *Ravindra Sanchay* in 1993 and *Ravindra Sanchayita* in 2012, along with Anila Dalal. Anila Dalal is credited with translation of *Chhinapatra* (Tagore letters), *Lipika* and four Tagore plays – *Muktadhara*, *Rakta Karabi*, *Achalayatan* and *Chandalika*.

Apart from those who learned Bengali from Nagindas Parekh there are other translators who either went to Santiniketan or learned

⁴¹ *Ravindra Purvacharit*, Nagindas Parekh, Gujarat Sahitya Academy, 2002, p. 248.

Bengali from other sources. Mahadev Desai, Jugatram Dave, Jhaverchand Meghani, Bachubhai Shukla, Niranjana Bhagat, Suresh Joshi, Pinakin Trivedi, Subhadra Gandhi, Narayan Desai, Shrikant Trivedi, Chandrakant Mehta, Ramnik Meghani, Shivkumar Joshi, Sugna Shah and others belong to this category.

Mahadev Desai, who served Gandhiji as his Secretary, has given an immortal translation of Tagore's *একলা চলো রে* and *তোর আপন জনে ছাডবে তোর*. These are two Tagore songs which are known to an average Gujarati either because they were Gandhiji's favourite or because of their melody as set by Tagore.⁴² As stated earlier, along with Narhari Parikh, Mahadev Desai translated the first Tagore title - *Chitrangada ane Viday Abhishap* - in Gujarati. This was before he joined Gandhiji in 1917.

Jhaverchand Meghani had stayed in Bengal and had visited Santiniketan at the invitation of Tagore and had lectured there on Gujarati folklore. Collection of his translated poems were published under the title of *Ravindravina* in 1944. Apart from *Gitanjali* this was the first collection of verse which introduced Tagore's other poems - non-*Gitanjali* - to Gujarat. It was this translation, through which Gujarat learned to sing Tagore songs and some of them became so popular that quite often they are sung without realising that it is a Tagore poem. The success of this translation lies in its unique style, which is steeped in Gujarati folklore, at times even at the cost of the mood, subtlety and finery of the original. His collection of short stories, *Kurbanini Kathao*, was based upon stories of *Katha O Kahini*.

Bachubhai Shukla, who was one of the first two students to graduate from Visva Bharati and received his degree at the hands of Tagore, settled in Mumbai and translated a play - *Tasher Desh* as *Pattano Pradesh* - novels, short stories and essays in 1940s and 1950s.

Pinakin Trivedi, who was a student at Santiniketan and had settled in Mumbai as a teacher in New Era High School, has translated close

⁴² Gujarati words are: *તારી જો હાક સુણી જો કોઈ ના આવે તો તું એકલો જાને રે* and *તારા સ્વજન તને જાય મૂકી તો ચિંતા કરે યાદશે ના* respectively.

to 15 Tagore songs into Gujarati retaining the original Bangla melody. These include such famous prayers as *Jiban Jakhan Sukaye Jay*. Unfortunately, these songs are not heard these days.

Through performances of Tagore dance-drama in their schools, Bachubhai Shukla and Pinakin Trivedi introduced the form of dance-drama, known as *nrityanatika* in Gujarati, to Mumbai and Gujarat. This form is now used by many others on Gujarati stage.

Sugna Shah has successfully translated such difficult Tagore prose as *Shey* along with *Teen Sangi*. She has also translated Pratima Devi's *Nirvana* and Miradevi's *Smritikatha*. Her translations of Rani Chanda's *Gurudeb* and *Alapchari Rabindranath* as well as Abanindranath's *Gharoya* await publication.

This brings me to translation of Tagore related literature. As stated earlier, Nagindas Parekh has translated such important books as Abu Sayeed Ayyub's *Rabindranath O Adhunikta* and *Panth Janer Sakha*. Maitreyidevi's *Svarger Kachhakachhi* is also available in Gujarati. In the past decade Mahesh Dave has written a Tagore biography under the title of *Kavitano Surya*. He has also translated Tagore -Ocampo correspondence.

Most urban Gujaratis are bilingual these days. The language they speak as well as understand best is a mix of colloquial Gujarati sprinkled with English. I would not be surprised if such is the case with many, if not most, regional languages of India. In order to make them appreciate Tagore's poetry an effort has been made by this speaker to present Tagore's poetry in a bilingual volume containing English as well as Gujarati versions side by side. In the current decade, *English Gitanjali*, *Naibedyā*, *Prantik* and *Shesh Lekha* have been published.

To summarise the scene of Tagore in Gujarati, I would like to offer some observations. Tagore's prose, particularly novels and short stories have received adequate attention and one can safely say that almost the entire corpus is available in Gujarati. Most of his

important essays and plays are also available in Gujarati. However, in order to bring forth the quintessential Tagore, the essayist and the playwright, more work is called for. As far as verse is concerned, there are many translations of the *English Gitanjali*, more than one of *Crescent Moon* and apart from *Naibedya*, *Gitanjali*, *Balaka*, *Lipika*, *Prantik* and *Shesh Lekha* no other collection of verse has been translated in its entirety though there are many selected works. Personally I am of the opinion that an anthology on the lines of *Sanchayita* or Sankha Ghosh's *Suryavarta* should be undertaken as a long term project to celebrate Tagore's 150th birthday. This may be undertaken by Sahitya Akademi, Delhi for all the regional languages as was done in the centenary year when *Gitapanchashati* and *Ekottarashati* were published.

Tagore - the Playwright

The sheer volume of Tagore's literary creations is awe inspiring and its variety is mind boggling. It is in his poetry that the master craftsman of language and wizard of words presents an exceptionally beautiful sculpture of exquisite imagination blended with ideas distilled from wisdom and vision. His prose is far more voluminous than and as varied as his poetry. Many of his prose pieces are poetic if not poetry. In his letters and essays he can be repetitive and verbose. Some times the reader is carried away by the force and charm of his language at the expense of rationale. In letters one generally finds spontaneous expression of the author's mind. In essays it is his considered and deliberated expression that is manifested. Tagore's letters, in spite of being spontaneous, carry a stamp of not only literature, but outstanding literature. It is in narrative literature - prose as well as verse - that the sensitivity and imagination of the author create a world all his own to be shared with his readers. Narrative verse has traditionally been lyrical and has formed part of the folklore of every region and culture. Narrative prose can be divided into short story, novel and of course, play. Short stories thrive within their limited constraint of space. This constraint, which is also their strength, limits the scope and canvas of short stories to a few characters, shorter time span and brevity of the author's expression. In a novel these limitations are eliminated and the author can express himself to the minutest relevant and pertinent detail, leaving almost nothing to the imagination of the reader. The world and the characters around the author come alive in his short stories and novels. Tagore, the master story teller has utilized the medium of short stories most effectively. Rural Bengal and its people have come alive in his short stories with all their seasons, festivals, joys, sorrows and all the human emotions presented in most touching and heart rendering manner. In his novels the history of his times is inextricably interwoven with the plot. However the human drama unfolded is timeless and universal. The total corpus of his poems, short stories and novels, all taken together, create a synthesis between history and literature which is

‘unparalleled in the history of culture and literature’. Niharranjan Ray appropriately elucidates this as under:

Not a phase, from the coarsest to the finest, not an event, from the most significant to the most lowly or subtle, ever took place in our land that did not find its reaction in some form or other within the orbit of Tagore’s conception and imagination, artistic activity and expression.⁴³

In a play, the author has to express himself as well his characters and situations only through dialogues with sparse commentary on the backdrop etc. in the introduction. Hence, the craft of story telling becomes far more demanding than in the case of short story or a novel. When a play is read, a lot is left for the reader to imagine or surmise on the basis of his own interpretation. However, when a play is staged or becomes theatre, there are many other inputs such as the interpretation by the director and actor. Stagecraft is another aid which can supplement and augment the script and lend a far greater support to the original concept presented in the script or ‘play’. Success of the theatre can be judged from the extent to which the audience has become an inextricable part of the play.

It is in his plays that one finds a peculiar blend of Tagore the poet and Tagore the prose writer. His *padya-natya* and *nritya-natya* are more poetry than prose and use of poetry is fairly extensive in most of the plays. It is in this genre that one finds Tagore to be pedagogic or didactic although the message is conveyed rather subtly. One also finds that Tagore, the playwright is the farthest removed from reality, as perceived by a man on the streets. Ananda Lal summarizes this issue quite appropriately with a brief statement:

...the realism in Tagore’s plays is a realism of the mind, not so much of exterior physical action as of emotional or spiritual action. It does not depict external conflicts as much as internal conflicts of the mind and spirit.⁴⁴

⁴³ Tagore: *The Last Phase*, Nihar Ranjan Ray(1903-1981), *The Calcutta Municipal Gazette: Tagore Memorial Special Supplement* issued on September 13, 1941, Kolkata, January 2006,, p. 25

⁴⁴ Rabindranath Tagore: *Three Plays*, Tr..with an introduction by Ananda Lal, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2001, p. 44.. For a detailed discussion see *Tagore’s Themes* (p.43 to 47) in this publication.

Some of his plays address the problems of his time. He draws on themes from the past or an abstract theme using his own brilliant imagination, to address the problems of the present. The characters of his plays are seldom persons of his time and clime. This does not apply to his comedies and satires, where his characters breathe the same air he did. His other plays have a quality of intrinsic rhythm as well as obviously open canvas that offers innumerable opportunities of interpretation.

About *Prakritir Pratishodh*, one of his earlier plays, he says that:

When love bridged the gulf between the two, ... the seeming triviality of the finite and the seeming emptiness of the infinite alike disappeared.the joy of attaining the Infinite within the finite ... has been the subject on which all my writings have dwelt.⁴⁵

In his famous *Naibedyā* poem (No. 30) he has unhesitatingly and emphatically declared

Not for me, deliverance through renunciation.

Indeed, this is a metaphysical manifestation of his earlier declaration:

মরিতে চাহি না আমি সুন্দর ভুবনে

Indeed, by this very dictum his quest for the infinite has to be within the confines of the finite. This quest so eminently manifested in his poems, continues its subterranean journey in his plays. It is as if his quest begins with poems, continues through his plays and culminates in his paintings. The state of bliss, symbolized by wordlessness, initially sung in many words in his poems, spills over in his plays and ultimately finds its destination in his paintings. This is not to say that his quest is complete or the state of bliss is attained. I concur with Radice that Tagore was a seeker, not a finder.⁴⁶ I find

⁴⁵ Reminiscences, Rabindranath Tagore, Mac Milan, p. 238 – slightly re-arranged

⁴⁶ See 'Talking at Night to Rabindranath' on

http://www.williamradice.com/Dancing%20Words/Talking_at_Night_to_Rabindranath.htm

his *pratham diner surya* a convincing confession of his unfinished quest and an optimistic declaration of continuing quest.⁴⁷

This is the reason I find his plays closer to his paintings than any other form of expression he indulged in. To me his paintings as well as plays are incomplete works of creation which are completed only after the viewer adds his own inputs and imagination or the director and actor expresses his view with the aid of stagecraft. In his quest for the infinite within the finite as expressed in his plays, his director, actor as well as stagecraft and to some extent his audience - all have a role to play. To illustrate this, I would like to ask whether in *Chitrangada* - the *kabyanatya*, he takes up the cause of a feminist or deliberates upon the fulfillment of womanhood, or does he debate *satya* and *mithya*? Would it not depend upon the emphasis of the director and the tone of the actor and the perception of the audience?

Having expressed my layman's perception of his plays in general I would like to talk about the variety of forms he uses in his plays.

Beginning with *gitinatya*, he presented his famous *kabyanatya* and *prahasan* - all before the end of 19th century. He went on to write more *prahasans* in 20th century. He used the form of *gitinatya* in 20th century, mainly for his theatrical productions revolving around seasons and hence, these are often classified under *ritunatyas*. The other two genres were not repeated later. Perhaps, *nritya-natya*, which he indulged in with passion in later years, gave greater scope to his creativity than did *gitinatya*. However, I regret not seeing *kabyanatya* in his later repertoire. Did he regret the difficulty of staging these? Was it difficult to find appreciative audience for these plays? Or did he conclude that in theatre, lyrics and/or prose convey as much, if not more than verse does?

Themes of quite a few plays by Tagore are drawn from ancient Hindu or Buddhist scriptures or even regional stories/folklore.

⁴⁷ See 'Between and beyond the lines of *Pratham Diner Surya*', Shailesh Parekh, Towards Rabindranath, Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, 2011.

However, he merely draws inspiration from these sources and moulds situations and characters to suit his purpose and plot. Drawing inspiration from traditional sources saves him the trouble of building up the character and lends brevity to the play. For example, in *Chitrangada*, he does not have to say much about the valour of Arjun and he can even use an adjective such as un-Arjun to pack a lot in one word! This is despite the fact that his Arjun is quite different from Arjun of Vedavyas. This is true of quite a few of his *kabyanatya*, if not all. His Kacha, Debayani, Karna, Kunti, and Malini – they all have a distinct Tagore touch which paints them in a colour which is quite different from the one given by the original author or plot. However, he succeeds in making his theme timeless although the plot and the situations are firmly embedded in their times.

Genius of Tagore comes to light in such pieces as *Gandharir Abedan* when one realizes that he has drawn on a classic piece to parody the prevalent situation and in doing so he leaves behind a gem for generations to savour upon.

This poem has an interesting, but almost forgotten story about its genesis.

In 1897, forty years after the 'mutiny' of 1857, the freedom movement once again gained momentum under the leadership of Tilak and others who transformed the previously meek and mild population by initiating violent protests against the British. Two Englishmen were assassinated in Pune. The British retaliated by arresting Tilak, sending the Natu brothers to exile, sending Damodar Chapekar to the gallows, etc. The press reacted with sharp and critical resentment to such oppressive practices. The British responded by introducing Sedition Bill in December 1897 and in spite of the feelings of resentment against such draconian measures, it became an Act in February 1898.

Gandharir Abedan was written in November/December 1897 at Santiniketan. In its first public recital on February 12, 1898, at the

hall of the Calcutta University Institute in College Square, it was described as a poem composed by Babu Rabindranath Tagore on the exile of the Pandavas.

A week later, a short lived weekly, *Sansar*, reported,

Last Saturday, ...Rabindranath recited a natyakavya, on the exile of Pandavas – a dialogue between Dhritarashtra and Duryodhana. .. At the time of the recitation I felt that this poem is particularly useful in the present time. I think it is a satire on the way the politicians function under the Sedition Act. The President of the meeting said that the moral of the poem will teach good lessons to the politicians in the times of present movement.⁴⁸

In Rabi Rashmi, Charuchandra Bandopadhyay wrote,

Dhritarashtra is British Parliament, Duryodhana bureaucracy, Gandhari, British sense of justice, Bhanumati, British prestige, Pandavas, Indians deprived of rights and Draupadi, Strength and glory of the ethical.⁴⁹

A day before the Sedition Bill became an Act, i.e. on February 17, 1898, there was a meeting in Town Hall of Kolkata to request the Viceroy to reconsider the decision. At that meeting Tagore delivered a speech titled *Kantharodh*, later included in his essay, *Raja Praja*. Some of the statements in this speech are similar to the ones made in *Gandharir Abedan*.⁵⁰

This makes *Gandharir Abedan*, a topical poem based upon an incident of a mythical epic. Only a great poet can draw upon a mythical epic to write a topical poem which becomes timeless because of the universal message it conveys.

While female characters of his novels and short stories are also powerful they assume a greater emphasis and importance in his plays. The protagonist in most of his plays is a female. Even when the protagonist is not a female, she either initiates or dominates the

⁴⁸ Rabi Jibani, vol. 4, Prasanta Kumar Paul, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, p. 160.

⁴⁹ Rabi Jibani, vol. 4, Prasanta Kumar Paul, Ananda Publishers, Kolkata, p. 161.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 162.

action or plays an important role in conveying the message. This is true for his *gitinatya*, *kabyanatya*, *nritya-natya* or plain *natya*.

A large portion of his plays can be classified as symbolic, allegorical, social or addressing a problem. However, Pramathnath Bishi prefers to call them *tattvanatya* and I agree with him.⁵¹ As it is used here it is extremely difficult to translate *tattva* into English. The closest I have been able to approach it, is with words like 'reality' or 'truth' or 'substance'. His quest is pronounced and prominent in these plays which dramatize its fulfillment in union with the universe.

Ultimate objective of any play is to be presented on a stage. If it was not so, the author could have adapted any other genre as his personal form of expression. A play reaches people when it is presented on a stage and it becomes theatre. As stated earlier, this calls for many external inputs by persons other than the author – those who may or may not have the same wavelength as well as sensitivity as the author. What is presented to the audience is a joint venture between several individuals separated from each other by not only space and time but also internal perceptions and external practices. Obvious question is what kind of theatre do Tagore plays make? In my opinion, not a great one. As reported by Ananda Lal, during Tagore's life time, P. Guha-Takurta had said, '[Tagore] has not written plays for the public but has rather created a public for his plays.'⁵² While there are reports of the great success Tagore plays had during his life time within India and abroad also. A pertinent question, difficult to answer, remains: would these plays have received the same success if the author was a lesser celebrity than Tagore?

With this birds eye view of Tagore's plays, before turning my attention to his plays and their influence in Gujarat, I would like to take a quick look at the contemporary scene. Sitting in faraway Gujarat, with the help of the world-wide-web, I do get to know

⁵¹ *Rabindranatyaprabaha*, Pramathnath Bishi, Orient Book Co., Kolkata, 1998, p. 122

⁵² *Rabindranath Tagore: Three Plays*, Op. Cit., p. 37

various efforts made across the country to celebrate 150 years of Tagore and pay homage to him on that occasion.

I notice that not much is being done by way of introducing Tagore, his life and ideals on the stage. Theatre is a very vibrant and live media to put ideas and thoughts across and should be used not only to present Tagore's works but also himself and what he stood for. Bhanu Bharati's *Tamasha Na Hua* and Bangalore Little Theatre's *The Prophet and the Poet* are two such examples and I wish there were many more efforts in this direction. The most common comment from the audience after a show of *The Prophet and the Poet* has been, *we were not even aware of this stimulating controversy*. Very recently, Mallika Sarabhai presented a Tagore's life, his ideals and his own regrets and loves as perceived by her, in a brief but brilliant dramatic experience called *With Love*, which I believe was also in Kolkata a couple of weeks ago. To appreciate all the nuances and subtleties with which she had presented quintessential Tagore, called for an audience fairly well acquainted with Tagore's thoughts and literature. The Ahmedabad audience, though it is not quite in that category, responded with such enthusiasm that one felt that the revival of Tagore was around the corner! Such is the power of good theatre.

In this category, one may also include modest efforts by Ravindra Bhavan, Ahmedabad, by presenting three audio-visuals – *Portrait of a Poet Within*, *Tagore's Last Birthday* and *From Shelidah to Stockholm*.

Secondly, I have observed that there is a fair sprinkling of what is known as re-inventing or re-interpreting. The need for re-inventing or re-interpreting indicates a new approach to the play – either by changing its form or genre or shifting the emphasis from the conventional approach to either contemporary or something new or different. It is my belief that this should be done judiciously and only when one is convinced that the new approach will either add to what has already been accepted or will bring out something that has been overlooked or eluded so far or will be more effective and convincing for the audience of the present generation.

Recently, two such efforts of re-interpreting Tagore have been made that I am aware of and would like to draw the attention of this august audience to. One is a play called *Robi's Garden*, written by Vijay Padaki and produced by Bangalore little Theatre. This is a play in which a few of Tagore stories for children have been dramatically presented by and to a group of children visiting Jorasanko. Another is a dramatic presentation of a famous Tagore story – *Streer Patra* – by Mallika Sarabhai. To illustrate my point I would show a short video clip of the play.

I would also like to suggest some rather bold re-inventions of his famous works.

One could be a contemporary version of *Chitrangada* in which a female scion of an industrial empire takes recourse to cosmetic surgery to win over her male counterpart whom she has always wanted to outsmart in a hostile takeover bid. Her battle within will be as pertinent today as it was in Tagore's days. Indeed, one can argue that today's woman – or a man, for that matter – knows how to tackle a real 'other' woman and hence, would have no problem dealing with the one within her!

Another suggestion is to present *Ghare Baire* on stage without the backdrop of the national movement, illuminating the exceptionally moving drama of human relationships. This, I believe, has not received the attention it deserves and hence, this proposed re-invention. Tagore's noble concept of love as presented in *Chitrangada*, *Ghare Baire* and *Syama* can also be explored in a dramatic form revealing his quest for the infinite within the finite or *satya* through *mithya* presented by characters of these three works of different genres.

I would now like to present a picture of Tagore, the playwright as prevalent in Gujarati theatre.

Tagore's poetry, short stories and essays have found a direct reflection in works of some Gujarati litterateurs but the same cannot be said of his plays. However, it must be noted that his earlier *kabya natya* did inspire themes and forms of some poems of Umashankar Joshi. Another exception is Krishnalal Shridharani.⁵³ While Tagore peeps through his *Pila Palash* (Yellow Palash- one act play for children, 1933), both Gandhi and Tagore make their presence felt in *Morana Inda* (Peacock Eggs - a three act play, written in Santinikeatan, 1934).

In Table 1 a chronological survey of publication of Tagore plays in Gujarati has been presented. This table is based upon data published in *Parishishta 3 to Ravindra Purocharit* by Nagindas Parekh first published in 1997 and reprinted in 2002. The last three have been added as these are subsequent publications.

It is interesting to note that the first play to be translated was as early as 1915 - not long after the Nobel Prize. This data suggests that *Mukta Dhara* was translated in the same year that it was published in Bangla, *Dakghar* was not translated for more than 20 years after its Bangla publication. It must be remembered that some of these could be translated from English, which Natvaralal Sheth's *Malini* is. Bachubhai Shukla's *Chandalika* - probably published in 1941 - appears to be an omission in this list. Another interesting feature appears to be absence of any new translations after sixties in spite of the fact that quite a few of the plays remain to be translated. A

⁵³ Krishnalal Shridharani (1911-1960), author in Gujarati and English, journalist,. Studied at Santiniketan between 1931-33.

Table 1⁵⁴

<u>PLAY</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PUBLISHER</u>
Chitrangada ane Viday Abhishap	Mahadev Desai & Narhari Parikh	1915	Navjivan
Muktadhara	Nhanalal Shah	1922	Jivanlal Mehta
Be Balnatako - Shaaradotsav ane Mugat	Karsandas Manek	1924	Amrutlal Sheth
Malini	Narasimhbhai Bhakt	1924	Author
Chitra ane Malini	Natvarlal Sheth	1927	Author
Visarjan	Nagindas Parekh	1930	Gurjar
Pujarini ane Dakghar	Nagindas Parekh	1932	Gurjar
Pujarini	Bhogilal Thakkar	1934	??
Bharatdharm ane Andhara Mahelno Raja	Narasimhbhai Patel & Sevanand	1936	Sastu Sahitya
Pattano Pradesh	Bachubhai Shukla	1943	Author
Rajarani	Jhaverchand Meghani	1945	Gurjar
Lakshmini Pariksha	Nagindas Parekh	1947	Gurjar
Achalayatan	Giridhari Kripalani	1949	Navjivan
Ekanki Natako	Ramaniklal Dalal	1949	Gurjar
Andhara Mahelano Raja	Sevanand	1957	Sastu Sahitya
Muktadhara (2 nd edition)	Karsandas Manek	1957	Sastu Sahitya
Kaumar-asambhavam	Hakumat Desai	1960	Harihar
Natini Puja	Nagindas Parekh	1961	Gurjar
Lal Karen	Chandrakant Bhatt	1961	Chetan, Baroda
Ravindranath Thakurna			
Char Ekanki	Chandrakant Mehta	1962	Kalki
	Nagindas Parekh & Mahadev		Sahitya
Ravindranathna Natako - 1	Desai	1962	Akademi
Chitrangada	Niranjan Bhagat	1965	Darpana
Tagorena Natako	Nagindas Parekh	1981	Lokmilap
Chandalika ane Muktadhara*	Anila Dalal	2003	
			Gujarati
Hasyakatuk ane Vyangakautuk (reprint)*	Ramanlal Soni	2006	Sahitya Parishad
			Sahitya
Ravindranathna Natako - 2*	Anila Dalal	2010	Akademi

⁵⁴ Ravindra Purvacharit, Nagindas Parekh, Gujarat Sahitya Academy, Gandhinagar, 2002, p. 229 to 231

(*) - added to the list published in the above reference

cursory look at the list of poetry translations and novel and short story translations appearing in the same source does not reveal the same feature. Although the number of poetry collections and novels translated post 60s has gone down, one does not find a vacuum noticed in the case of plays.

Before going into the reasons for the same let us take a look at Table 2, which lists the Tagore plays performed in Gujarat over the years. It is proposed to deal with *nritya natya* separately.

Table 2⁵⁵

<u>Play</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Director</u>	<u>Centre</u>
Lal Karen	1950	Jaswant Thakar	Ahmedabad
Nandini	1952	Jaswant Thakar	Ahmedabad
Lal Karen	1960	Janak Dave	Ahmedabad
Muktadhara	1960	Jaswant Thakar	Ahmedabad
Muktadhara	1962	Markand Bhatt	Vadodara
Muktadhara	1983/85	Bharat Dave	Ahmedabad
Dakghar	1962	Ramesh Bhatt	
Dakghar	2010	Nimesh Desai	Ahmedabad
Kaumar			
Asambhavam	1960(?)	Pravin Joshi	Mumbai
Gandharinu			
Avedan	1960	Jaswant Thakar	Ahmedabad
Karnakunti	1960	Jaswant Thakar	Ahmedabad
Kshudhit			
Pashan	1962	Ashok Rede	Vadodara
Aruparatan	1963	Markand Bhatt	Vadodara
Achalayatan	2008	Manoj Shah	Mumbai

⁵⁵ Source: A forthcoming publication by Has Mukh Baradi supplemented by additional information

This is not a comprehensive or exhaustive list but covers most of the major productions in Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Vadodara, prior to the current celebrations of 150 years began. Even for Mumbai, there should be more than the singular efforts of Pravin Joshi and Manoj Shah reported here. Two observations are obvious. First, three major plays, viz. *Rakta Karabi*, *Mukta Dhara* and *Dakghar* have received more attention than others – these have been performed more than once and have been performed by more than one director.

Surat appears to have concentrated on staging Tagore short stories mainly for dramatic competitions – in schools and elsewhere. A list of performances is given in Table 4 below:

Table 3⁵⁶

<u>Play</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Director</u>
Mashi	1959	Vajubhai Tank
Kabuliwalla	1960	Jyoti Vaidya
Chandalika	1962	Jyoti Vaidya
Natir Puja	1963	Jyoti Vaidya Kapildev
Man Pankhinum Shikshan (Tota Kahini?)	1989	Shukla
Nashtanid	2000	Mehul Sharma
Kabuliwalla (Nriya Natika)	2005	Ujrit Kinariwala
Gharbhani (Homecoming) – radio play/soliloquy	1982/6	Jyoti Vaidya
Tarchhodayelo (Castaway) - soliloquy	1979	Jyoti Vaidya

One also finds that most of the performances are around the time of Tagore Centenary. In the past five decades, Tagore plays have been more or less forgotten on Gujarati stage. In Surat one finds some activity in 80s and then in the decade just past. This is a repetition of the observation made for translation of Tagore plays. One of the reasons could be the commercial performance of the plays presented

⁵⁶ Courtesy Sonal Vaidya

around the time of Centenary and the other could be the convenience of staging a Tagore play within the grasp of average audience without compromising quintessential Tagore.

It is obvious that Tagore, the playwright has a far greater presence on the pages of Gujarati than on the stage of Gujarat.

Now let us take a look at Tagore *nritya natya*, known as *nritya natika* in Gujarati. This genre is rather difficult to define as demonstrated by the following review of *Chitrangada* that appeared in *Statesman* of March 17, 1936, soon after maiden performances of *Chitrangada* in Empire Theatre of Kolkata on March 11, 12 and 13, 1936:

The form of the dance-drama 'Chitra' makes it embarrassing to label it by a class-name. It is a ballet yet rebelling against its accepted conventions; it is a pageant of dances, yet its theme, dramatic elements and continuous 'story' carry it on a plane higher than recitals of thematic dances; it is a drama, but the dialogue is reduced to a minimum, and its monuments are expressed not through events and happenings but through songs and dances.⁵⁷

While looking for history of *nritya natika* on Gujarati stage I realized that the work done in this genre has not been adequately documented and hence, I had to start with dance and then approach the genre of *nritya natika*.

Another problem I had to resolve was the definition of Gujarati stage. For the purpose of this paper I have decided to define Gujarati stage not as the stage on which the language used was Gujarati but the stage within Gujarat including Mumbai. I would also be talking about artists who are Gujarati, but settled outside Gujarat as well as non-Gujarati artists settled in Gujarat. This complex approach is called for due to a variety of reasons which will be clear once we are through with our deliberations.

Tagore's interest in and encouragement of Manipuri dance is well known and documented. He had also encouraged E. Krishna Iyer of Chennai and Vallathol Narayana Menon of Kerala to promote

⁵⁷ *Rabindrajibani*, vol. 4, Prabhatkumar Mukhopadhyaya, Visva Bharati, Kolkata, 2007, p. 53

dance.⁵⁸ Of the various institutions teaching dance that came up in India (such as Kerala Kala Mandalam, Kalakshetra, Nrityalayam etc.) Tagore's Visva Bharati was perhaps the earliest.⁵⁹

It was after his visit to Java in 1927 that Tagore really took up *nritya natya* or dance drama as a genre in his creations.⁶⁰

Not long after that, in 1933 Tagore had come to Mumbai with his troupe and had presented *Shapmochan* and *Tasher Desh* at Excelsior Theatre on November 25 and 27 respectively. Both these plays were very well received. In his troupe was a Gujarati student named Pinakin Trivedi, who was also an accomplished singer as well as a poet. He had translated some of the songs of *Tasher Desh* into Gujarati and had retained the original Bangla melody. In the course of this tour he had an occasion to sing his translated songs for Tagore⁶¹ and Tagore had given him a certificate which read:

... he has transposed some of my songs into Gujarati and it gave me genuine pleasure to hear my own songs, sung in another language without any deviations from the original tunes.⁶²

It is a well-known fact that soon after writing *Chitrangada* in *nritya natya* form (completed on 21 February 1936)⁶³, Tagore undertook a tour of North India along with the troupe of *Chitrangada* in March 1936 and all the programmes after Meerut were cancelled at the behest of Gandhiji.⁶⁴ It is quite likely that originally it was planned to take the play to Ahmedabad, but the plan did not materialize until 1937.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ *Jhaveri Baheno ane Shastiya Manipuri Nartan*, Sunil Kothari, Parichay Trust, Mumbai, 2010, p. 2 - 4.

⁵⁹ See Sunil Kothari's Introduction (p. 10) of December 2003 issue of *Marg on New Directions in Indian Dance*, Marg Publications, Mumbai.

⁶⁰ See *Rabindra Natyaprabaha*, Op. Cit., p. 87 and *Letters from Java*, Ed. Supriya Roy, Visva Bharati, Kolkata, 2009, p. 24

⁶¹ *Prasad*, Pinakin Trivedi, Pinakin Trivedi, Mumbai, 1984, *Nivedan*

⁶² Xerox copy of original certificate dated October 27, 1933, issued on Uttarayan stationery and duly signed by Rabindranath Tagore, of the original in possession of Devkumar Trivedi, son of Pinakin Trivedi (1911-

⁶³ *Rabindrajibani*, vol. 4, Op. Cit., p. 51

⁶⁴ *Rabindrajibani*, vol. 4,, Op. Cit., p.57

⁶⁵ See *Rabindranath and the Sarabhais of Ahmedabad: Part I*, published in *Rabindra Biksha*, vol. 42, Rabindra Bhavana, Santiniketan, p. 29 and footnote 10 on p. 30.

Bachubhai Shukla, one of the first two to graduate from Visva Bharati, was also in Mumbai at the time and Pinakin Trivedi came to Mumbai in 1934. Both of them had joined Pupils' Own School, started by Jahangir Vakil, who was also at Santiniketan till 1926.

In 1936 November, Bachubhai wrote and staged what was probably the first Gujarati *nritya natika*, *Vardaan*. This was an original play, though it did carry an unmistakable Tagore imprint and influence, with songs by Bachubhai Shukla, Pinakin Trivedi and Prahlad Parekh, another former student of Santiniketan, music by Bachubhai Shukla, Pinakin Trivedi and one Mr. Chaterjee and Costumes and Stage by Kunwarbai Vakil, wife of Jahangir Vakil mentioned earlier. It was performed by the students of Pupils' Own School on November 14, 1936, for the first time.⁶⁶

Bindu Jhaveri, then Bindu Desai and a 12 year old, recalls staging this play in Santiniketan before Gurudev and Gurudev appreciating the effort and suggesting that Bindu should stay and study at Santiniketan, which she did in 1940-41, after completing her matriculation from Mumbai.⁶⁷

Subsequently, Bachubhai Shukla translated *Chandalika* and *Tasher Desh* into Gujarati in 1941 and 1942 respectively. These were subsequently staged in Mumbai. While the exact year of production is not available as of now, it is quite likely to be in early 40s. This was the time when Kanaiyalal Munshi⁶⁸ was quite active in Gujarati theatre and it is on record that at his instance '*Jai Somnath*' was presented as a *nritya natika* in 1945.⁶⁹ Subsequently, there were many *nritya natika* on Gujarati stage.

The foregoing clearly establishes that *nritya natya* on Gujarati stage was inspired by Tagore and his *nritya natya* or dance drama.

⁶⁶ *Vardaan*, Bachubhai Shukla, Shiyut Bachubhai Shukla, Church Road, Vile Parle, Mumbai, 1936/7(?)

⁶⁷ Personal communication with Bindu Jhaveri in January 2012.

⁶⁸ Kanaiyalal Munshi - (1887- 1971) - Gujarati author, Founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in 1938. Lawyer and politician

⁶⁹ Yog Sunder: A True Prince of Dance, Ashish Mohan Khokar, <http://www.narthaki.com/info/tdhc/tdhc7.html>

It was in 1923, on a visit to Gujarat that Tagore was impressed with a cymbal dance he saw in Saurashtra. He had invited a mother-daughter duo from Gujarat to demonstrate this⁷⁰ and even wrote a song perpetuating this dance - *Dui Hate Kaler Mandira* (April 1923). Later in 1924, when Prof. Jahangir Vakil joined Visva Bharati in 1924, his wife introduced *Garba*, a Gujarati folk dance to Pratima Devi, and she, in turn was instrumental in incorporating this dance form in *Shesh Varshan*.

In return for a folk dance, Tagore generously compensated Gujarat by introducing it to an entirely new genre on its stage - a *nritya natika*.

The earliest reference I have come across about a Tagore *ritu natya* being performed in Gujarat is in *Introduction to Pila Palash* by Krishnalal Shridharani. Gijubhai⁷¹ writes on June 24, 1933:⁷²

Last year I saw Tagore's *Vasantotsav*, beautifully performed in Gujarati garb, at the last *balotsav* [children's' festival] at Sharadamandir.

This clearly establishes percolation of Tagore literature to small institutions of Gujarat as early as early 30s.

In this context, I would like to mention *Vadlo*, a short play - *giti natya* (?) or *nritya natya* (?) - written by Krishnalal Shridharani in 1931. While this play was written in a prison before Shridharani went to Santiniketan, its theme with characters which are elements of nature such as trees and plants, flowers, birds, spring, stars etc. it is reminiscent of Tagore's *ritu natya*, wherein nature plays a dominant or at least prominent role. While direct influence of Santiniketan can be easily ruled out, one wonders whether the atmosphere pervading in Gujarat - as indicated by performance of *Vasantotsav* in early 30s - could have indirect influence of Tagore creations on this brief but

⁷⁰ *Tagore's Mystique of Dance*, Utpal K. Banerjee, Niyogi Books, New Delhi, 2011, p.75

⁷¹ Gijubhai Badheka (1885-1939), reformist, educationist and an author, associated with Dakshinamruti - a residential educational institute at Bhavnagar.

⁷² *Krishnalal Shridharanini Sahityasrishti*, vol. 2, ed. Bholabhai Patel, Gujarat Sahitya Academy, Gandhinagar, August 2011, p. 414. - translation from Gujarati, mine.

beautiful play. Incidentally, this play was staged almost 60 years ago in 1952 by Shreyas⁷³, about which I will be talking later on.

Another fact that comes to my attention is that there have not been many Gujarati translations of Tagore's *nritya natya*. However, stage of Gujarat has been blessed by many performances of the same. This is due to the fact that this particular genre, in its contemporary incarnation finds it easy to transcend the boundaries of language.

Darpana Academy, Ahmedabad, founded by Mrinalini Sarabhai has presented several Tagore plays and *nritya natya* over the years beginning in late 40s or early 50s. They have staged these at various centres in India and abroad. Table 4 below, lists their works chronologically:

Table 4⁷⁴

Theatre

Name	Style	Year
Chandalika	Gujarati Play	1959
Viday-Abhishap	Gujarati Play Tr. By Nagindas Parekh	1960
Visarjan	Gujarati Play Tr. By Niranjan Bhagat	1961
Chitrangada	Gujarati Play	1962
Malini	English Play	1965
Karna-Kunti	Gujarati Play	??

Dance Drama

Name	Style	Year
Chitrangada	Creative – Bharatanatyam & Kathakali	1957
Tasher Desh	Creative – Bharatanatyam & Kathakali	1961
Bhanusingher Padavali	Bhartanatyam	1963
Chandalika	Contemporary	1977
Tagore Poem	Contemporary	1987

⁷³ Shreyas Foundation, an educational institution founded in 1947 by Ms. Leena Sarabhai (1915 -) on the tenets of Mme. Montessori, Tagore and Gandhiji,

⁷⁴ As provided by Darpana Archives – January 2012

There have been repeat performances of the above plays as well as some newer versions also. They have performed practically all over the country as well as abroad. In China, a show of *Tasher Desh* had to be cancelled at the behest of the Indian ambassador, I am told. There have been performances in 80s, 90s as well as in the current century, the last one being *Tagorenama*, celebrating 150 years of Tagore. It is quite likely that Darpana has been the most active group, perhaps in India, in pursuing the Tagore plays over the last 50 years.

Other Gujarati artists who have presented Tagore's *nritya natya* are:

Jhaveri Sisters from Mumbai – Nayana, Ranjana, Suvarna and Darshana – their repertoire included *Bhanusingher Padavali*, *Chitrangada*, *Tasher Desh* and *Kal Mrigaya*. Their performances were essentially in Manipuri.⁷⁵

Yog Sunder Desai – now settled in Delhi – is credited with directing *Chandalika* in his Kolkata days and produced *Shyama* in 1961 in Hindi which was broadcast by All India Radio. In 1967, he directed *The Man Divine* based upon Tagore's *Shishutirtha*.⁷⁶

It can be easily inferred from the foregoing that it is Tagore's *nritya natya* that have received the maximum attention in Gujarat and although like all other forms of plays activity in this genre has also witnessed a lull in the post centenary period, it is still vibrant, comparatively speaking.

⁷⁵ Tagore's *Mystique of Dance*, Op. Cit., p. 221

⁷⁶ Tagore's *Mystique of Dance*, Op. Cit., p. 231

Tagore's Reception in Gujarati

There is a general impression that Gujarat got connected with Santiniketan chiefly after Tagore's 1920 visit and friendship between Kshitimohan Sen and Karunashankar Bhatt, one of the teachers at the private school for the Sarabhai children. Apparently, Karunashankar had been studying Bangla literature through one Nathuram Premi of Hindi Grantharatna Karyalaya, Mumbai since 1912⁷⁷ and had visited Santiniketan in 1914/15.⁷⁸ The notebooks maintained by Karunashankar during his lifetime and edited version of these published in 1982/3 by Karunashankar Shatabdi Samiti, are replete with references to and from Tagore literature. It was Karunashankar who was instrumental in suggesting to Gandhiji that Tagore should stay with Ambalal Sarabhai during his visit to Ahmedabad in 1920. He also encouraged Bharati and Leena, two daughters of Ambalal Sarabhai, to study Tagore and visit Santiniketan, which they did in mid-to-late 30s. He was also in constant touch with educational institutions and educationists in other towns of Gujarat. It is quite likely that he, along with his associates might have played a catalytic role in creating awareness of Tagore literature and thought.

The first Gujarati to be influenced by Tagore was none other than Gandhiji – albeit in his English writing! His quotable quote – *I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any...* – was indeed a response inspired by Tagore's poetic opposition to his views.

Perhaps, because of special relationship between Tagore and Gandhiji, Gujarat Vidyapith in Ahmedabad used to offer a course in Bengali. Quite a few of the poets of the period were associated with

⁷⁷ *Sanskar Shikshak*, Hariprasad Shastri: *Shri Ksitimohan ane Shri Karunashankar*, Shri Karunashankar Shatabdi Samiti, Ahmedabad, 1973, p. 109

⁷⁸ While the above (footnote 14) and other references state the date as 1914, there are also statements that he saw Gandhiji during that visit – hence, uncertainty about the year.

Gandhiji's movements and hence, preferred to join Gujarat Vidyapith rather than the Government colleges of the day. Gujarati poetry had passed through a phase, now called Gandhiyug. Some of these poets, because of availability of a course in Bengali at the Vidyapith became familiar with Tagore literature and came under his influence.

Among the creative writers of Gujarat, the first two to be influenced by Tagore were Krishnalal Shridharani⁷⁹ and Prahlad Parekh. Both of them had studied at Santiniketan.

Tagore peeps through his *Pila Palash* (Yellow Palash- one act play for children, 1933), both Gandhi and Tagore make their presence felt in *Morana Inda* (Peacock Eggs - a three act play, written in Santiniketan, 1934). I would also like to mention *Vadlo*, a short play - *giti natya*(?) or *nritya natya*(?) - written by Krishnalal Shridharani in 1931. While this play was written in a prison before Shridharani went to Santiniketan, its theme with characters which are elements of nature such as trees and plants, flowers, birds, spring, stars etc. it is reminiscent of Tagore's *ritu natya*, wherein nature plays a dominant or at least prominent role. While direct influence of Santiniketan can be easily ruled out, one wonders whether the atmosphere pervading in Gujarat - as indicated by performance of *Vasantotsav* in early 30s - could have indirect influence of Tagore creations on this brief but beautiful play. Incidentally, this play was staged almost 60 years ago in 1952 by Shreyas⁸⁰, about which I will be talking before concluding. Shridharani's poems in *Kodiya*, (earthen lamp) - (1934) echo Tagore's opposition to rituals and his faith in worship from within. An excerpt:

પૂજારી from કોડિયા

ઘંટના નાદે કાન ફૂટે મારા,
ધૂપથી શ્વાસ રુંધાય;

*Blowing of conch pierces my ears,
incense suffocates;*

⁷⁹ Krishnalal Shridharani (1911-1960), author in Gujarati and English, journalist,. Studied at Santiniketan between 1931-33.

⁸⁰ Shreyas Foundation, an educational institution founded in 1947 by Ms. Leena Sarabhai (1915 -) on the tenets of Mme. Montessori, Tagore and Gandhiji,

ફૂલમાળા દૂર રાખ પૂજારી,
અંગ મારું અભડાય:

*keep away the garland of flowers, O priest,
it pollutes my body.*

ન નૈવેદ્ય તારું આ!
જા પૂજારી પાછો જા!

*This is not your offering!
O priest, go back!*

In 1940, through his collection, બારીબહાર, Prahlad Parekh⁸¹ brought the beauty perceived by the senses to the Gujarati poetry. His sensitivity to nature and desire to be one with it was indeed an inheritance of his contact with Gurudev and Santiniketan. I would quote from his collection of poems – *Baribahar* (Outside the Window) – published in 1940:

આજ from બારીબહાર

આજ અંધાર ખુશબોભર્યો લાગતો, આજ સૌરભ-ભરી રાત સારી; . . .
ક્યાં? કયું પુષ્પ એવું ખીલ્યું જેહના મધમઘાટે નિશા આજ ભારી;

*Darkness is fragrant today, fragrant is the entire night . . .
Where? Which flower has blossomed today, whose fragrance fills the night;*

While Umashankar Joshi⁸² described Tagore's poetic career as spanning from *nirjharer svapnabhnga* to *samukhe shanti parabar* – from *awakening of the waterfall to the ocean of peace* – his own was described by Niranjan Bhagat, another Gujarati poet under the influence of Tagore, as spanning from *mangal shabda* to *maunano shabda* – from *the word of the beneficent to the word of silence*.⁸³ A confessed admirer of Tagore⁸⁴, Umashankar Joshi truly reflected Tagore's universal humanism in many of his writings. His first publication in 1931, *વિશ્વશાંતિ*, is a brilliant combination of homage to Gandhiji and his thoughts and Tagore's humanism quoting the credo of Visva Bharati – *yatra vishvam bhavatyek nidam*. A quote from his *Vishvashanti*:

⁸¹ Prahlad Parekh (1912-1962) – Poet and teacher. Studied at Santiniketan from 1933 to 1937.

⁸² Umashankar Joshi (1911-1988) – Poet, scholar, critic, writer. Receptient of Gyanapith and many other literary awards. Chancellor of Visva Bharati from 1979 to 1982.

⁸³ Niranjana Bhagat on the blurb of *Samagra Kavita*, Umashankar Joshi, Gangotri Trust, Ahmedabad, 1981.

⁸⁴ Sitting on the bank of the river Sabarmati, he used to recite page after page of *Prachin Sahitya*

સૌ જીવ આજે ઉરથી વહાવીએ
કારુણ્યની પ્રેમધારા,
વસુંધરાનાં સહુ બાળકો મળી
બજાવીએ અંતરએકતારા.
હૈયેહૈયાં પ્રેમગાને જગાવી,
પ્રજાપ્રજા હાથમાં હાથ ગૂંથી,
ને સ્કંધે સ્કંધ સંપે મિલાવી,
ગજાવીએ સૌ જગઉંબરે ઊભી;
માનવી પ્રકૃતિ, સૌને વસુધૈવ કુટુમ્બકમ્!

ને એ જશે શબ્દ અનંત વીંધી
જ્યાં ધૂમતી કોટિક સૂર્યમાલા,
જ્યાં શાંતિના રાસ યગે રસાળા
યત્ર વિશ્વં ભવત્યેકનીડમ્ .

*Today, let us all together shower the love of kindness,
Gathering together, let all the children of the earth play the lute within.
Awakening all the hearts with the song of love,
Forming a chain of arms of all the peoples,
Standing shoulder to shoulder in peace,
From the threshold of the world
Let the message of the man's nature – the world is a family – reverberate!*

*And that word will transcend the eternity
Where rotate millions of nebulae,
Where there is dance of peace,
Where the world becomes a nest.*

વ્યક્તિ મટી બનું હું વિશ્વમાનવી, માથે ધરું ધૂળ વસુંધરાની -

*Ceasing to be a person. Let me become a world citizen,
And offer my salute to the dust of the earth -*

He is one author who, like Tagore has explored many genres of literature such as poetry, lyric poems, dramatic or dialogue poems, one act plays, short story, essays, criticism, travelogues, letters etc. In *Prachina*, the dialogue poems are a form inherited from Tagore and even the subjects are taken from Indian mythology/ epics as well as Buddhist legends like Tagore did in his earlier phase. The values emphasised through these poems also appear to be inspired by Tagore. My non-academic approach leads me to believe that he had the imagery, sensitivity, humanism and optimism of Tagore as well as a firm grip on and great grasp of the language. Amidst the chaos he lived through he claimed - *chhinnabhinna chhu - Helter-skelter am I*, unlike Tagore who was steadfast despite his graceless *disillusion*. However, Umashankar Joshi's optimism comes alive in poems like *Hiroshima*, despite his anguish at the inhuman aspects of Man. He has also written extensively about Tagore and his literature. It seems that Tagore has penetrated to the core of his creativity and time and again Tagore appears in his creations in a new incarnation.

Other poets of the Gandhiyug to be inspired by Tagore were Sundaram⁸⁵ and Sneharashmi⁸⁶.

A quote from Sundaram:

પુષ્પ તણી પાંદડીએ બેસી હસતું કોણ ચિરંતન હાસ,
 પૃથ્વી ઉરથી ઊઠે કોનો પુલકિત, સુરમિત, મુખરિત શ્વાસ?
 કોનાં કંકણ બાજે એકલ સરિતા કેરે સૂને ઘાટ?
 પર્વતના શિખરે બેસી કોણ સનાતન જોતું વાટ?

*Sitting on a flower petal, who spreads a smile eternal,
 From the heart of the earth, whose happy and fragrant breath talks?
 Whose bracelets jingle on a lonely bank of a desolate river?
 Sitting atop a hill, who eternally awaits?*

A quote from Sneharashmi:

⁸⁵ Sundaram – Tribhuvandas Luhar (1908-1991) – Poet and teacher

⁸⁶ Sneharashmi – Jhinabhai Desai (1903- 1991) – poet and teacher

કોણ બોલાવે from પનઘટ

મુજ વિદાય સમયે કો આ
મને પાછળથી બોલાવે?
મને કોણ ફરી બોલાવે?

At the time of farewell, who is this
Calling for me from behind?
Who calls me once again?

Sneharashmi was the Principal of the High School I went to and perhaps, more known for his introduction of Haiku in Gujarati. Some of the lyrics of both these poets are inspired by the mystic strain in Tagore's poetry. But for inspiration of Tagore poetry, it would not have been possible to find such a blend of beauty and nature with divine in the lyric poems of these two poets, who not only belonged to Gandhiyug, but were also under the influence of Gandhiji.

In the history of Gujarati literature, the period following Gandhiyug is named after two distinguished poets and is called Rajendra – Niranjan Yug. Rajendra Shah⁸⁷ who translated *Balaka* into Gujarati, was inspired by Tagore as evidenced in his acclaimed poems *niruddeshe* and *shesh abhisar*. Both these poems have Tagore's poetry at the root of their genesis. Tagore's values of dharma and his mysticism are beautifully rendered by Rajendra Shah.

Niranjan Bhagat⁸⁸ has announced from a public platform, more than once, that at the age of 15, he was seduced into writing poetry by the death of Tagore. He has translated *Chitrangada* in verse and has contributed to translations of *Ekottarashati*. In translation of *Chitrangada* he has used the metre *vanaveli* – forest creeper -, which is very similar to Bengali metre *payar*. Although a confessed child of the city, Tagore's pastoral images peep through some of his earlier poems. Some of his lyric poems follow the structure of Tagore's.

An excerpt from one of his poems from *Kinnari*, which I believe is inspired by *sedin dujane*:

⁸⁷ Rajendra Shah (1913-2010) – Poet. Recipient of Gyanapith and many other literary awards.

⁸⁸ Niranjan Bhagat (1926 -) – Poet, scholar, critic and professor of English Literature

પૂનમ રાતની વેળા from કિન્નરી

તે દી પૂનમ રાતની વેળા,
આપણે ભેળાં, પ્રીતશું બબ્બે પાવા બજાવી,
સારી સીમ ગજાવી!

ચંદન શી મધુચંદની ઝરી
આભને તે ચાર આરે,
જુગ ગયો જાણે પલમાં સરી
આપણા સૂરને ધારે;
તે દી અધરે અધર રસી,
હેતમાં હસી, તેં ચંદની આંખ શી લજાવી!

આજ અમાસને એકલપથે
ક્યાંય કળાય ન દિશા,
આજ ગાવા મુજ મન મથે,
રે મૌનથી વ્યાકુલ નિશા;
તે દી તો બે મનના મેળા,
આજુની વેળા, મેં તો એના સ્મરણે સજાવી!

*On that full moon night,
Together with love, on two flutes,
A duet we played,
And all across the sky, it reverberated.*

*All over the sky was spread,
Soothing moonlight, cool as sandal paste,
And in the spell of our notes,
As if an eon flashed past in a moment;
Then kissing the lips you smiled with love
And the moon had to look the other way!*

*Today, on a lonely path, with no moon,
Nothing can be seen.*

*Today, my heart struggles to sing
And the night is silent with anxiety.
I celebrate today,*

*With the memories of that day –
The festival of two hearts!*

Like Tagore, he is a poet of loneliness. Time and again, his loneliness takes control of his poems. But unlike Tagore, being uncomfortable, he seeks his way out, rather than enjoying the bliss of loneliness, which Tagore did. Like Tagore, he has the vision of history and sensitivity for mankind. If Tagore talks about the bomb that fell in Finland, he reprimands Britannia for the first nuclear explosion in no uncertain terms. Like Tagore he has been writing birthday poems since he was 23. For the past 8 years along with Bholabhai Patel⁸⁹, he has been at the helm of Ravindra Bhavan, Ahmedabad, where once a month, discourses are held on Tagore thought and literature.

Suresh Joshi⁹⁰, who has translated Baudelaire into Gujarati and is considered a modernist as well as romantic, is perhaps the only Gujarati author whose prose exudes a distinct and definite inspiration and influence of Tagore. His personal essays, particularly those of *Janantike* are indeed inspired by the prose of Tagore's *Chhinapatra*. The mood of blissful existence verging on a serene spiritual experience pervades in his prose.

An excerpt:

Suresh Joshi - જન્મનિતકે માંથી.

ગ્રીષ્મની બપોર. માર્ગો નિર્જન છે. સૂર્યના હજાર હાથના આશીર્વાદ મસ્તકે ઝીલવાની કોઈની મગદૂર નથી. સમય પણ જાણે પોતાની પગલી ભૂંસીને ક્યાંક સરી ગયો છે. એવામાં ક્યાંકથી કોઈક ઘૂઘવે છે. ગ્રીષ્મની આ નિસ્તબ્ધ બપોરના ઉજ્જવલ રહસ્યને એણે જાણે એના કંઠમાં સારવી લીધું છે. ચોમાસામાં દેડકાનો એકધારો અવાજ એવી જ રીતે વર્ષાના હાઈને પ્રગટ કરે છે. વિદ્યાપતિએ તેથી જ તો એના પદમાં દેડકાંને અમર કરી દીધાં છે.

A summer afternoon.

⁸⁹ Bholabhai Patel (1934 -) – Writer, linguist, critic and Professor of Hindi.

⁹⁰ Suresh Joshi (1921 - 1986) – Poet, writer and critic

*The roads are desolate.
No one would dare to accept the blessings
liberally bestowed by the sun-god.
Even the sun has slipped away somewhere erasing all his trace.
From somewhere, someone growls.
Blazing mystery of this silent summer afternoon
has been gulped down its throat.
In the monsoon incessant drone of the frogs
reveals the meaning of the rains in the same manner.
It is for this reason that Vidyapati has immortalised frogs in his verse.*

A bird's eye view of Gujarati literature and Tagore can be summarised in the following general observations. It is mainly in the sphere of verse that the impact is observed. His lyric poems of *puja* and *prakriti* and to a lesser extent his encounters with death in poetry have found more response in Gujarati literature than anything else. In prose, with exception of essays of Suresh Joshi, no significant influence is observed. Significantly lacking is the impact of his universal humanism, his sensitivity to the events around him. His forte – optimism – seems to have failed to inspire the litterateurs of Gujarat. Exceptions to the above have been discussed earlier.

For the practising and promising poets and prose-writers of Gujarat, I wonder if Tagore is an awe-inspiring presence rather than inspiring. Perhaps, Tagore has become an inimitable role model hidden behind layers of years, a luminary of a distant past, so different from the vibrant present. Or have they found aspirations and ideals of Tagore too ambitious or too irrelevant in the present world blessed with technology and beset with such atrocities as terror which were not a part of the world he lived in?

I cannot resist the temptation of over-stepping the confines of 'literature' and add a short note on Tagore's reception in Gujarati socio-cultural milieu.

It was Tagore who introduced the genre of *nritya-natika* or dance drama to Gujarati stage. *Basantotsav*, as performed in Santiniketan, was reported to be performed as early as 1930 in one of the Gujarati schools.⁹¹ Even today, Shreyas, a school founded by Leena Sarabhai, who had spent a few months in Santiniketan in '30s, celebrates *Vasantotsav* as well as *Varshamangal* on the lines of Santiniketan as can be seen by these photographs. Another school, Rachana, has adapted a freely translated version of *chitta jetha bhayashunya* as their school song and the students there, have been singing the same since 1964. While these are isolated instances of presence of Tagore in Gujarat and certainly should not be taken as an indication of his deep influence on the cultural psyche of Gujarat. However, it certainly is a pointer towards the penetration of his ideals at least to certain pockets of enlightened minds.

On the other hand, a famous Tagore poem, perhaps, one of his favourites – *Nababarsha* from *Kshanika* – translated by Jhaverchand Meghani as *man mor bani thangat kare* and set to music in the style of a folksong is on the lips of all the youths, urban and rural, who dance to its beat every *navaratri* all across Gujarat. Not all of them may be aware of the fact that it's a translation of a Tagore poem. It would be safe to assume that this is more popular than Mahatma's favourite – *ekala chalo re* – so creatively translated by Mahadev Desai retaining its original Bangla melody. While the Gujarati version is loyal to the Bangla original, - except for omitting translation of last but one stanza - retaining most of its images and similes, it neither has the form or style of the original. What is it that makes this Tagore poem percolate down to the masses of Gujarat? Is it the universal appeal of his poems pertaining to nature? Are there not many others which are as intense or picturesque? Is it the style of translation? Is it the melody? These are very pertinent questions, but beyond the scope of this endeavour. However, this does convince me that many of his songs with universal appeal, if transcribed imaginatively into Gujarati, perhaps at the cost of sophistication and subtlety of Tagore, can percolate down to masses but the rest of

⁹¹ *Krishnalal Shridharanini Sahityasrishti*, vol. 2, ed. Bholabhai Patel, Gujarat Sahitya Academy, Gandhinagar, August 2011, p. 414.

Tagore, - and that is a significant and substantial Tagore - which will be beyond the masses, not only in Gujarat but anywhere.

The world of today, distressed and disfigured with the ugly demonstration of man's brutal and barbaric instincts as manifested in acts of terror and torture, needs Tagore's faith in mankind, his hope for mankind, his optimism as expressed in his works. This could be best spread effectively by offering good translations of not only his own works but also of works exploring his psyche.

Umashankar Joshi and Rabindranath Tagore⁹²

Umashankar Joshi (1911-88) was a major poet and scholar of Gujarati. Apart from being a recipient of the prestigious Jnanapith Award, he was also the only non-political⁹³ Chancellor (Acharya) of Visva Bharati. Like Rabindranath, he had also dipped his pen in many a genres of Gujarati literature. He hailed from a small village, Bamna, in North Gujarat, studied at Ahmedabad and Mumbai, taught in Mumbai and Ahmedabad and was a great devotee of Mahatma Gandhi and his ideals. He has written numerous articles about Rabindranath and his literature.

Quoting him from his fairly extensive writings would be his best introduction to the reader, who may not be familiar with him as well his approach to Rabindranath and his literature.

...childhood is a gold mine for a creative artist. Its resources are inexhaustible. .. Even after a couple of scores of years it presents unique fractions of experiences before the creative artist. The most unique wealth that childhood presents to the creative artist is about the language. As one learned to live, each word must have come alive in childhood – some connected through a shape, others through smell or sound. After fifty or sixty years these words suddenly, without any anticipation, reappear in the consciousness of the creative artist in the same garb and guise, with a sensuous reference or context - so different from the reference to the classic literature. With this the entire being of the creative artist is filled with a miraculous passion. This is the magic of the initial linguistic inspiration of childhood.⁹⁴

Poetry is the mother-tongue of soul. It expresses itself at its own free will – without abiding to or respecting our wish. It is dangerous to connect it with the cause and effect relationship between poetry and the events of the world, notwithstanding their importance. In my

⁹² The author is grateful to Niranjana Bhagat for drawing his attention to various articles by Umashankar Joshi on Rabindranath Tagore and for making available manuscript/typescript of his unpublished articles.

⁹³ Usually, the prime Minister of India is appointed as Chancellor of Visva Bharati.

⁹⁴ *Samagra Kavita*, Umashankar Joshi, Gangotri Trust, Ahmedabad, 1981, p. 5. Free translation, mine.

personal case, it is worth noting two characteristics about creativity. Almost always, something pertaining to study, research, editing – some intellectual activity which would be mentally taxing – continued side by side with creative endeavour. ... Secondly, the conflict of being involved in establishment of values (such as freedom, social justice, and human dignity) has been a background, if not a prerequisite, of creative writing. These two have been considered to be at odds with creativity. I have not felt so. Perhaps, I did not have the option.⁹⁵

I am indeed happy to note that Umashankar Joshi implicitly agrees with my statements in the Preamble.

Next, I would like to quote his own words – from an interview in 1968 - about his perception of Rabindranath and his ideals.

When I started writing, the prevalent atmosphere in Gujarat was not conducive to my writings being influenced by his creative style. In 1929 ... I would sit on the bank of Sabarmati river and in a loud voice, cram the prose paragraphs of Prachin Sahitya. ... I have not seen Rabindranath. In 1938, when the Indian Authors' Meet was organized in Kolkata under his patronage, I was invited to attend as the President of one of the sessions. But I did not have the resources to go there. But, to tell you the truth, I cannot accept that I have not seen Rabindranath.⁹⁶

At first glance this appears to be a complex or even an incomprehensible statement. Particularly, the first and the last line appear to be contradictory to each other. Umashankar Joshi's first poem, *Nakhi Sarovar Upar Sharat Purnima* (October Full Moon Night on the Nakhi Lake), is reported to be written in October 1928. Presumably, he is referring to that period – 1927 -1929?) as 'when I started writing'. He was 16 years old in 1927 and had moved to Ahmedabad. In 1929, he had joined the National Movement and

⁹⁵ *Samagra Kavita*, Op. Cit., p. 8. Free translation, mine.

⁹⁶ *Thoduk Angat*, Umashankar Joshi, ed. Swati Joshi, Gurajar Grantharatna Karyakaya, Ahmedabad, 1999, p.127. In reply to questions asked by Niranjana Bhagat, Harindra Dave and Suresh Dalal between September 23 and November 10, 1968. Free translation, mine.

joined the strike of students, boycotting the Gujarat College. Perhaps, the then omnipresent and austere Gandhian ideal is what he means by 'the prevalent atmosphere' which was not conducive to his coming under the influence of the creative style of Rabindranath. However, by 1929, Umashankar Joshi was cramming passages from Rabindranath's literature! By 1968, in the hindsight, he is so immersed or involved with Rabindranath and his literature that he cannot believe that he has not seen Rabindranath!

In a poetic description of his encounter with Rabindranath, Umashankar Joshi says in the opening lines of his lecture in the meeting organized to mourn the demise of Rabindranath in August 1941:

A man sitting on the bank of Ganga beholding the current of Ganga imagines the existence of Himalaya somewhere. Similarly, I imagine Rabindranath. And hence, today, when he is no more, sitting on the bank of the stream of his poetry, I cannot accept that he is no more. ... Rabindranath is immortal through his poetry.⁹⁷

Finally, a quotation about Rabindranath and Gujarati literature from a lecture Umashankar Joshi delivered as the President of Gujarati section of 33rd Nikhil Bharat Bang Sahitya Sammelan at Ahmedabad on December 29, 1957:

(After hearing some of the new Gujarati poets yesterday) Devesh Das told me that Gujarati poetry is marked by restraint. Perhaps it is true. We present our poetry amongst a practical people. If we let our emotions lose we might appear unadorned or bare. We are crazy about Rabindranath but our creations have not come under his direct influence. Two of our subtle lyricists, Sneharashmi and Rajendra are exceptions to this.⁹⁸

With this background, I would like to compare a few passages from the poems of Umashankar Joshi with those of Rabindranath.

⁹⁷ *Abhiruchi*, Umashankar Joshi, Gurjar Grantharatna Karyalay, Ahmedabad, 1997, p. 55. Free translation, mine.

⁹⁸ *Abhiruchi*, Op. Cit., p. 88-89. Free translation, mine.

First, a passage from Umashankar Joshi's *Karna-Krishna*, written in 1940:

English translation:

*Karna: Look, from the balcony of the sky laughs the sun,
Seeing the two of us together here –
Like unfortunate lotus and lily,
Blooming near each other in a pond,
But not happy together.
The sun and the moon together,
Do not shine for long, in the sky, O Krishna.
Likewise, two brave ones of Kauravas and Pandavas,
Do not befit in one chariot.*

Compare this with Rabindranath's *Gandharir Avedan*, written in 1894:

*Duryodhana: I cannot forget -
in spite of common ancestors,
equal we are not
in prosperity, pride or glory,
had they been someone else, unrelated,
it would not have mattered -
moon, aglow in the night has no qualms
about the sun, radiant in the afternoon,
but, one eastern horizon
cannot accommodate two suns.
Today, the duel is over.
Today, I am victorious, I am triumphant,
today, I am alone.*

Dhritarashtra: Petty envy! Poisonous cobra!

*Duryodhana: Not petty, great is envy.
To envy, is the duty of the great!
Two large trees keep a distance,*

*millions of grass blades embrace each other,
stars cluster together in fraternity,
the sun, the moon -alone!*

It is interesting to note how the concept of the sun and the moon together in the sky takes various shapes in the poetic sky of these two great poets.

This reminds me about the commentary offered by Umashankar Joshi about a beautiful line from his poem, *Majhamarat*, (Dark Night), written in 1934. The line reads:

નથી તેની ઝંખના જાગે મોરે મંદિરે

*In my temple awakes the desire for what is not.*⁹⁹

He says:

*Although it is obvious, one must note that this is not merely an echo but a translation of Shelley's 'And pine for what is not'. Even I realized it later. Perhaps an intended translation might not have been so suitable.*¹⁰⁰

Umashankar Joshi, a Gandhian to the core, pained at the state of the nation following the independence in 1947, wrote *Jirna Jagat* (World Torn Apart), in 1948:

In free English translation it reads:

*I smell the stench of dead bodies.
In many a meetings and committees, where
Old and orthodox talk of new construction,
Where a 'yes' is followed by a caravan of 'yes',
- manly 'no' is rare to find -
but stamping it with disgust,*

⁹⁹ Literal translation, mine.

¹⁰⁰ *Nishith*, Umashankar Joshi, R. R. Sheth, Mumbai, 1939, p. 205. Translation, mine

*they think slowly ever,
breathing half-truths and lies,
some mature, some youthful,
yawning and beholding the future,
instead of choking the truth, crushing the dead bodies,
day and night I smell the stench of extinguished hearts.*

*The stench of dead bodies bothers me.
Roaming about in forms covered with flowers,
Dead bodies move from a peak of society to another.
The forests have not run out of wood,
Chair after chair is being made.
The flowers bloom in the garden
And the necks are adorned –
In the worship of the dead, life is sacrificed.*

*O Rudra, O Shiv, arise instantly,
With your little drum in the hand, strike this world worn out.
All that is decaying and dying – make compost of it
With new saplings and new crops, let the earth be green,
From the dead heap of past let new macho man awake,
Make the world smile with your lively and loud laughter.*

Compare this with Poem No. 17 of *Prantik*, written by Rabindranath on December 25, 1937, as a reaction to the situation in the West, soon after his near-death experience:

*The day
my consciousness was freed from the cave of extinction,
it found itself in an intolerable storm of surprise
and extremely difficult times
on the edge of some volcanic hell-fire;
its hot fumes roaring and spitting gross insult to man,
the earth trembling with its evil din,
smearing gloom in the air.
I saw the self destructive foolish drunkenness of time,
its all-pervasive, abominable sarcasm.
On one side, a defiant cruelty,*

*shameless roar of intoxication,
on the other, diffident footsteps of cowardice,
clasping the carefully hoarded treasures of a miser,
like a terrified animal –
momentary barks followed by low key screams
and secure, silent meekness.
in conferences of the senior and mighty presidents
orders and decisions
are crushed, suppressed and concealed
between tight shut lips with doubt and diffidence.
On the other hand, in the perturbed sky,
swarms of demon-birds fly
reaching the abode of the dead.
The mechanical wings, roaring like vultures,
hungry for human flesh, desecrate the sky.*

*O judge, presiding on the great throne of time,
give me power, give me strength,
give me the voice of thunder
so that I may hurt these obscene and repulsive
killers of women and children
with outrage and hatred
which may always pulsate
in the heart-throb of a disgusting folklore
even when this choked, chained and scared age
is silently covered under the ashes of its own pyre.*

Soon after the publication of *Prantik*, Kshitimohan Sen had visited Gujarat and had explained the first 14 poems in a series of lectures delivered at the Kosindra Ashram of his friend, Karunashankar Bhatt. Notes taken by Nagindas Parekh at that time, were published in a book titled *Sadhanatrayee* in 1990. For this purpose, Umashankar Joshi had translated and explained the remaining four poems. The reader is left to draw his own inference after comparing the two poems.

In the initial lines of the last poem, *Pankhilok*, written between 1956 and 1978 Umashankar Joshi talks of the words freed from grammar:

In free English translation:

*Words come looking for the poet.
Words bound by the rules of Panini?
Or like birds – dripping pieces of light?*

*If words could speak
They would have surely told the poet,
It is indeed beyond us to become poetry.
By ourselves in the dictionary or in grammar,
Or together on the tongue of man,
Were we like those of us, you saw in poetry?
Jumping around like frogs, at the first sight of the world,
Mesmerized, captive we are at the instance of the creator;
We, the words and sounds,
We jump into the silence;
All our meanings and babbles submerge
In surge of waves of intense feelings.*

*Radiant face of the words is erased by the poet;
Sometimes he even covers it with a mask
So that the face of his poetry is embossed.*

Compare this with Rabindranath's poem no. 20 of *Janmadine*, written in August 1940:

*Today I imagine the words of countless languages
to be suddenly fetterless -
after long incarceration in the fortress of grammar,
suddenly up in rebellion,
maddened by stamp-stamping
of unmitigated regimented drilling.
They have jumped the constraint of sentence
to seek free expression in a world of intelligence, snapping
the chains of sense
in sarcasm and ridicule of literary decorum.
Liberated thus,*

*their queer postures and cries appeal only to the ear.
They say,
'We who were born of the gusty tuning
of the earth's first outbreathing came into our own
as soon as the blood's beat impelled
man's mindless vitality to break into dance in his throat.
We swelled his infant voice
with the babble of the world's first poem,
the original prattle of existence.
We are kin to the wild torrents
that pour from the mountains
to announce the month of Shraban:
we bring to human habitations Nature's incantations -'
The festive sound of leaves rustling in forests,
the sound that measures the rhythm
of approaching tempests,
the great night-ending sound of day-break -
from these sound-fields man has captured words,
curbed them like a breakneck stallion
in complex webs of order
to enable him to pass on his messages
to the distant lands of the future.
By riding words that are bridled and reined
man has quickened the pace of time's slow clocks:
The speed of his reason has cut through material blocks,
explored recalcitrant mysteries;
with word-armies drawn into battle-lines
he resists the perpetual assault of imbecility.
But sometimes they slip like robbers
into realms of fantasy,
float on ebbing waters of sleep, free of barriers,
lashing any sort of flotsam and jetsam into metre.
From them, the free-roving mind
fashions artistic creations of a kind
that do not conform to an orderly universe -
whose threads are tenuous, loose, arbitrary,
like a dozen puppies brawling, scrambling
at each other's necks to no purpose or meaning:*

*Each bites another - they squeal and yelp blue murder,
but their bites and yelps carry no true import of enmity,
their violence is bombast, empty fury.
In my mind I imagine words thus shot of their meaning ,
hordes of them running amuck all day,
as if in the sky
there were nonsense nursery syllables booming -
Horselum, bridelum, ridelum, into the fray.¹⁰¹*

About this poem, Umashankar Joshi says,

*The poet knows how time can be conquered with the help of the word.
He says in Janmadine (20) -*

*Riding the bridled word-horse
Man speeds up the watches of time.*

The poet knows fully well how the aesthetic use of the language differs very much from the logical and with a very apt image he describes how words in an aesthetic composition easily get out of hand and resemble a pack of rowdy puppies, which revel in romping, and yelping and biting one another, not meaning any violence thereby but just enjoying the style of it all. The poet visualizes with not a little amusement how the words run in all directions pulling violently at their meaning and creating a noise which yields a perfectly satisfying nursery rhyme:

আগডম বাগডম¹⁰²

I am tempted to believe that here a seed lying dormant has sprouted in a new sapling. It is for the reader to decide if it is a new incarnation.

Finally, let us see what do both these poets say about the role played by the language in their respective journey.

¹⁰¹ English translation by William Radice

¹⁰² Tagore's Last Poems: Encounter with Reality, Umashankar Joshi, (1962), Unpublished paper, Manuscript dated 'Ahmedabad, 21.9.1962.

Umashankar Joshi says in 1981, in Preface to his *Samagra Kavita*:

English translation:

In the company of word, I had left the village. Where all has the word led me? In Satyagraha camps, prisons, university, parliament, prestigious literary organization of the country, Rabindranath's Visva Bharati, in the cultural societies of the foreign lands – in the vast world of poetry, in the exquisite wonderland of being a human and occasionally on the edge of the contemporary conflicts between the human values and sometimes a few steps nearer to the centre of that conflict. On one hand the debt kept increasing, on the other, there were a few opportunities to repay the debt. What about the debt to the word? Have I forgotten the word? I can honestly say that I have not. Company of the word is a transaction of joy.

Compare this with Poem No. 132 of *Gitanjali*, written in 1910 and translated into English by Rabindranath himself:

*Ever in my life
have I sought thee with my songs.
It was they who led me from door to door,
and with them have I felt about me,
searching and touching my world.*

*It was my songs that taught me all the lessons
that I ever learnt;
they showed me secret paths,
they brought before my sight
many a star on the horizon of my heart.*

*They guided me all the day long
to the mysteries of the country of pleasure and pain,
and at last,
to what palace gate have they brought me
in the evening at the end of my journey?*

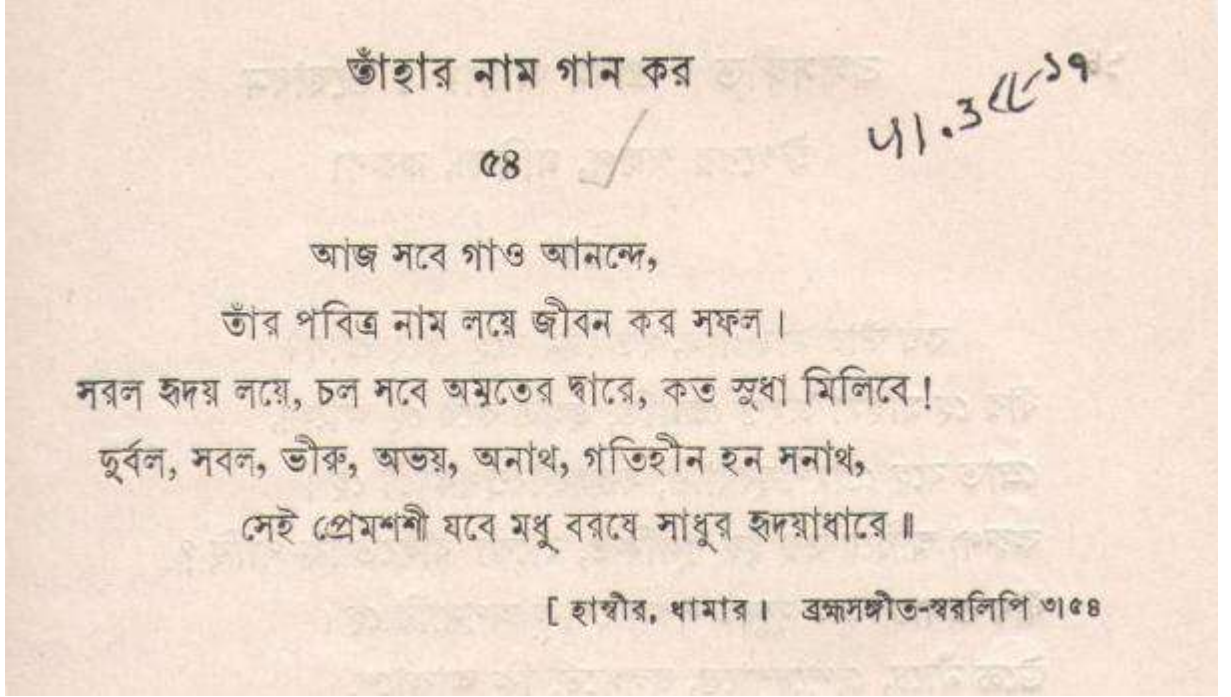
The foregoing illustrations are a good indication for me to accept that the poetry of Rabindranath had become an integral part of the mental make up of Umashankar Joshi.

One should examine some of the statements of Umashankar Joshi in light of these illustrations.

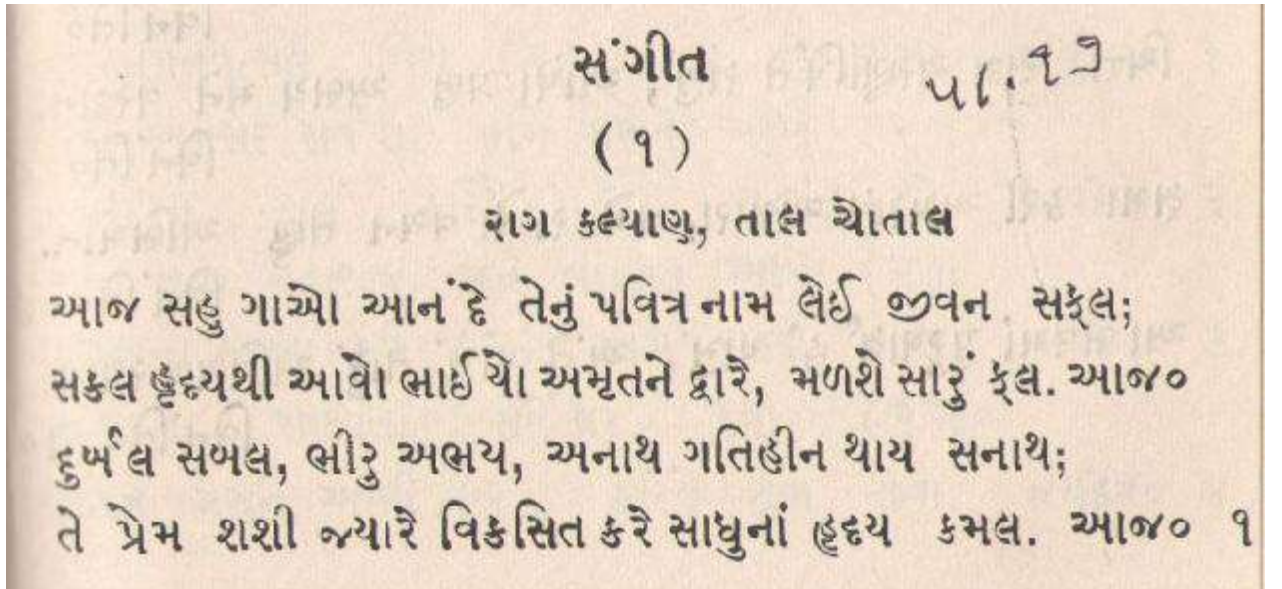
It should be noted that he excludes himself when he talks of influence of Rabindranath on Gujarati poets. On the other hand, he also claims that he has known Rabindranath so well that he finds it difficult to believe that he has not seen him!

Should we conclude that Umashankar Joshi was inspired by Rabindranath? Should we say that the seeds planted by Rabindranath's poetry sprouted now and then from Umashankar Joshi's pen and took the shape of a new incarnation?

Annexure 1



Satyendranath Tagore



ଗାଓ ହେ ଠାଁହାର ନାମ, ରଚିତ ଧାର ବିଶ୍ଵଧାମ,
 ଦୟାର ଧାର ନାହିଁ ବିରାମ, ବାରେ ଅବିରତ ଧାରେ ।
 ଜ୍ୟୋତି ଧାର ଗଗନେ ଗଗନେ, କୀର୍ତ୍ତି-ଭାତି ଅତୁଳ ଭୁବନେ,
 ପ୍ରିତି ଧାର ପୁଷ୍ପିତ ବନେ, କୁସୁମିତ ନବ ରାଗେ ।
 ଧାର ନାମ ପରଶ-ରତନ, ପାପି-ହୃଦୟତାପ-ହରଣ,
 ପ୍ରସାଦ ଧାର ଶାନ୍ତିରୂପ, ଭକତ-ହୃଦୟେ ଜାଗେ ।
 ଅନ୍ତହୀନ, ନିର୍ବିକାର, ମହିମା ଧାର ହୟ ଅପାର,
 ଧାର ଶକ୍ତି ବର୍ଣ୍ଣିବାରେ, ବୁଦ୍ଧି ବଚନ ହାରେ ॥

[ଶାନ୍ତୀ, ଚୌତାଳ । ବ୍ରହ୍ମସମ୍ପ୍ରଦାୟ-ସ୍ଵରଲିପି ୩୧୦]

Ganendranath Tagore

ରାଗ ଅମାତ୍ୟ : ଚାଳ ଥାତାଳ

ଗାଈଁ ଅ ତମାତୁଁ ନାମ, ରଞ୍ଜୁଁ ଈ ଜଞ୍ଜୁଁ ବିଶ୍ଵ ଧାମ;
 ଦୟାନୋ ଈଧାଁ ନଥୀ ବିରାମ, ବରସେ ନିୟତ ଧାରା. ଗାଈଁ ଅଠ
 ଜ୍ୟୋତି ଜେନୀ ଗଗନ ଗଗନ, କୀର୍ତ୍ତି ଂଧାପୀ ଅତୁଳ ଭୁବନ;
 ପ୍ରିତି ଜେବୀ ପୁଷ୍ପିତ ବନ, କୁସୁମିତ ରଂଗ ସାରା. ଗାଈଁ ଅଠ
 ଜେନୋ ଗୁଣୁ ପାରସ ରତନ, ପାପୀ ଜନ ମନ ତାପ ଶମନ;
 ପ୍ରସାଦ ଜେନୋ ପ୍ରାଣୁତ ଭକ୍ତଜନ ସୁଖ ଘାତା. ଗାଈଁ ଅଠ
 ଅନ୍ତହୀନ ନିର୍ବିକାର, ମହିମା ପ୍ରଭୁ ଅପାର;
 ମୁନିଜନ ମନ ବଦନ ଥାଈ, ତାରା ଧରା ଗୁଣୁ ଗାତାଁ. ଗାଈଁ ଅଠ ୧

২৬৮

গাও তাঁরে গাও সদা, তরুণ ভাঙ্গ,
যবে অচেতন জগতে দাঁও প্রাণ,
জন-হৃদয়-প্রফুল্ল-কর চন্দ্র তারা, সবে মিলে মিলে গাও তাঁরে ।
সুগভীর গরজনে কাঁপাইয়ে গগন-মেদিনী,
মহেশের মহৎ যশঃ ঘোষ বারিধি— সবে মিলে মিলে গাও তাঁরে ।
প্রবল সিন্ধু, শ্রোতস্বতী, প্রফুল্ল কুম্ববনরাজি,
অগ্নি, তুষার, কেহই থেকে না নীরব—
যত বিহঙ্গ চিত্রবিচিত্র, সবে আনন্দরবে গাও বিশ্ববিজয়ী ব্রহ্মনাম,
সবে মিলে মিলে গাও তাঁরে ॥

[গৌড়-মল্লার, চৌতাল। ব্রহ্মসঙ্গীত-স্বরলিপি ১।১০০

Satyendranath Tagore

(৭)

রাগ মল্লার, তাল খোতাল

গায়্যা তেনে গায়্যা সদা, তরুণু ভাঙ্গ, জ্যারে অচেতন জগতনে আঁপা
প্রাণু; জন হৃদয় প্রফুল্লকর অঁদ্র তারা সধু মণি মণি গায়্যা তেনে.
সুগভীর গর্জনথী কাঁপাথীনে গগন মেদিনী মহেশনো মঙ্গ যশ
বিস্তারো, বারিধি. সধু মণি মণি গায়্যা. ১
প্রাণু সিঁধু উত্তরংগ পর্বত সরিত বনরাজি, অগ্নি তুষার ঠাঠ ন করে
বিরাম; ঞটলা বিহংগ যিত্রবিযিত্র সর্বা আনন্দ রবে, গায়্যা বিশ্ব-
বিজয়ী ব্রহ্মনাম. সধু মণি মণি গায়্যা তেনে ০ ২

✓ ২৪৫

জয় পরম শুভসদন ব্রহ্মসনাতন,

করণার সাগর, কলুষ-নিবারণ ।

জয় বিশ্বপাতা অনন্ত বিধাতা, জয় দেব দেবেশ জীবের জীবন ॥

[মট-বেহাগ, ঝাঁপতাল । ব্রহ্মসঙ্ঘীত-স্বরলিপি ৪।১০৯ ; গীতপরিচয় ১।১৭

Jyotirindranath Tagore

(২)

রাগ ঝিড়াগ ঝপতাল

জয় পরম শুভ সদন ব্রহ্ম সনাতন,

কুরুশাসাগর কলুষ নিবারণ।

জয় বিশ্বপাতা অনন্ত বিধাতা;

জয়দেব দেবেশ জীবনু জীবন।

জয়শান্তিদাতা অক্ষয় অজ্ঞতা;

জয় জগতারণু জগদ্বাদিকারণু।

জয় বিশ্ববন্দন বিঘ্ননিকন্দন;

জয় বিশ্বপাবন পাপবিনাশন।

আনন্দে আনন্দে প্রাণমি পদারবিন্দে;

গাঠম্বে সধু মণি মংগল গায়ন।

বিশ্বনিয়ন্তা বিপত্তিনিহন্তা;

আপো অক্ষয়িত লজ্জিতানু সাধন।

তব কুরুশামৃত পান পিপাসিত;

ঘো শুভ দর্শন দেব দ্ব্যধন।

জয় পরম ০ ০

জয় পরম ০ ১

জয় পরম ০ ২

জয় পরম ০ ৩

জয় পরম ০ ৪

জয় পরম ০ ৫

জয় পরম ০ ৬

৬৮৪ ✓

১১.২৫

মঙ্গল তোমার নাম, মঙ্গল তোমার ধাম,
মঙ্গল তোমার কার্য, তুমি মঙ্গলনিদান।
অকুল ভব- সাগরে অহুদিন তুমি সহায়,
পাপ-তিমির নাশি বিতর কল্যাণ।
দুর্বল হৃদয় মোর, আশ্রয় করো দান,
দুর্গম পথ তরাও, দাঁও হে পরিত্রাণ।
দুর্জয় রিপু-দ্বন্দে অন্তরে বাহিরে,
এ সঙ্কটে ধ্রুব নেতা তুমি করো বিজয় দান ॥

[খট্ট, সুরক্ষা। ব্রহ্মসঙ্গীত-স্বরলিপি ৪১৭২

Satyendranath Tagore

(৭) ✓

রাগ হুমীর উল্লেখ, ধ্রুপদ

মংগল ঐ নাম তারুং, মংগল ঐ ধাম তারুং,
মংগল ঐ কাম তারুং, ত্রিলুবন নাথ তুং;
তুগ পদ ঐ বরদ, কৃতকর্মইলপ্রদ,
অন্যকৃত অক্ষাং ঐক, অকল অখাধ তুং. মংগল ঐ ০ ৭
ঐবো তুং প্রভু মডান, সধণে বিরাজমান;
নাথুী লে অধী অমারী, অंतरনী বাত তুং,

উপাসনা-শেষ, বন্দনা, প্রণাম

২৩৯

৫১.৫৬(৭)৭৯
৫১.৩১৫(৩)

তৎসৎ ব্রহ্মপদ প্রণমি হে দণ্ডবৎ ।

শ্রবণ করো করুণা করি প্রভু এ জ্বতি-গীত স্বরিত ।

শান্তিসুখা সর্বভুবন বিস্তারো, ইচ্ছা তোমারি হউক সফল হে,

অনীতি দুর্মতি করি অপহৃত, পুণ্য-সলিল বরিষ, বরিষ অমৃত ।

প্রাণের প্রাণ তুমি হৃদয়ের স্বামী, বিকশিত কর আসি হৃদয়কমল হে,

প্রেমসুখা দেও চিত্তচকোরে, প্রসাদবিন্দুর তরে প্রাণ তুষিত ।

সর্বজ্ঞ সর্বসাক্ষী পুরাণ, কী আর জানাব, জানিছ সকলি হে,

ভক্তবৎসল তুমি, ভক্ত এই যাচে, মোচন কর সর্ব ছুরিত ছুক্ত ।

কাতর হইয়ে এসেছি তব দ্বারে, দীনহীন সবে মলিন দুর্বল হে,

বিল্ববিনাশন পতিতপাবন, দেখাও দেখাও হে তব পুণ্যপথ ।

বিশ্বনিরস্তা বিভু গায়মিছু, ইচ্ছা তোমারি হউক সফল হে,

দিব্য পিতা প্রভু পরমরূপায়, বিতর সবে শান্তি স্মৃতি সতত ॥

[ভৈরবী, ঝাপতাল । ব্রহ্মসঙ্গীত-স্বরলিপি ৪১৭৪]

Satyendranath Tagore

সংগীত

৩১৫

(২)

কাঙ্ক্ষী, দীপ্যংঘী

তৎসৎ ব্রহ্মপদ প্রণমি হে দণ্ডবৎ.

তমে শ্রবণ্য করো, করুণা করো,

প্রভু আ স্তবননে ত্বরিত.

তৎসৎ ০

শান্তি করো সর্ব বিশ্বমাং স্বামি,

সত্তা তমারী প্রভু ছে সখল হে;

সখ্যিধন সর্ব মনুষ্য জনানে,

আপো তমে ধর্ম নীতি সুপ্রত.

তৎসৎ ১

করুণাময় মংগল পদ প্রভুর্নু,

ধ্যান ধরু নিগ হৃদয়কমণ হে,

প্রেম থকী পরমাत्मপদাঙ্ক,

অখিয়ে পরাভক্তির্পী অক্ষত.

তৎসৎ ২

সর্বত্র সর্বংযাপী সমর্থ,

অখ্যা তমে শ্রব কৃত্যিও সঙ্গ হে,

সুতবাস্তব্য স্বভাবথী স্বামী,

নাশ করো সর্ব হুরিত হুঙ্কৃত.

তৎসৎ ৩

বিশ্বনিয়ংতা বিলু ন্যায়সিধু,

কণা তমারী সঙ্গ ছে অকণ হে,

দ্যধনা দ্যাময় দৃষ্টিথী,

বৃত্তি করো ধর্মমার্গে প্রবৃত্ত.

তৎসৎ ৪

বঁদনপূর্বক প্রার্থন করিয়ে,

দৃষ্টি তমারী সঙ্গ ছে সঙ্গ হে,

জয় জয় পরব্রহ্ম, অপার তুমি অগম্য,
 পরাৎপর তুমি সারাৎসার,
 সত্যের আলোক তুমি, প্রেমের আকরভূমি, মঙ্গলেরা তুমি মূলধার ।
 নানারসযুত ভব, গভীর রচনা তব, উচ্ছ্বসিত শোভায় শোভায়,
 মহাকবি, আদিকবি, ছন্দে উঠে শশী ববি, ছন্দে পুন অস্তাচলে যায় ।
 তারকা কনককুচি, জলদ-অক্ষর কুচি, গীতলেখা নীলাশ্বর-পাতে,
 ছয় ঋতু সষৎসরে, মহিমা কীর্তন করে, স্বথপূর্ণ চরাচর সাথে ।
 কুসুম তোমার কান্তি, সলিলে তোমার শান্তি, বজ্রববে রুদ্র তুমি ভীম,
 তব ভাব গূঢ় অতি, কী জানিবে মূঢ়মতি, ধ্যায় যুগযুগান্তে অসীম ।
 আনন্দে সবে আনন্দে, তোমার চরণ বন্দে, কোটি সূর্য কোটি চন্দ্রতার,।
 তোমাৰি এ রচনারি, ভাব লয়ে নরনারী, হা হা করে, নেত্রে বহে ধারা ।
 মিলি স্বয় নর ঋতু, প্রণমি তোমায় বিভু, তুমি সৰ্বমঙ্গল-আলয়,
 দেও জ্ঞান, দেও প্রেম, দেও ভক্তি, দেও ক্ষেম, দেও দেও ও-পদ-আশ্রয় ।

[বিভাস, কাপতাল । ব্রহ্মসঙ্গীত-স্বরলিপি ৬।৪৪

সংগীত

(১)

রাগ ঝিলাস অগর অমায়, ঔপতাল

জয়জয় পরব্রহ্ম অপার তমে অগম্য, পরাৎপর তমে সারাৎসার;
 সত্যনু তমে নিধান, প্রেমনী অমূল্য আশু, মংগলনা তমে মূলধার.১.

নানা রসযুত ভব, গভীর রচনা তব, আত্মাশ্রয় শোভাথী শোভায়;
 মঙাকবি আদিকবি, গাটা ভিঠে শশিরবি, গাটা পুন:অস্তায়লেঅয়.১.২
 তারকা কনক মাল উজ্জবণ অক্ষর জল, গীত লেখনীলাংপর পানে;
 পঙ্কতু সংবৎসরে, সতত কীর্তন করে, তব যশ সুমধুরতানে.১.৩
 কুসুমে তমারী কান্তি, সলিলে তমারী শান্তি, বজ্রবে রুদ্র তমে ভীম;
 তব ভাব গূঢ় অতি, শুং অথু মূঢ় মতি, ধ্যান ধরে যুগাংত অসীম.১.৪
 আনংদে সতু আনংদে, তমারে অরথু বংদে, ডাটি সূর্য ডাটি অংদে তারা;
 রচনা নিরশি তারি, মোঙ পামে নরনারি, নেত্রে বহে আনংদাপ্রধারা.১.৫
 মণী নরনারি সতু, প্রণমিয়ে তনে বিধু, তমে সর্ব মংগল আলায়;
 ঘো জ্ঞান, ঘো প্রেম, ঘো ভক্তি, ঘো ক্ষেম, ঘো ঘো তত্পদ আশ্রয়.১.৬

Annexure 2

Translation of Tagore works into Gujarati

The following Tables are based upon the Parishishta 3 to *Ravindra Purvacharit*, Nagindas Parekh, Gujarat Sahitya Academy, Gandhinagar, 2002, p. 228 to 238. Translation of plays is included in Tagore – the Playwright and hence, does not appear here. Additions to the above are marked with an asterisk (*).

Autobiography

<u>NO.</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BOOK</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
1	1919	SAMSMARANO	AMBALAL PURANI
2	1919	KAVI TAGORANI JIVANSMRUTI	MANIBHAI DESAI
3	1948	MARU BALPAN	BACHUBHAI SHUKLA
4	1960	JIVANSMRUTI	RAMANLALA SONI
5	1962	MARU BALPAN	RAMANLALA SONI

Poetry

<u>NO.</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BOOK</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
1	1918	GITANJALI	MANIBHAI DESAI
2	1919	GITANJALI	KANUBEN DAVE
3	1919	GITANJALI	MANISHANKAR RATNAJI BHATT (KANT)
4	1923	GITANJALI FALACHAYAN	RAMCHANDRA ADHVARYU
5	1928	GITANJALI (ENGLISH)	GANDIV, SURAT ?
6	1929	NAIVEDYA	NARASIMHBHAI I. PATEL
7	1933	UTSARG *	GORDHANDAS ENGINEER
8	1942	GITANJALI	NAGINDAS PAREKH
9	1944	RAVINDRAVINA	JHAVERCHAND MEGHANI
10	1956	GITANJALI	DHUMKETU
11	1963	EKOTTARASHATI	VARIOUS
12	1964	VISHVANJALI	KUSUMAKAR
13	1971	NAIVEDYA	NAGINDAS PAREKH
14	1972	GURUDEVANA GITO	JUGATRAM DAVE
15	1973	CHANDRINI HODLI	KUSUMAKAR
16	1978	GITAPANCHASHATI	VARIOUS
17	1978	SHISHU	SUBHADRA GANDHI
18	1979	RAVICHHABI	NARAYAN DESAI
19	1981	TAGORANA KAVYO	NAGINDAS PAREKH
20	1990	RAVINDRANATHNI RATNAKNIKAO	NAGINDAS PAREKH
21	1993	BALAKA	RAJENDRA SHAH
22	1993	RAVIPRASAD	RAMANLAL SONI
23	1994	GITANJALI	KANTILAL PARIKH
24	2003	ANGREJI GITANJALI *	SHAILESH PAREKH

25	2006	GITANJALI *	MAVJI SAVLA
26	2007	PRANTIK *	NAGINDAS PAREKH
27	2009	NAIVEDYA *	SHAILESH PAREKH
28	2009	PRANTIK *	SHAILESH PAREKH
29	2009	SHESH LEKHA *	SHAILESH PAREKH
30		SHISHU *	KANTILAL PARIKH

Novels and Short Stories

<u>NO.</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BOOK</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
1	1916	CHOKHERVALI ETALE AMKHANI KANI	DHANSHANKAR TRIPATHI
2	1918	RAJARSHI	JETHALAL DAVE
3	1919	VAHU THAKURANI	JETHALAL DAVE
4	1921	GORA VOL 1 & 2	SAKARLAL MAGANLAL KAPADIA
5	1922	KURBANINI KATHAO	JHAVERCHAND MEGHANI
6	1922	DRASHTI	HIMMATLAL DAVE
7	1922	MADHURANI	SAKARLAL MAGANLAL KAPADIA
8	1924	KAVIVAR RAVINDRANATHANI TUNKI VARTAO - VOL 1 & 2	DHANSHANKAR TRIPATHI
9	1924	RAVINDRA KATHA GUCHCHH	VRAJLAL THAKKAR
10	1930	ATMANUM ANSU	?
11	1931	DUKHIYANAM AMSU	MAHASHAKAR DAVE
12	1939	LAVANYA	BACHUBHAI SHUKLA
13	1941	ANANDI	MANGALAM
14	1945	GUPTADHAN	RAMANLAL SONI
15	1946	NAGARLAKSHMI	RAMANLAL SONI
16	1946	MADHAVI	MANGALAM
17	1947	ANANDI	RAMANLAL SONI
18	1947	HEMANTI	RAMANLAL SONI
19	1950	KARMAFAL	RAMANLAL SONI
20	1950	GAPSAP YANE BALAVATO	RAMANLAL SONI
21	1950	VISHVAVATI	RAMANLAL SONI
22	1950	SAMARPANANI KATHAO	NARASIMHBHAI PATEL
23	1952	CHAR ADHYAY ANE MALANCH	BACHUBHAI SHUKLA
24	1953	GORA - SANKHIPT (ABRIDGED)	RAMANLAL SONI
25	1953	TAGORANI SUNDAR VATO	RAMANLAL SONI
26	1953	NAUKADUBI - SANKSHIPT (ABRIDGED)	NAGINDAS PAREKH
27	1953	MADHURANI (GHAREBAIRE)	NAGINDAS PAREKH
28	1954	VAHURANI VIBHA	BACHUBHAI SHUKLA
29	1955	KUMUDINI	KISANSINH CHAVDA
30	1955	CHIRAKUMARSABHA	RAMANLAL SONI
31	1955	PREMKUSUM	VISHVAMITRA
32	1956	CHATURANG ANE BE BAHENO	NAGINDAS PAREKH
33	1956	NAUKADUBI	NAGINDAS PAREKH
34	1956	BHAIBAHEN	RATNESHVAR VAKIL
35	1956	MASHI	RAMANLAL SONI
36	1956	RAVIKIRANO	KISANSINH CHAVDA
37	1956	RAVIRASHMI VOL 1 & 2	BACHUBHAI SHUKLA
38	1956	SONANU KEDKHANU	RAMANLAL SONI
39	1957	ATITHI ANE BE BAHENO	VISHVAMITRA
40	1957	TAGORANI BODHKATHAO	PRAMILA SHAH
41	1958	LIPIKA	VINOD KOTHARI

42	1958	VIMKHAYALO MALO	BHOGILAL GANDHI
43	1959	CHHAYA KE MAYA	RAMNIKLAL DALAL
44	1959	TAGORANI DRASHTANT KATHAO	RAMANLAL SONI
45	1959	TAGORANI SHRESTH NAVALIKAO	RAMNIKLAL DALAL
46	1961	TAGORANI TRAN SUNDAR VATO	PRABHAKAR TELANG
47	1962	SVAPNASUNDARI	RAMNIKLAL DALAL
48	1963	NILADHARA	SHRIKANT TRIVEDI
49	1963	BHABHI	BHOGILAL GANDHI & DHANSHANKAR TRIPATHI
50	1963	RAJARSHI	RAMANLAL SONI
51	1963	VIBHAVARI	DHANSHANKAR TRIPATHI
52	1967	SATILAKSHMI	MOHANLAL DHAMI
53	1969	JOGAJOG	SHIVKUMAR JOSHI
54	1969	BALSAHITYA	RAMANLAL SONI - EDITOR
55	1970	ATITHI ANE BE BAHENO	RAMANLAL SONI
56	1970	SHUBHA	RAMANLAL GANDHI
57	1971	GIRIBALA	RAMANLAL SONI
58	1971	GUPTADHAN	RAMANLAL SONI
59	1971	NAUKADUBI	JAGJIVAN PATHAK
60	1971	NAUKADUBI	SHANTILAL SHAH
61	1971	MAHAMAYA	RAMANLAL SONI
62	1973	VARAKANYA	RAMANLAL SONI
63	1973	VARMALA	RAMANLAL SONI
64	1979	GHARE BAHIRE	NAGINDAS PAREKH
65	1980	KABULIWALA	SHIVAM SUNDARAM
66	1980	GORA VOL 1 & 2	RAMANLAL SONI
67	1980	CHOKHERVALI	RAMANLAL SONI
68	1980	NIRAJA	URMI JANI
69	1980	VINIPAT	HASMUUKH VYAS
70	1981	TAGORANI BE NAVALKATHAO	NAGINDAS PAREKH
71	1981	TAGGORANI VARTAO	RAMANLAL SONI
72	1987	ATITHI	RAMANLAL SONI
73	1987	KABULIWALA	RAMANLAL SONI
74	1987	CHANDANTILAK	RAMANLAL SONI
75	1988	CHAR ADHYAY	BHOLABHAI PATEL
76	1988	VAHURANI	RAMANLAL SONI
77	2005	TE ANE TRAN SANGI *	SUGNA SHAH
78		GORA VOL 1 & 2	BACHUBHAI SHUKLA
79		GORA VOL 1 & 2	SHANTILAL SHAH
80		TAGORANI SHRESHTH VARTAO	PRAHLAD BRAHMABHATT
81		MADHAVI	ANANT VAKIL

Essays

NO.	YEAR	BOOK	AUTHOR
1	1921	SHIKSHANO ADARSH	DALPATRAM RAVAL
2	1925	VIDYARTHI JAGATANE SANDESH	? (SURAT, SEVAMANDAL)
3	1931	RASHIYANA PATRO	MAHASHANKAR DAVE
4	1938	MANAVDHARM	JAYANTILAL ACHARYA
5	1944	VISHVAPARICHAY	NAGINDAS PAREKH
6	1947	BRAHMACHARYA	JAYANTILAL ACHARYA
7	1948	MAHATMA GANDHI	BACHUBHAI SHUKLA

8	1987	KALYANIYESHU AMIYA	NAGINDAS PAREKH
9	1991	SHANTINIKETAN - 1	NAGINDAS PAREKH
10	1993	CHHINNPATRAMARMAR	ANILA DALAL
11	1994	SHANTINIKETAN - 2	NAGINDAS PAREKH
12	1995	SHANTINIKETAN - 3	NAGINDAS PAREKH
13		RAVINDRAPATRAMARMAR	NAGINDAS PAREKH

Miscellaneous

<u>NO.</u>	<u>YEAR</u>	<u>BOOK</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
1	1921	SHIKSHANO ADARSH	DALPATRAM RAVAL
2	1925	VIDYARTHI JAGATANE SANDESH	? (SURAT, SEVAMANDAL)
3	1931	RASHIYANA PATRO	MAHASHANKAR DAVE
4	1938	MANAVDHARM	JAYANTILAL ACHARYA
5	1944	VISHVAPARICHAY	NAGINDAS PAREKH
6	1947	BRAHMACHARYA	JAYANTILAL ACHARYA
7	1948	MAHATMA GANDHI	BACHUBHAI SHUKLA
8	1987	KALYANIYESHU AMIYA	NAGINDAS PAREKH
9	1991	SHANTINIKETAN - 1	NAGINDAS PAREKH
10	1993	CHHINNPATRAMARMAR	ANILA DALAL
11	1994	SHANTINIKETAN - 2	NAGINDAS PAREKH
12	1995	SHANTINIKETAN - 3	NAGINDAS PAREKH
13	2011	CHHINAPATRAVALI *	ANILA DALAL
14	2012	RAVINDRA SANCHAYITA *	ANILA DALAL & BHOLABHAI PATEL - ED.

The above Tables are not exhaustive or comprehensive. Omissions are unintentional and sincerely regretted.