

**GROWING MATERIALISM AND LOSS OF HUMAN  
VALUES IN THE POETRY OF JAYANTA  
MAHAPATRA**

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**FINAL REPORT**



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Human Values in the Poetry of  
Jayanta Mahapatra"**

## **10. Objectives of the Project:**

1. Exhaustive study of all the poetry volumes including articles, reviews and short critical studies of individual poems / volumes of Mahapatra's poetry in order to understand both the poet and the time he is living in.
2. To study poetry voicing protest against the sufferings of the poor, weak and down-trodden of the land.
3. To safeguard the poor sufferer and become their saviour therefore, the poet dwells on hunger, violence and terrorism.
4. To judge the political issues from the humanistic view point.

## **11. Achievements of the Project:**

The study confirms that behind the anguish of the poet there is a desire for restoration. Underneath every sorrow and suffering he is longing to fill hope and transformation. Though he does not speak about it openly, he implies that. Mahapatra tries to make sense out of life. It appears that life today exists in fragments. The poet does not want to leave it that way. Mahapatra makes a request to the poets to produce poetry that surpasses the ills of modern life rather than to compose poetry that mirrors them. His poems belong to a similar classification of purpose.

## **12. Summary of the Findings:**

### **Imagery in the Poetry of Jayanta Mahapatra**

1. Images work as a strong desire travelling from a Poet to its Reader in the case of poetry of Jayanta Mahapatra. Reader cannot interpret his poems without understanding his use of symbols and images.
2. Mahapatra's images work as a driving force that binds him to his soil, to his locale, to its festivals, cultures and to its myths, rites and rituals.
3. He lures his imageries from the landscape, religion, locality, from the history of the land and from his scientific education.

4. Several of his images like Rain, Stone, Women and Religious symbols are persistent in his poems. He uses such symbols and images each time with new implications and layers of meaning.
5. Early phase of his poetic career reveal him as the one who is in the pursuit to find a medium of expression. His early poems are marked with excess of images and symbols. These poems are highly personalized, carrying load of his alienation and haunting experiences.
6. His earlier limitation of being highly personalized gets diluted in his middle and later phase of poetic career. He broadens his outlook and finds a catastrophe in the pain all around him.
7. Early phase of his poems is also marked with experimentation with language and Indianising the medium of expression.
8. Middle and later phases of his poetic career prove him to be master when it comes to use of images and symbols to connote his meanings. He successfully portrays a verbal travesty using his images.

#### **Past Elements in the Poems of Jayanta Mahapatra**

1. Poems of Jayanta Mahapatra present a historical reading of the land of Orissa with more humane elements in to dry facts.
2. War of Kalinga and Ashoka's propaganda of peace, blood smeared soil of Dhaulagiri, blood shed at the banks of river Daya all find a frequent references in his poems where he questions Ashokan Edicts without being satirical.
3. Limbless lord Jagannath and Chariot festival of Puri, Lingaraj Temple with other religious places gets combined in his historical portrayal of the land.
4. Konarka becomes his metaphor for Orissa, its stone, carvings, the pain of artisans and death of a small boy all find a place in most of his poems.
5. Orissan rituals, festivals along with its entire landscape come crowding in his major poems



6. Architectural heritage of the land like Konarka, Bhubaneswar, Chandipur sea beach all find place in his poems.
7. Major incidents of Indian history like Assassination of Gandhi, Indira Gandhi, Bhopal Gas Tragedy, Terrorism in Kashmir and Punjab, Frequent flood in Orissa and burning of an Australian missionary Graham Staines, along with his two young sons all find reference in his poems.

### **Social Outlook in the Poetry of Jayanta Mahapatra**

1. Jayanta Mahapatra becomes one of the most concerned poets for the fate of women of the land. He portrays pain and pathos of women as Mother, as daughter, as wife, as Goddess and as a prostitute.
2. A majority of his poems is dedicated to his sociological concern for the state of women.
3. Poverty, Hunger and Misery finds a detailed portrayal in his poems as Orissa has remained frequent victim of Natural Calamity.
4. Worlds of fisher women, sweeper girl, beggars, lepers, blind men with pox stricken eyes also get portrayed in his poems.
5. His number of poems lashes at Social evils like Dowry system, growing Corruption and Dirty Politics. But he saves himself from becoming too much satirical and being only political in his outlook rather he make himself socially concerned one.
6. Poems of Jayanta Mahapatra are his humane effort to portray the world around him, bind historical elements with sociological themes using his variegated imagery.

### **13. Contribution to the Society:**

1. Mahapatra's poetry largely depends upon the resources of the unconscious which is connected with the collective unconscious of India. Mahapatra penetrates through the depths of the collective unconsciousness of the human race to bring out the mythical heritage of man.

2. Mahapatra attempts to define in his poetry the predicament of modern man who is torn between conflicting values, shattered faith and absence of life sustaining principles. In his poetry there is a subdued self-talk leading to self-introspection, being directed towards him.
3. There is an intensity and closeness to the experiences handled in a specific context of his poetry. There is a shift from the highly subjective world towards articulating problems that concern the people at large.
4. Self-centeredness of the people and leaders in the nation's politics leading to many social evils cause anguish in Mahapatra's later part of poetry. Mahapatra involves himself in the contemporary society and keeps watching its ways from close quarters. He faces the world with courage and conviction and does not try to run away from it. His poetry is an authentic account of the lives and of people described in it.
5. Though Mahapatra may appear to the outer world as a person living in financial stability and comforts it is the maladies prevailing around him like corruption, violence, poverty, indiscipline and hunger of people that haunt him always. The poet seeks solace in search of his roots by flowing down like a river towards the ancestral past. There is solemnity and meditative humility in his poems. He is an instinctive insider. He expresses his own doubts about the validity of writing poems and whether he has contributed anything by means of his poetry to change the country.
6. Like a modernist poet Mahapatra's prime focus is on the subjective memory and the inner self rather than on the materialistic surroundings, but he shares the contemporary concern for the predicament of modern man. Mahapatra's poetry is never contentless. Mahapatra's poetry reveals a desperate quest for meaning in the individual stipulation.

7. Mahapatra's poetry is different from Keats or Shelley who approached poetry as an emotional aesthete. Mahapatra wrote with the scientific mind and objective view. His poetry shows people who are torn between painful memories. They are wistful filled with dissolution but renewal of life is possible provided one learns to wait on the banks of art. Writing is a higher form of activity which takes up an individual to move from the periphery to centre or from local to the universal.
8. Mahapatra's whole oeuvre reveals his extreme sensibility to the larger issues that concern mankind in general and our society in particular.

14. **Weather any Ph.D. Enrolled/ Produced out of the Project : No**

15. **No. of Publications out of the project : 02**



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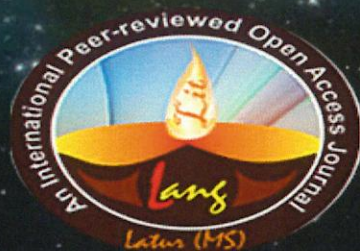
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## INDIAN ETHOS: MYTHS, RITES AND RITUALS IN JAYANTA MAHAPATRA'S POETRY

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### ABSTRACT

*Mankind is continually engaged in a fruitful search for the right clues to unravel the mysteries of Nature. Through his varied activities man transforms Nature for making his life more comfortable and in the process he is also simultaneously transformed by Nature which creates a new awareness and also generates new needs and aspirations. Both these transformations are conditioned by the historical and social environments which are operative in the specific contexts of time and place. No man has freedom in the choice of an appropriate time, a suitable place or a favourable socio-historical condition to begin his life simply because he cannot choose his parents. A man is born into a specific socio-cultural milieu and he inherits, quite unconsciously though, and often without efforts, the accumulated wisdom of earlier generations in the form of traditions, legends and myths. Therefore, it is apt to say that "myth is the embodiment of human aspiration and its appropriate imaginative form"<sup>1</sup>. No man can relate himself meaningfully to his fellow human beings without being nurtured by the myths which sustained the earlier generations.*

**Keywords:** *Myth, Nature, Socio-cultural milieu, Imaginative*

Myths are the potent symbols of man's dreams and aspirations, which provide him with ideals and help him set goals in a hostile world that constantly threatens man's existence. Struggle for survival consume man's life energies and he needs fresh impetus to go on facing and tackling the new obstacles which keep propping up like the ending, rolling waves in the sea. Myths and legends provide mankind with the much required psychological support and help him discriminate between good and evil judiciously. However, mankind's history is codified in its myths and therefore myths symbolically represent what has stirred man's soul in his life's journey from times immemorial to the present day. Carl Jung, the well-known psychoanalyst, stresses that myths are indispensable for discovering one's root:

*If we are to see things in their right perspective, we need to understand the past of man as well as his present. That is why and understanding of myths and symbols is of essential importance.<sup>2</sup>*

Each one of us is a part of the cosmos, the inexplicable and the eternal. The essentially religious spirit of man must have invented and projected myths that have sustained whole civilisations, interpreted the significance of life, connecting it with the unknown. The present has meaning only in relation to the past in a manner that the past was not aware of itself. As Sivaramakrishna says,

*Without roots in history and myth no poet can hope to make his aesthetic strategy other than merely cerebral [ . . . ]. affirmation of the environment and awareness of its mythical bases can hardly function in the absence of a pervasive personal quest of significant personal emotion.*<sup>3</sup>

Jayanta Mahapatra attempts to explore the dark corners of the human soul to elicit meaning and significance of life. His attempts to penetrate into the hidden depths of the collective unconsciousness of human race by breaking through the mythical heritage of man. By correlating his personal quest with man's eternal preoccupations, Mahapatra endeavours to define the predicament of modern man torn between conflicting values, shattered faiths, the lurking darkness both *within* and *without*, and a near- total absence of life-sustaining mythical values.

Mahapatra is haunted by a strange sense of fear and uneasiness throughout. In many cases the source of these apprehensive feelings is his own imagination without a correspondence, atleast the obvious one, in the external reality. Mahapatra himself reflects this sense of fear in "My Boy" taken from his *Svayamvara* and *Other Poems*:

*From where his fears  
come, he looked into and wondered  
at other fears, doubled in a pupal face,  
the secret signs of a tabooed race (32).*

It looks as though these fears are grounded in the primitive consciousness of the prehistoric man, who being unable to explain the natural phenomena of fire, thunder, lightening, rain, etc., looked at them with awe and wonder. He came to regard these as manipulations of superior astral powers which guided the life and destiny of men and matters alike, the uncertainties of his nomadic life coupled with the equally unpredictable vagaries of Nature, left everything to chance in that primitive society, including man's very own survival. This certainly must have contributed to man's fear of the inexplicable in the universe and perhaps also roused his curiosity to explore, what he might have inferred to be a fundamentally more powerful but equally invisible causative factor. Thus, the primitive man came to believe in the mystery of the universe, driven as he was, by a strong desire to live and propagate. Naturally then he felt the need to appease these *unknown forces* to protect him from their potential destructive powers and also to seek their benediction to live and prosper. Mahapatra narrates the practice of human sacrifice conducted, till the end of the last century, by the Kondhs, a primitive tribal community which inhabits the mountainous tracts of south and west Orissa:

*The meria sacrifice, as it is called, can be looked upon as a part of the universal preoccupation of the primitive mind, seeking to propitiate the supernatural powers for the peace and prosperity of the entire tribe. Religious symbolism, obviously, was at the root of the meria sacrifice (33).*

Thus, rituals and magic were devised which represented symbolically man's submission to the superior powers. Conversely, this ritualistic magic also became the means of man's quest to know, understand and interpret the nature of this mysterious power. This is how perhaps religion was born with its intricate system of secret signs and symbols, from the rudiments of man's fear of the inexplicable, the unknown and his curiosity to explore the unknowable. Jayanta Mahapatra makes an attempt to articulate these symbolic gestures of mankind's eternal search into the unknown through his poetry.

But Mahapatra's probe lead him into an exploratory journey unto the *self*. In the amphitheatre of his mind the burden of the whole race with its taboos, rites and magic is constantly re-enacted in the hope of understanding man in relation to Nature. In "Ceremony", Mahapatra explores the significance of rituals thus:

*What is there in ceremony, in a ritual's deeply hidden meaning?  
The familiar words are rude like roots, and out of place,  
hanging like history in which one's sky stumbles.  
In the world it is always I who come back to myself, that far flower of thought; the  
sacred cold books flash with star pyres[. . .].  
Any cult here, triumphs for ever (15).*

Ironically, the gestures man created towards off his chocking fears have now come to be the source of generating new fears. The increasing complexity of these symbols, through their transformation and other associations gained with the passage of time has only drifted man away from the original meaning, purpose or message, imprisoning him tragically in the mess he has created for himself. Following lines from "India" deserve a close study.

When we learned dumbly to grow,

*we felt of ourselves abandoned in the wilds, in things not  
real,  
full of the mysterious fog that excites the shadows of the spirit (50).*

Here, the word "dumbly" has a negative connotation which suggests that man has not grown at all. Therefore, he feels "abandoned in the wilds" without direction or purpose. This abandonment is made more fearsome because man is lost "in things not real" in a dense "mysterious fog" which blurs his vision. Nevertheless, the "mysterious fog" invokes something unknown to the phenomenal world. Therefore the "shadows of spirit" are excited and the prospect of a glimpse into the unknown seems brighter than at the stage before man's "abandonment in things not real." This ambiguity in responding to a situation is characteristic of Mahapatra's poetic craft.

For Mahapatra, no history of human civilisation will be complete without considering its rites and rituals which bind people together into an identifiable whole, as a community. A deep insight into the natural of these rites becomes compelling as it forms a vital part of the socio-historical background of Orissa, with its sizeable tribal population for example, the Juang tribe is only one of the sixty two aboriginal tribes, who inhabit the forest regions of Keonjhar and Dhenkanal constituting about twenty three percentage of state's population, beside the Saoros, Kondha, Didayi and the little known Bondas. Each of these tribal communities has its own heritage of rituals, which are interesting anthropologically too. Mahapatra says,

*Orissan culture has been influenced to a considerable extent by the aboriginals, and it is common knowledge that folk and tribal elements are an integral part of Hindu ritual and living. It is believed that the original inhabitants of Orissa were such primitive tribes akin to the Saoros and Juangs, groups living in the wooded hinterland. Here, in the dense jungles, were ambiguous essences symbolised and made into ritual objects. Legends say that the original deity of the Saoros was a log of wood, which slowly became transformed into the image of Lord Jagannath – an indication that the origins of the cult of Jagannath lie in tribal totems. Even today a select group of priests of tribal origin are deputed to carry out certain tasks connected with the deity's worship... Totem and taboo are prevalent amongst the tribals... Magic forms an integral part of the tribal religion, and its practices are many... Here beats Orissa's primordial heart (Orissa, p.32-33).*

Orissa abounds in temples. One can easily count five hundred temples in the old city of Bhubaneshwar alone – “An array of temples built systematically through the centuries, in chronological order form the sixth century to the thirteenth century AD”(18). The Jagannath temple at Puri, the Lingaraja temple at Bhubaneshwar and the Sun Temple at Konarka now in ruins, are the landmarks of Orissa and the living monuments of its highly developed, sophisticated temple sculpture and architecture. They symbolise man's quest into the realm of the unknown and stand, as mysterious as their presiding deities inside the dark sanctum sanctorum, where both illusion and reality become inseparable and indistinguishable. Hence temples are “a museum of symbols” (40) for anybody who cares to study them with perseverance and patience; and they point to an “unending rhythm”(16) in the flux of time – a journey towards infinity seeking to encompass eternity as an “ancient rite of dead years / makes its obeisance of life” (15). Therefore, temples and rituals constitute the hub of Orissa.

A sense of timelessness and space lessness pervades the poetry of Jayanta Mahapatra. Orissa is the land where time seems to stand still, without moving in the direction of change. “We watch time-bound people go through their daily routine in the same unhurried way that their ancestors have done for centuries”(19). For example, on a pleasant October morning we shall not miss the familiar sight of Gobinda Maharana, the image maker, deeply engrossed in making the clay image of Durga (“from clay / the goddesses take their sacred shapes / in every autumn.” p.34) to be worshipped during the festival of Durga Puja: a veneration of the Female Principle as Mother Goddess. Mahapatra observes Gobinda Maharana walking down the road to the club-house in Cuttack where he moulds the ten-armed, life-size clay image of Durga in her dual role as Creator and destroyer, with reverence, passion and humility in the same unchanging traditional way of his ancestors.

*Like his father before him, and his father's father, Gobinda stolidly pursues his ancient craft, and I cannot but notice a certain inner impulse which drives him on, part poetic, part divine. I look up at the images... Slowly I realise that I am living at one particular instant in many layers of time – the mythic, the historical and the present; and what I see in the present is only what has stirred the air of countless generations (36).*



Even the ritual of *Cherapahanra* has an interesting point for consideration. In the traditional ritual of *Cherapahanra*, the King of Puri is called on to perform the duty of a sweeper before the deities at the time of the yearly chariot festival – an act of utter humility and submission to the Will of the Lord, which is continued to this day both in action and spirit. During the annual Car Festival, when the deities are installed ceremoniously in the chariots, “Raja of Puri sweeps the platforms of the chariots in the manner of his ancestor, King Purusottama, eight hundred years ago”(26). Only then the Lord starts on his symbolic tour of the Universe to study the fate of mankind, in the massive wooden chariot, accompanied by his brother Balabhadra and sister Subhadra, in only slightly smaller but nevertheless gigantic chariot. (“The giant chariot jostles like a toy / in a million hands.” p.32). Here, Mahapatra compares the “giant chariot” to a tiny “toy”. Chariot represents godliness and divinity whereas toy stands for playful childhood coupled with irresponsibility. By juxtaposing these two, Mahapatra demonstrates his ambivalent attitude to the famous *Ratha Jatra* the symbolic tour of Lord Jagannath – which is held every year in the month of July amidst great rituals and pomp. Mahapatra says that:

*Temple chronicles specify a height of 45 feet for Jagannatha’s car, with 16 wheels, each 7 feet in diameter. Deep yellow and red colours characterise this car. Balabhadra’s car, slightly smaller, is 44 feet in height and has 12 wheels, each with a diameter of 6 feet. It is covered in red and blue. Subhadra’s car is crimson, 43 feet high, and sports 12 wheels of 5 feet diameter each (25-26).*

These minute details of the rituals, both in their form and content, are yet another manifestation of frozen Time (Sun Temple at Konarka) is built so magnificently in the form of an immense stone chariot which stands on the three-metre-wide twenty four stone wheels (symbolising the hours of a day) being pulled by seven horses (symbolising seven days of a week) shown in the action of pulling the giant chariot through its course in the high sky which infact symbolises constant motion. But the life-style in Orissa has hardly moved away from its time honoured, traditional ways. Therefore, we have reasons to believe that all these ritualistic practices, perhaps, will be continued uninterrupted and unchanged into the future, the way they used to be in the distant past, because “Oriyas have always stuck to their own ways” (12) of living and the agriculture-based rural Orissa is a classic example of permanence and changelessness.

*Oriyas are reluctant to leave the village... the land is, to all accounts, their mother – however hungry he is, (the Oriya farmer) will not leave his home and the special bit of earth that has absorbed the ashes of his fathers (9-10).*

All beliefs, customs and rituals connected with agriculture in a predominantly agrarian society of the rural Orissa still survive with the grandeur of antiquity. Therefore, Mahapatra feels that Time has had no impact on the ways Oriyas have been living their lives, i.e., the passage of time. Here, Mahapatra communicates how the rituals and traditions are inherited defying the passage of Time and how they still exert their strong influence on our ways of living especially in Orissa. Thus, countless generation of Oriyas have lived the same way facing similar ordeals and in the whole chain of endless movements, sons have merely replaced fathers. Mahapatra’s sense of timelessness and spacelessness lies precisely in the fossilised life-styles and the antiquated attitudes of his people living in the predominantly rural landscape of Orissa.

Perhaps this is the main reason why even to this day, Orissa still remains one of the least developed Indian states. Orissa's sprawling backwardness is as well-known as its magnificent, many –splendoured cultural history! The former is deplorable and the latter highly adorable and admirable!

Lord Jagannatha reigns supreme in Orissa, rather in the hearts of every devout Hindu. Our understanding of Orissa, and the poetry of Mahapatra, would never be complete without our knowing the cult of Jagannatha. Vasant. A. Shahane too feels that

*Jagannath Puri has assumed the position of a central character in several of Jayanta Mahapatra's poems – it is, as it were, the central consciousness of the poet's creativity which flows into the making of these poems.<sup>4</sup>*

Mahapatra, on entering the sanctum of the Puri temple, feels that

*The three gods (Lord Jagannatha, his elder brother Balbhadr and sister Subhadra), darker than the darkness, strange, limbless, grotesque, the stark round eyes seeming to move darkly, circling and drawing me with the rope of my breath into a land where I stand, transfixed, repeating to myself: 'Do what you want. I am ready. Join my life' (28).*

Lord Jagannatha is "strange, limbless and grotesque" which makes the reader realise that Mahapatra cannot respond to the image of the Lord as the Supreme One. At the same time, Mahapatra is drawn to it "with the ropes of my breath" as if he moves towards the image against his own wishes driven by an inner compulsion and he submits his free will to the Will of the Lord as if in a trance. Mahapatra's divided inheritance – his grandfather's conversion to Christianity and his own Hindu roots – results in such a complex ambivalence as seen throughout Mahapatra's poetry and prose writings. Legend has it that Raja Indradyumna performed *Ashwamedha Yaga* and the Lord, being pleased, granted to appear to him as a log of wood with special characteristic marks, floating down the Mahanadi. None of the King's sculptors could carve the image of Lord Jagannatha out of the log of wood, as their tools broke everytime they attempted. Finally, an old carpenter, Ananta Maharana (believed to be God himself in disguise), assured the King that he would complete the task provided the King agreed to lock him for 21 days and the temple doors be opened only after the stipulated date. The King agreed. But the queen had doubts about the old carpenter's skills and prevailed upon the King to open the temple doors before the appointed time. To their great surprise, they saw three incomplete shapes without limbs and hands. And that is how the Jagannatha – Trio came to be worshipped. Mahapatra says,

*Perhaps nowhere else in India are deities worshipped in such unfinished, in conceivable forms as in the temple of Jagannatha at Puri. The common Oriya believes in the Supremacy of Lord Jagannatha; for even though he has no arms or legs, his reach encompasses every corner of the world (26).*

In his *Relationship*, Mahapatra alludes to the ritualistic practice of replacing the sacred deity of Lord Jagannatha, along with Balbhadr and Subhadra, at the Puri temple at a festival called the *Navakalevara* (the new body) which is observed once in twelve years. The new images of the deities are carved from the *neem* trees found in "the dense jungles" of Orissa,

and then the “wood becomes a conceiver of life”(11) as it is transformed into the images of the presiding deities ready to be worshipped by the devotees. Mahapatra explains the elaborate rituals prescribed for the Navakalevara.

*Chose temple attendants are sent into the deep Orissa forests to search out certain neem (margosa) trees, marked by prescribed signs, and bring them back to the temple. There the tree trunks are carved into new forms identical to the old ones. When the images are complete, a specially chosen priest is blindfolded and led into the sanctum. The doors are then closed. The priest next takes the soul (unidentified relic) from the sealed body of the old image, rewraps it in leaf and seals it in the body of the new image, which is then placed on the altar to be worshipped. This is partly religious ritual, partly a way of life for thousands of Oriyas who value permanence and changelessness in their day-to-day existence (27).*

This quotation offers an explanation to the concept of Navakalevara which in fact reads as a commentary on the preceding quotation.

However, it is important to note that Mahapatra does not gloat over the glories of Lord Jagannatha, nor is he concerned with the temple rituals or its spiritual implications or the mystery of the cult of Jagannatha in absolute terms. Infact, the poet in Mahapatra is guided by a different logic – “the need to be human is important in a poet than in anyone else”: therefore, the guiding force of the poetry is a pervading sense of involvement and a humanitarian concern for the welfare of his people. When Mahapatra sees stark poverty around him and the starving children crying for the slices of watermelon on a hot summer afternoon, Mahapatra becomes indignant about the divine indifference of Lord Jagannatha, who becomes virtually the dead wood He is made of, because of His inability to alleviate hunger and suffering even in His own land. Orissa is also known as *Jagannatha Desa*: literally, the land of Lord Jagannatha. In “A Summer Afternoon”, Mahapatra scoffs at “the atrocious innocence of Jagannath” who turns a blind eye to all the sufferings, especially of the children.

*Outside in the bright sun,  
the screams of five children crying for slices  
of watermelon pierce his ears:  
he sees a tree of ten hands  
scoffing the atrocious innocence of Jagannath  
in his sheltered shrine (40).*

Where is compassion in His Round Eyes? Could He be blind? Mahapatra wonders whether those are “fake huge eyes”(33) because they look vacantly without seeing. This shows that at least Mahapatra is not blind to the social realities. He does not deceive himself with an easy excuse of *Fate* or *Karma* to ease his conscience allowing his people to suffer. Mahapatra scoffs at the Lord in the face as it were, moved deeply by the sad plight of the children in whom he sees “a tree of ten hands”- a mocking reference to the ritual of carving the image of the Lord out of a *neem* tree. Unlike His image, these children are fully formed and their hunger is as real as the blood flowing in their weak bodies. Limbless, shapeless and grotesque as He is, how will He understand the needs of those who feel the hunger in the pits of their stomachs? Then it is a myth that His compassion reaches all, without discrimination and

without prejudice. Mahapatra's poetic self refuses to accept such a grotesque Being as the saviour of mankind and as a redeemer of human miseries. Mahapatra reveals his stand as follows:

*Around me was sickness and hunger, the sufferings of people from malnutrition and disease – terrible form of disorder of the universe that made me question myself on the goodness of God we had been taught to believe in. And so I felt unable to reconcile these two affirmations – that God is the sum of all perfection, and that the world of ours, with all its imperfections was created by Him.<sup>5</sup>*

This seems to be Mahapatra's intellectual response and the preceding one inviting the Lord to join his life, contradicting the rationalist in Mahapatra, seems to be born out of a mystical mood. Thus, the mystic, the poet, and the rationalist exist in Mahapatra's work. Therefore, it is not at all surprising to see such basic contradictions in Mahapatra's thinking as well as in his poetry. Mahapatra believes that *feeling* is central to a poem and the truth of a poem is independent of the poet's personal faith.

*Today, somehow I have come to believe that the poet is neither a philosopher nor a logical being. Nor is he able to connect the value of a poem with the truth of what the poem states. It is feeling alone which seems to me the heart of the poem, and it is feeling which starts the poem in the mind of the poet. And perhaps, it is when the act of writing of the poem continues in the poet's mind that the poet truly learns to feel, moved by feelings itself, eventually being startled by it and experiences the expense of his art – before he gets his sense of life across.<sup>6</sup>*

The above statement confirms the famous dictum that the poet as a creator is different from the man who suffers. Mahapatra's poetic search throughout has been an encounter with the other *within* and to come to terms with this "stranger within" him.

*Poetry is the stranger within oneself – the man inside one is unaware of, and the poet is almost always in the quest of finding this other one. In this unending process of writing poetry, one is always trying to recognize oneself, finding out ultimately which part of oneself will finally outlast the other part.<sup>7</sup>*

And this exploratory path is riddled with contradictions. Hence, to understand Mahapatra's writings, we should concentrate more on such contradictory statements or points of view, that search for a unified vision, which Mahapatra emphatically dismisses as utopian in the context of present day living.

In *False Start*, we can trace references to the *meria* (human sacrifice) practice that has been mentioned earlier. If we have no knowledge of this *meria* ritual, many of the poems would remain outside the periphery of our shared experience. Even those who summarily reject the autobiographical and historical approach as extraneous will see how they become mandatory in Mahapatra's poetry. Mahapatra himself states:

*A poet is, perhaps, only right when he says in his poem what he has actually known... Usually writers do rely on their individual personal experiences on those things that can be seen and heard, touched and trapped by their senses, which threaten their ephemeral existence – to produce their own poems. For, it is then that the poem becomes the only reliable authority to which one can turn to if one is to recognize the*



*shapes of verse... A good number of my poems have their roots in day-to-day common experiences (10).*

*Meria* – ritual, which was till recently prevalent among the Khonds of Phulbani – an ancient tribe of Orissa – is rooted in agricultural magic and the fertility cult of the primitive agrarian society. *Meria* is the human *sacrificial lamb* who is bought and reared with care and affection in the house of the tribal headman (*Saonto*). So, symbolically *meria* becomes the son of *Saonto*. On the auspicious day, with the priest's invocation and chanting of *mantras*, *meria* is sacrificed for the welfare and prosperity of the entire tribe. It is interesting to note that the first stab comes from the *Saonto* and the rest of the tribesmen fall upon the *meria* tearing him into bits, singing songs for peace and welfare. The tribal song rendered into English by Mahapatra reads as follows:

*Now we sacrifice the meria...  
Let there be abundant rains...  
And no famine strike the village.  
Let onions and garlic grow well  
And goats and cattle return home  
We merely feed the gods and Dhartani  
We have no guilt, we commit no crime  
We only offer the small sacrifice  
Too small for the gods, too small for the goddess  
Let them be pleased, let them make us happy (34).*

The title of Mahapatra's poem "Time drawing In" suggests that the hour of the sacrifice is approaching fast. It also echoes the finality of the *Hour* and the *Deed* emphatically. There is a feeling that the mysterious hands of *Death* are gradually tightening their powerful grip around the slender neck of the meek *sacrificial lamb*. Of course, in the modern times, we do not conduct human sacrifices; the poetic recreation of this ritual is neither exact nor accurate because Mahapatra does not intend to faithfully record a *meria* sacrifice – that would be the job of a historian or anthropologist! Rather, Mahapatra wants to show how the edifice of a modern society is built on the terror of unsanctified blood as against the sacrificial blood of the primitive society and the modern *meria* is none other than the poet himself. The poem opens "In this December fog", which sets the scene for the mysterious rite. "Fog" denies us a clearer vision and whatever takes place in the foggy atmosphere is relevant only to this secret world.

*In this December fog that comes crowding in  
from nowhere, my life feels its weakness again,  
and my secret nerves and blood leave me  
with the mask of pain,  
as the cool air of the humble leaves  
hears the cry of the slaughtered sheep in the butcher-house  
and awakes;  
my face proceeds bravely to drown  
the fresh, taunting laughter that fills the hollow ears:  
the grey water of doubt that will not wet  
the throats of earth or sky (34).*

The poet hears the fearful cry of the *meria* (himself) in the image of “a slaughtered sheep in the butcher-house”.

*Cf: the mournful bleating of goats as they are led to the municipal slaughterhouse in my own town every morning awakes me (149).*

*Meria* – ritual is conducted for the benefit of the entire tribe whereas goats / sheep are slaughtered for satisfying the hungry. The sharp contrast in the purposes behind the two kinds of *sacrifices* is evidently self-explanatory! A comparison between the tribal song and its modern counterpart becomes inevitable and the inference, obviously, is too glaring! *Meria* sacrifice is sanctified by the noble purpose of appeasing the gods for the peace and prosperity of the whole tribe; the poet mock-seriously attempts to elevate the slaughtering of a sheep to the level of *sacrifice*, obviously on the implicit suggestion that the butcher caters to the twin demands of hunger and taste of a wider community! Therefore, the doubt as to whether or not such an act of *sacrifice* is essential or barbaric is irrelevant from the point of view of those who propitiate it, because they are solely guided by the welfare or the need of the respective communities they think they are serving. The last two lines of the stanza quoted above justify this interpretation.

*Time draws in timidly  
each weakness, each fear to clear focus;  
and as the sun dulls the gleaming marigold in the fields,  
as the stones spread their designs over the hills  
and teach them the silent alphabet of belief,  
as the rain wears the mute, sightless seedout,  
I take the meat and bone of my body  
and lay this offering at the foot of the starless sky (34).*

In contrast to the two types of sacrifices discussed earlier, when the poet becomes the *meria* taking out the meat and bone of his body as a sacrificial offering, the ritual magic does not work any longer; instead, Nature turns inhospitable and hostile. Life energies are suppressed (“sun dulls the gleaming marigold in the fields”) and there is no trace of fertility anywhere near in sight – “rain wears the mute, sightless seedout”. Earth no longer guards the seeds in its womb to be grown into bountiful harvests, and the rain instead of nourishing the seeds, washes them out of earth’s womb. The intended regenerative force proves abortive: the resultant “weakness and fear” counter the much desired pulsating, vibrant optimism. The poet feels utterly lost because his *sacrifice* has had no desired effect. He is condemned to be “haunted forever by loss” (36). There, is no rejoicing instead of resounding with the beating of drums and joyous laughter that follows a ritualistic sacrifice.

The modern *meria*’s highly individualistic approach to life negates the very concept of a ritualistic sacrifice by robbing it of its conventional purpose and meaning. Nevertheless, the poet still nurses an intense longing to be an integral part of the society and to establish vital links with it while still retaining his individual identity. And the poet’s anticipated joy at the very thought of all these becoming true almost like a miracle, and he waits with hope for that dawn to break in, dispersing the misty December fog.

Mahapatra, as we know was brought up as a Christian by his parents, especially the mother, who imposed a stern discipline on the growing child. But the atmosphere outside home was redundant with Hindu rites and festivals. Mahapatra experienced the pull of two religions in his early childhood, which left a permanent scar on his personality. Mahapatra was more and more drawn into an orbit of Hindu world view which has a dominant presence in the lives of the majority of our countrymen. Mahapatra admits that *"Today my brother is a faithful Christian, a leader of the local community. I am not "* (142).

It is of course wrong to assume that Mahapatra has embraced Hinduism. He is not interested in such simple solutions nor does he advocate it as a cheap prescription for a psycho-religious crisis. We must understand Mahapatra's genuine concerns for the world his grandfather was compelled to forsake by historical necessity.

*My grandfather, almost starving to death, has become a Christiana century ago, quitting the Hindu fold when a devastating famine struck Orissa and people died by the hundreds, to be devoured by vultures and jackals. Shadows began to haunt me – of those voices that were no longer there, of a past that my father and mother made me forget. I was left alone, with my own insecure feelings, in an akasa that is there within the heart. I was left alone with my own moral uncertainty (151).*

This uncertainty, as we have already seen, is central to Mahapatra's creativity. It is a fact that Mahapatra has his lineage deeply rooted in the Hindu culture and its ethos, from which he was estranged by circumstances: yet he experiences its pull as irresistible and real. However, Mahapatra believes that one should draw strength from one's own inner resources; the intrinsic quality of humanness should guide us in life more than any dogmatic beliefs. In the formulation of this conviction, Mahapatra acknowledges his debt to *Jean Barois*, a fiction by French novelist Roger Martin du Gard, which had a profound impact on Mahapatra because it taught him to rely on himself, to be true to his inner voice and to see that world as it really is. Jayanta Mahapatra skilfully makes use of myths to give a wider appeal and a cosmic touch to the eternal problems of mankind, by moulding the mythological symbols into new forms and placing them in contemporary context. Myths operate at two levels – social and cultural – in Mahapatra's poetry. At either level, myths undergo a metamorphosis to bring into focus the present degradation and debasement of human life and its consequent loss of enduring quality. In the modern context, myths are stripped bare and they serve as poor travesty of their original rich symbolic suggestiveness. Hence, we experience the deglorification and sometimes even the debunking of myths in Mahapatra's poetry, which trait he largely shares with Keki. N. Daruwalla. For example, in Daruwalla's *Crossing of the Rivers*, the Ganges, the most sacred river of India, is realistically depicted as polluted because of the indiscriminate emptying of industrial waste into it, which has turned the Ganges into "swermouth"(11). The half-burnt corpses that float in the holy river make a horrible sight. Hence,

*The Ganga flows through the land,  
not to lighten the misery  
but to show it (16).*

That the Ganga is believed to wash away the sins of people and thus purify them, while it always remains unsullied, is only a myth, because now the Ganges itself has become impure and defiled for all to see. Similarly, in Mahapatra, the Ganga is no more a spiritual purifier.

The last rites to the dead performed on the banks of the Ganga, the ever burning funeral pyres at the ghats and the devout Hindu's last wish to disperse his *asthi* (bones and ashes) after his death in the holy Ganges – all these for Mahapatra, become “decorations” to the Ganges: and its banks are shrouded by mysterious rites and chanting of *mantras* directing and guiding the souls in their ascendancy to heaven. In “Our Imprecation,” Mahapatra alludes to this.

*The mouth is empty.  
Yet there is the River  
it catches, unaware:  
a Ganga  
decorated with histories of ashes  
like a mist of enchantments<sup>9</sup>*

Mahapatra deftly turns the ashes of the dead into “histories of ashes”, which suggests the individual history of every dead person and also the diverse histories of countless generations which paid their homage to the Ganga in the belief of cleansing their sins for attaining salvation are discounted by the decisive verb “decorated” and cures the reader as well as the poet of any illusion regarding the Ganga's mythical powers or significance in the present day.

*The Ganga stretches out its leisured hand,  
the whole of its vanity lying like an old newspaper  
that contains the poverty of those words which carry  
their own death with them. (34).*

In *A Rain of Rites*, Goddess Durga herself has become one such dead-weight bringing no benediction. During the festival of Durga Puja, people carry the clay image of the goddess more by habit than unstinted devotion, to the accompaniment of drummers “hammering on the deep stillness of the valley” (26).

*The ten-armed clay Durga  
framed in a mythic past,  
carried slowly twenty-four tired men (26).*

“Hammering” indicates man's inner restlessness and his desperate need to break the monotony of boredom even at the cost of disturbing the serene quietness of the valley, producing a terrible numbness of senses. So both at the cultural and social level, myth has ceased to be functional in the traditional way. Hence, the contemporary reality now defeats the age old beliefs and practices. Over a period of time, the defilement of what was sacred and derangement of what was natural has come to be accepted complacently without producing any qualms in man's consciousness. In *Svayamvara* and *Other Poems*, Mahapatra depicts this deplorable situation with the calm acceptance of a man who is resigned to his fate.

Mahapatra shatters the mythic image of India through his realistic portrayal of our society in its stark nakedness. He also stresses how we have come to sympathise with the deviants and how tacitly we approve of, even perhaps appreciate, their ways. The ability to discriminate between right and wrong seems to be inoperative. Hence our loss is indeed too great. We have become powerless, silent spectators of “*the disrobing of human values*,” weakened by the absence of moral righteousness, unable to draw sustenance from age – old myths (22).



The poet holds himself answerable to the unpardonable apathy to the human suffering and deprivation for which, at one time or the other, we are all direct but mute witnesses; worse still, “we have fallen asleep / to the groans of the women taken in rape”(54). Nothing moves us, not even death, as we have become desensitised in the process of living our self-centred lives:

*Even in this remote, slack and wrinkled village  
on the bank of the Kaveri, the breeze  
trembles to the last breath of a drowned girl,  
Yet you move about, Jayanta,  
as though nothing had ever happened here.  
It is not as if anyone has to answer for it;  
I sit on the river bank wanting to smile  
for the destitute children who hang around the temple  
using their young years to shoo away the flies  
aroused by luncheon leftovers from city picnics (24).*

Here, Mahapatra confronts his poetic self to own his moral responsibility for the misery of “drowned girl”. And the voice of his conscience seems to chide him for moving about “as though nothing had ever happened here”. Mahapatra knows the bitter truth that endurance of suffering in the daily struggle for survival and existence renders anyone selfish, insensitive and callous to the needs of other fellow human beings. This dehumanising effect of poverty, hunger and deprivation is indeed deplorable. There seems to be no hope even for the “future generation” to restore dignity to the human person as the children have become “destitutes” and turned beggars and they “hang around the temple” in the hope of getting some food but sadly what they are destined for is only “luncheon leftovers from city picnics”. Even to claim this, the children have to “shoo away the flies”!

Jayanta Mahapatra’s poetry makes exacting demands on reader response by creating dream-layers of experience where “the real and imagined calmly coalesce”; making our effort to distinguish the one from the other highly difficult if not impossible (18). Therefore, Mahapatra does not dare to disturb the mystery of myth born of the grand fruition of reality and imagination. He also perhaps feels that any attempt to unravel the mystery of myth would render it powerless. Hence, in “Myth” Mahapatra confesses that,

*I dare not go  
into the dark, dark sanctum  
where the myth shifts  
swiftly from hand to hand, eye to eye (22).*

It may perhaps be true that what is real is too shocking to the senses, baffling to the eyes and aesthetically distasteful. Therefore, Mahapatra’s poetic world, even when it depicts reality, doesn’t show mirror-reflections; instead are exposed to a broad colour spectrum of overlapping images and symbols.

In his long-poem *Relationship*, Mahapatra deals with the Myth of Origin, i.e., myth of origin of this Universe and the myth of origin of man on this planet. Howsoever intelligent or advanced man may be in his thinking and technological accomplishments, his efforts in

unraveling the Myth of Origin have at best remained only conjectural. There exists a series of missing links in the experimental verifications of the multiple hypotheses man has put forward. But the crux of the matter lies in the fact that while a scientist may be interested in the scientifically demonstrable aspect of the issue, poets have been equally concerned with the philosophical implications of such a quest and their relevance to man's life. Man has been eternally confronted with such question, as *Who am I? Where have I come from and where am I going to?* Continuing the same line of self-introspection, Mahapatra says,

*I ask myself: What am I made of? Of hunger and earth and home-sickness? Of loneliness and barbarism and the surprises of death? Yet I realise I cannot help being affected by the world around me, by a sensitivity to issues that plague my country and the whole world today. And in order to understand who I am and who I will become, I shall go on writing my poems.*<sup>11</sup>

This persistent self-introspection is characteristic of Mahapatra's poetry which essentially remains exploratory in nature. Mahapatra is constantly haunted by questions that often seem to have no satisfactory answers, and Mahapatra's poetry reflects his almost obsessive preoccupations with a host of unanswerable questions. And Mahapatra succeeds in communicating the inevitability of our need to keep on asking questions about the problematics of life in order to come at least somewhere near the possibility of finding the most probable answers. Thus, one hopes that the explorations may lead one to a meaningful self-revelation. However, the answers or truths one arrives at, often remain highly personal, because, the validity and relevance of any answer or truth depends solely on the investigator's preferences, his mental preparedness, and finally, on the nature of his probing into the mysteries of life. A questioning attitude as against an uncritical passive acceptance and complacency, is basic to all serious and genuine pursuits. Therefore, a sensitive poet like Mahapatra frequently uses the *question form* in his writings. Commenting on this, Pushpinder Syal observes:

*A clear evidence of Mahapatra's exploratory technique, the series of 'questions' in the structure of a poem mark the progress of poetic explorations of a theme. They convey the puzzlement, the sense of wonder, indecision, groping in the dark and all the dilemmas of a conscience struggling with itself and the intransigence of life. Often the whole sequence of a poem is interspersed with questions. Beginning with a question, the poem proceeds in a crisis-cross of interrogations while this conveys an intensity of mental activity, it also gives the feeling of moving in a circle, condemned to wondering in a maze, without the possibility of relief.*

*Questions in Mahapatra's poetry occur much more frequently and consistently than in other poets, and serve the purpose of recapitulating moments of stillness and introspection. It is in the form of these quizzical interrogations that the silence, absences, doubts and fears that abound in the poems, grow on the reader with quiet but urgent insistence.*<sup>12</sup>

While Mahapatra is no doubt concerned with the philosophical implications of such quests, he is equally attached to this world and not lost in reverie of metaphysical abstractions. Mahapatra anchors his quests firmly on the realities of this life. Even when he knows that the very nature of such probing will always remain inconclusive and unsatisfactory, a dialogue

with it in the hope of getting at least a glimpse of the truth. Therefore, Mahapatra explorations into the myth of origin do not lead him to the biblical parallel of Adam and Eve. Instead it is rooted in the non-Vedic derivative of Indian culture in the form of Tantrism with its supreme emphasis on *Prakriti* or the Female Principle. The union of *Prakriti* with *Purusha* or the Male Principle brings forth Cosmic creation in its entirety. It was believed by the *Tantrikas* (Practitioners of Tantrism) that cosmogony had a close parallel in human procreative principle. In the mystery of cosmogony because they believed that both the Universe and the human body are the expressions of the same principles and are composed of the same materials: *Panchabhutas* – *Bhoomiraponalonilonabhaha*, i.e., Five Elements = Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Space. Even the etymology of the word Tantra lays emphasis on the act of procreation so predominantly associated with Tantrism, the origin of which has been traced back to the agricultural magic and fertility cult. Since, Orissa being primarily an agrarian society, it is only natural that any cult connected with agriculture and fertility should triumph and Mahapatra utilizes the suggestive power of this cult to celebrate life-forces.

In *Relationship* Mahapatra holds the *Deha Tattva* in high esteem.

*This is the real body: raging pachyderm  
with the crazy testicles, red and wild,  
the lusty god of the blackest Siva night:  
thus it is that it can hardly contain ourselves(27).*

The Mukteswara temple (9th century AD), Parasurameshwara temple (7th century AD) and Vaitala temple (8th century AD) in Bhubaneswar clearly show the rudiments of tantric cult. In the *Jaganmohana* (porch) of the Mukteswara temple, Mahapatra says, one can see the *Sapta Matrikas* (seven incarnations of the Mother Goddess as Brahmi, Maheshwari, Aindri, Kaumari, Vaisnavi, Varahi and Chamunda) and the figure of *Virabhadra* (born of Shiva) carved elegantly in the eight petals of a lotus – *astadalapadma* (20). Here is an unmistakable clue that this temple was once the centre of Tantric rites because in Tantrism lotus is a symbolic representation of the Female Principle. Similarly, in the Parasurameswara temple one can observe the sculptures of emaciated ascetics, their ribs showing plainly, engaged in the worship of *Linga* (20). And the “*Vaitala temple dedicated to Chamunda, the fearful mother goddess. Here, about 1200 years ago, unimaginable Tantric rites were performed. An image of Siva in his most terrible form, sporting a garland of skulls, with a protruding tongue and hollowed belly, points to the influence of Tantrism on Saivism*”(21).

When Orissa is so full of the impact of Tantrism, it is natural for Mahapatra to be highly influenced by the Tantric motifs. Mahapatra says that our Tantric ancestors' quests should not be dismissed as a perverted system of rites, because their *ideas* certainly paved the way for the development of scientific spirit of inquiry into the nature of things, which is indeed the “*messianic gain of this new cult*”(15). Thus, Mahapatra's ordering of myths acknowledges our debts to the experiments of our ancestors that led to the development of the human society, perpetually encouraging and enriching man's intellectual pursuits in the domain of materialistic outlook of life.

The most curious and significant feature to be observed in Mahapatra's poetic world is his inability to maintain relationship either with his wife Runu Mahapatra, whom he loved and married against stiff opposition from his parents, which eventually led Mahapatra to leave the

house of his parents and set up his own home. Although, he confesses that *"I have a flirting relationship with some girls."*<sup>13</sup> But, after two decades of his marriage, when Mohan – his only son – left for studies, Mahapatra experienced a sudden void and he confesses that *"the house was empty... And Runu lived almost in herself, although we shared the same house"*(146). Hence Runu and Mahapatra were leading their own isolated lives, but despite the fact Mahapatra confesses that *"I still love my wife."*<sup>13</sup>

Although, Mahapatra's not-so-good relationship with his mother right from his childhood and Mahapatra never felt the warmth of maternal love and therefore the mother was always "A Missing Person." Mahapatra grew up almost as a lonely child in the house as his younger brother was born when Mahapatra was nearly four, and his sister first set her eyes on him nine years later. Mahapatra says,

*Perhaps my discontentment was in that there was no one in the house to talk to [ . . . ]. so often I longed for someone in whom I could confide, like a sister or a cousin of my age – but this didn't come about [ . . . ]. More than anything else, my reading took my mind away from the terrible discomfort I felt more and more in the house, as I tried to resist my mother's actions – those accusations of hers I knew were totally unjustified and merely impelled by her own ill-founded fears. I kept more and more to myself (138-140).*

Therefore, the image of his mother, physically ill, moving about in the listless darkness of the house was deeply ingrained in Mahapatra's mind which found expression, thirty years later in 1970, in the poem titled "A Missing Person". The poem is quoted in full.

*In the darkened room  
a woman  
cannot find her reflection in the mirror  
waiting as usual  
at the edge of sleep  
In her hands she holds  
the oil lamp  
whose drunken yellow flames  
know where her lonely body hides (7).*

This poem is rooted in Mahapatra's childhood, is one of those poems which transcend their real setting. Indian women are basically "missing persons", especially in the social settings of the rural Indian life, which moves at a snail's pace. She waits indefinitely to find her own reflection in the fulfilment of her womanhood beyond the conventional role of a wife and a mother. Mahapatra says,

*... what the woman is waiting for, she has been waiting for years, for aeons, for ages. So, it's both set in a moment and set in time... And my poems are not urban poems, they are not set in cities like Bombay or Delhi. The life people lead is a life which has remained unchanged through decades, through centuries. And so there is a sense of tolerance, a sense of endurance. You couldn't call it apathy, you couldn't call it indifference, but one waits with a smile for the next life. I guess the poem suggests that (22-23).*



Though Jayanta Mahapatra loved his father, his poetry depicts only an overpowering archetypal father figure and because of his basically shy nature, Mahapatra feels lonely wherever he goes and he finds it difficult to make friends. The effect of such experiences is perhaps responsible for the relational crises that we see in Mahapatra's poetry. Deserted by all, Mahapatra feels lost in the vast sea of unstable, sterile human relationships and shrinks with the thoughts of dying un-mourned by his own family and friends, feeling separated and repelled by all human contacts.

*I can't remember hearing anyone  
saying he will mourn for me when I am gone (39).*

Infact, the desolate ruins of Konarka sing a dirge on the loss of all human relationships in Mahapatra's poetic world. Hence, the only relationship that gets built up in the poem, volume after volume, is Mahapatra's relationship with his own self; and, in this sense, his poetry is a journey into the self.

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## International Journal of Academic Research and Development

### *Acceptance Letter*

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Dear  
**Rahul Mene,**

Manuscript titled “**Jayanta Mahapatra: The mouth-piece of India**” is very well written and has been accepted for publication.

Yours Sincerely,



**Nikhil Gupta**  
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