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## **JAYANTA MAHAPATRA'S WORK LIFE, POETIC AUGMENTATION AND INDIVIDUALISTIC THOUGHT PROCESS**

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### *Abstract*

Jayanta Mahapatra is a famous Indian English poet who writes in a variety of styles. He has readers in India as well as in other countries. In Mahapatra's poetry, the primacy of reader response is just as legitimate as the prominence of the text itself as a literary device. It becomes clear as one walks down the corridors of history that a healthy assimilation of cultures developed between the conquering and conquered countries over time, which made significant contributions to normalising ties between the two countries as well as the rise of a new literature between them. He is one of the most unique yet challenging poets to read. His literary writings are replete with fabricated imagery that set him apart from the majority of his contemporaries in terms of creativity. We need to have a glance into Mahapatra's personal background because his writings on poetry are heavily influenced by it. Jayanta Mahapatra is one of India's best-known English-language poets in Indian culture. Indian English Poetry would not be complete without including his poetry. We can say that Mahapatra's poetry, the primacy of reader response is just as legitimate as the prominence of the text itself as a literary device. We need to have a glance into Mahapatra's personal background because his writings on poetry are heavily influenced by it. Jayanta Mahapatra is widely recognised as one of the 'immortals of Indian literature' and a practitioner of what Bruce King refers to as 'elite art' of fugitive imagery in global poetry.

**Keywords:***Jayanta Mahapatra, Work, Poet, Thought, Process, Life, etc*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Jayanta Mahapatra is a famous Indian English poet who writes in a variety of styles. He has readers in India as well as in other countries. In Mahapatra's poetry, the primacy of reader response is just as legitimate as the prominence of the text itself as a literary device. It is not in the guise of a well-phrased witticism that his poetry communicates any message to its audience. Indeed, it causes the reader to look inwardly, to question oneself about life, its purpose, uncertainty, and so on, driving him to make an individual revelation of his or her own. His poetry's greatest strength is its ability to evoke strong emotions. In his poetry, there is an intrinsic knowledge of his deep roots in the cultural and socio-geographical ethos of his original rural region of Orissa, which gives his poetry its power and realism. His native town of Orissa serves as a lens through which he views both his nation and the whole planet. His search for roots, as well as the link between the self and the rest of the world, has been the primary themes of his poetry. It is he who describes his landscape with great accuracy and aesthetic flair. In his poetry, the most distinguishing features are the temples of Orissa as well as the beliefs, rituals, and ceremonies of priest, lepers, beggars, mongrels, and the countryside.

## 2. THE INDIVIDUALISTIC THOUGHT PROCESS OF JAYANTA MAHAPATRA

It becomes clear as one walks down the corridors of history that a healthy assimilation of cultures developed between the conquering and conquered countries over time, which made significant contributions to normalising ties between the two countries as well as the rise of a new literature between them. The same may be said for India and Britain, which we now label as Indian writing in English, as well as other countries. "The word 'Indo-Anglian' refers to literature written by Indians in English and is used to describe this type of literature. This phrase was coined by J H Cousins in 1883 to refer to the publication Specimen Compositions from Native Students, which was a collection of essays written by Indian students in English and published in Calcutta. It was the first time the phrase was used. With the title of his first book on the subject, Indo-Anglian Literature, Professor K R Srinivas Iyengar provided the phrase currency and credibility for the first time (1943). Since then, the phrase has gained



popularity in literary conversations and literature. However, there are some critics who prefer to refer to it as 'Indian Writing in English,' 'Indo-English Literature,' or 'Indian English Literature,' rather than just 'Indian Writing'. A small number of people have formed a positive aversion to the name "Indo-Anglian." The phrase 'Indo-Anglian' appears to be more exact and beneficial than other terms since it not only accurately characterizes the topic, but it can also be employed as an adjective and as a substantive in the same sentence. In any case, it appears to be here to stay.

V K Gokak identifies five kinds of English writing by Indians and argues that the title "Indo-Anglian" should be reserved for literature written by Indian writers in English that was initially published in the language. He refers to English translations of Indian languages as 'Indo-English,' and he considers Tagore's 'Gitanjali' to be an example of Indo-English. By remarking that Indo-Anglian writing is 'immediate and spontaneous,' but Indo-English literature is just translations and hence not original, V K Gokak attempts to draw a complex contrast between Indo-Anglian writing and Indo-English writing. The Indo-Anglian writer employs English for the purpose of 'self-expression,' whereas the Indo-English writer employs English for the purpose of 'communication.' It was only after the English had departed India that Indo-Anglian literature gained widespread acclaim and accelerated in its growth. Nowadays, even the most cynical among us have come to see that Indo-Anglian literature is a separate body of work that represents the Indian ethos and is expanding in a variety of innovative ways. Ironically, it was English critics such as Edmund Gosse, Arthur Symons, Lawrence Binyon, and later poet Yeats who were the first to praise Indo-English literature, and poetry in particular, in the early twentieth century. Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu discovered themselves as poets as a result of the kind encouragement of Edmund Gosse, while Lawrence Binyon was one of the first to recognise the brilliance of Michael Madhusudan Dutt.

A new rising had been taking place, albeit in an undetectable manner, among the Bengali elite, among other groups. The introduction of English instruction in the final quarter of the 18th century marked the beginning of this reawakening movement. Private English-language



schools had already been established in Cuddalore (1717), Bombay (1718), and Calcutta (1720) by the time the British arrived (1720). With the advent of English education in various sections of the nation, a new consciousness was growing among the elite, which eventually led to some English-educated Indians using English as a medium of expression to communicate their beliefs. The majority of the new generation of writers went to the schooled upper classes, and they chose to write in English because it was their first language. For the first time in 1792, Charles Grant, a progressive government official of the East India Company, proposed a plan to build a number of English schools for the Indians. Later, the British parliament instructed the East India Company to fund the establishment of such new institutions. Raja Rammohun Roy advocated for the implementation of a system of education that included arithmetic, natural philosophy, physics, and anatomy, as well as other important disciplines, in a series of petitions addressed to Lord Amherst. To the Governor General, Lord William Bentinck, in 1835, Macaulay delivered his 'Minute' on education, advocating that the locals should be given English instruction in order to develop them into excellent "English Scholars". In 1854, Sir Charles Wood's 'Despatch' resulted in a review of the existing system by the British Government, which led to the establishment of a controlled and organised system of English education. The first four Indian universities were established in 1857. The year was 1857. Indo-Anglian literature was born during this exhilarating moment of awakening, which produced the majority of its pioneers. An introduction to English literature and western science, as well as an education in English, proved to be a renewing encounter for the newly rising elite. This ecstasy resulted in the creation of Indo-Anglian literature. The Account of the Jains (1808), written by Cavelly Venkata Boriah, was the first piece of Indian writing to be written in English. It was a translation of several accounts about the history of the Jains that the author had received from Jain priests and was the first work of Indian writing to be published in English. Raja Rammohun Roy's A Defence of Hinduism was the first unique piece of writing to be released, and it was released in 1817.



### **3. POETIC AUGMENTATION OF JAYANTA MAHAPATRA**

Jayanta Mahapatra was birthed on the 22nd of October 1928 in the city of Cuttack, in the Indian state of Orissa. Mr. Naidu is considered one of the most important and brilliant Indian poets writing in English in the post-Independence period. He has remained silent while India's cultural treasure has been stolen from under his feet. He is considered to be one of the most important poets in Indian English poetry, having "a genuine voice" among his contemporaries. Mahapatra was originally trained as a physics teacher before pursuing a career in poetry. With this non-literary background, he has developed a certain "creative indirectness" of approach and established himself as a poet on par with eminent poets such as Keki N Daruwalla, Gieve Patel, Pritish Nandy, R Parthasarathy, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, and Kamala Das, all of whom are not associated with the field of English Literature teaching. He has also published poetry collections. Jayanta Mahapatra, according to Niranjan Mohanty, is "one of the most unique yet challenging poets" to read. Bijay Kumar Das supports this point of view, stating that "unlike Ezekiel and Ramanujan, Mahapatra's poetry is difficult to understand because of the intricacy, complexity, and allusiveness in his poetry." His literary writings are replete with fabricated imagery that set him apart from the majority of his contemporaries in terms of creativity. We need to have a glance into Mahapatra's personal background because his writings on poetry are heavily influenced by it. Not only do autobiographical details serve as a window into the poet's psyche, but they also provide a glimpse into Mahapatra's distinctive lyrical style. Lemuel Mahapatra, Jayanta Mahapatra's father, worked as a sub-inspector at a primary school. Jayanta Mahapatra grew up in a Christian home from a lower middle-class background. During the severe famine that ravaged Orissa in 1866, his grandpa, Chintamani Mahapatra, was one of the few people who survived.

When he staggered into a Christian missionary mercy camp in Cuttack, where he was "hungry and on the point of collapsing," he "renounced the faith of his birth in favour of a new religion pushed by the Baptists."



It was in this area that Chintamani Mahapatra met Rupabati, a young girl from another village in Orissa who belongs to a particular background than herself. The two of them later got married, and Jayanta's father, Lemuel, was the youngest of their sons. When Mahapatra was a child, he felt the attraction of two different religions. "As youngsters, we grew up in the between of two worlds," Jayanta explains. In the first, we were exposed to a strict Christian upbringing, with restrictions that my mother forcefully enforced. In the second, we were surrounded by a big and dominating Hindu amphitheatre outdoors, where we were surrounded by rites and festivals that reflected our own culture. After then, there were two universes, and I, thinking I was at the centre of it all, tried to connect with both, and possibly become uncommunicable as a result over the years."

#### **4. EMERGENCE OF JAYANTA MAHAPATRA AS A POET**

A poet is a poet because of his or her invention or because of his or her talent to communicate his or her feelings about life. His art is born out of a desire to share and interact with others. Without the ability to communicate with others, it makes absolutely no sense for someone to write poetry or create other works of artistic expression. And he has to engage with others in order to progress. Additionally to general (and social) communication, a more personal "you-me" level of engagement should actually occur in terms of general (and social) communication.

For one thing, such engagement aids in our development since it allows us to better understand ourselves and, as a result, to better understand others, which is absolutely essential. As a result, it is true that all work will be incomplete and pointless if it does not communicate. It may not say or mean the same thing to everyone, but understanding is made possible by the passage of an idea, which is referred to as intellectual; or our understanding becomes emotional in nature when an attitude is felt and accepted; or our understanding becomes physical by empathy, which refers to the quickening of the pulse when, for example, one observes a performing circus performer or other similarly dangerous shows. It is possible to communicate artistically in one of these methods, or in a mix of these approaches. Poetry, in particular, appears to



stretch out softly in the marrow and initiate a movement of winds in the blood, finally assisting in the creation of a resonant resonance in the reader or listener.

It is impossible to convey one's sentiments and experiences until one first learns to know oneself and understands oneself. Once a person has begun to recognise that he or she is a part of their own experiences, only then can they begin to understand what propels them forward or backward in the complex process of life, only then can they begin to comprehend what propels them forward or backward as he or she reacts to various situations that bring him joy, pain, or rage. The process of reaching into one's own self, the self that one believes he is familiar with, the self that one believes he knows, requires time and effort. Even the self he knows may be composed of several selves - distinct selves that are certain to exist as a result of the various experiences one will have faced over the course of one's life. Jayanta Mahapatra is a major poet in the Indian English Poetry scene, and he is known for having "a genuine voice" among his peers. Because of his non-literary background, he has developed a "creative indirectness" of approach that has allowed him to establish himself as a poet on par with eminent poets such as Keki N Daruwala, Gieve Patel, Pritish Nandy, R Parthasarthy, Arun Kolatkar, Dilip Chitre, and Kamala Das, all of whom are not associated with the field of English Literature education. The poet Jayanta Mahapatra, according to Niranjan Mohanty, is "one of the most unique yet tough writers." Bijay Kumar Das supports this point of view, stating that "unlike Ezekiel and Ramanujan, Mahapatra's poetry is difficult to understand because of the intricacy, complexity, and allusiveness in his poetry." His literary writings are replete with fabricated imagery that set him apart from the majority of his contemporaries in terms of creativity.

## 5. THE LIFE AND WORKS OF JAYANTA MAHAPATRA

Jayanta Mahapatra is one of India's best-known English-language poets in Indian culture. Indian English Poetry would not be complete without including his poetry. Jayanta Mahapatra, a physicist, multilingual poet, and essayist, is the first Indian English poet to get the Sahitya Akademi Award for Relationship (1981). In recognition of his significant contributions to literature, the Indian government bestowed upon him the "Padmashree Award" in 2009.



Jayanta Mahapatra is widely recognised as one of the 'immortals of Indian literature' and a practitioner of what Bruce King refers to as 'elite art' of fugitive imagery in global poetry. According to K Satchidanandan, Mahapatra's poetry "sets him out as a tragic rebel" because of "his sympathy for the dispossessed rustic that is unique among the urbanised Indian poets working in English." "A native Neruda" is how he refers to himself in connection to Indian English poetry, which is characterized by dream-layered experiences of mythological forms of memory and an elegiac engagement with language, geography and history of the virtuous waters of the secret springs of the Mahanadi River. It is Durga Prasad Panda, a multilingual poet and critic, who has published Jayanta Mahapatra: A Reader: the most persuasive work on the multiple heteronyms of Mahapatra's life and poetry. Poetically devouring Mahapatra's works, Panda has painstakingly gathered his words and imagery, including uncollected poetry, critical essays, talks and correspondences. A collection of six personal essays, Looking Into the Mirror, begins with Mahapatra's ancestral lineaments of personal identity and visceral family emotions, including a moth-eaten memory of his grandfather's conversion to Christianity, troubled relationship with his mother, warm bonding with his doting father, and the joys of being the first Indian poet to win the Sahitya Akademi award for English poetry in 1981.

#### • Birth and Early Life

Born in Cuttack, India, Jayanta Mahapatra is a member of a middle-class family. Stewart School in Cuttack was where he received his early schooling. Since graduating from the University of Orissa with a first-class Master's degree in Physics in 1949, he has worked as a college professor. He was educated at Stewart School in the city of Cuttack, Odisha, the son of a famous Odia Christian family. Patna University in Bihar, India, awarded him an M.Sc. in Physics. In 1949, he was hired as a lecturer in Physics at the University of Toronto. Teaching Physics in different government colleges in Odisha, including Gangadhar Meher College, Sambalpur; B.J.B. College, Bhubaneswar; Fakir Mohan College, Balasore; and Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, were among his professional endeavours during his working life.- In 1986, he stepped down from his position as a government employee as a Reader in Physics at Ravenshaw College, Cuttack (now Ravenshaw University). He just began writing seriously in



the late 1960s. Several publishers first turned down his short tales and poetry. As a result, his poetry was included in a number of prestigious literary periodicals, including The New Yorker, Critical Inquiry and the Sewanee Review, to name just a few. In addition, he had his work published in several Indian poetry publications. Many literary honours were bestowed upon him for his written works of poetry. Iowa's Foreign Writing Program (IWP) chose twenty-two international poets to participate in the programme. As a result, he was able to go outside of India and gain exposure to a wider audience.

- **Literary Works**

Odia and English are the two languages used for Mahapatra's 27 volumes of poetry. Relationship, Bare Face, and Shadow Space are three of his poetry collections. Furthermore, he has worked with a wide range of literary formats, including poetry and short stories. The collection Green Gardener and the memoir Door of Paper: Essay and Memoirs are two examples of his written prose. The literary journal Chandrabhaga from Cuttack has been published by Mahapatra for many years, and he is a well-known editor. An important river in Odisha, the Chandrabhaga River, inspired the magazine's name. Poetry compilations like The Dance of the Peacock: An Anthology of English Poetry from India, published by Hidden Brook Press, Canada has included his work. He just started composing poems in his thirties. First came Svayamvara and Other Poems, and then close the Sky Ten by ten, which was published in 1972. In 1981, Mahapatra became the first Indian English poet to receive the Sahitya Akademi prize for his epic poem Relationship. He has also translated from Odia into English while he was writing his original poetry in English and Odia simultaneously. He's worked with both established and emerging poets from Odisha, Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh. The Central Sahitya Akademi of India's bi-monthly literary journal, Indian Literature, publishes some of his translations, while his own magazine, Chandrabhaga, publishes others. His translations have been published in a number of anthologies in India by various publishers.



## 6. CONCLUSION

We can say that Mahapatra's poetry, the primacy of reader response is just as legitimate as the prominence of the text itself as a literary device. We need to have a glance into Mahapatra's personal background because his writings on poetry are heavily influenced by it. Not only do autobiographical details serve as a window into the poet's psyche, but they also provide a glimpse into Mahapatra's distinctive lyrical style. Lemuel Mahapatra, Jayanta Mahapatra's father, worked as a sub-inspector at a primary school. Jayanta Mahapatra grew up in a Christian home from a lower middle-class background. While Mahapatra's poetic style is dictated by a keen understanding of the cultural and socio-political ethos of his own country, his vision transcends all national bounds to acquire an international importance. Jayanta Mahapatra, a physicist, multilingual poet, and essayist, is the first Indian English poet to get the Sahitya Akademi Award for Relationship (1981). Jayanta Mahapatra is widely recognised as one of the 'immortals of Indian literature' and a practitioner of what Bruce King refers to as 'elite art' of fugitive imagery in global poetry.

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