

Book Review

Jayanta Mahapatra: Joy of Living and Loving in his Poetry. Ed. Jaydeep Sarangi, Jaipur: Aaviskar Publishers, 2012. Pp-162, Rs-600, ISBN-987-81-7910-374-6.

Book Review: **Sibasis Jana**, Panskura Banamali College. Panskura, Purba Medinipur (WB). sibasis.om@gmail.com

The recent book “Jayanta Mahapatra: Joy of living and Loving in his Poetry” edited by Dr. Jaydeep Sarangi, a poet academic and the author of a number of significant publications (including twenty five Books) on varied areas is an attempt to critically analyse and evaluate varied themes and facets of Jayanta Mahapatra's works. Jayanta Mahapatra is the poet who achieves remarkable success in every atom of his lifetrons by his sheer power of joy of living and perceiving joy in 'ars poetica'. The silent bound pilgrim achieves self realization in writing sublime elevated thoughts. Aesthetic tradition and love for joys and sorrows add beauty to his poetry gallery. In the opening article the editor focuses how the poet was face to face with the critic and the interview was very informative and suggestive. He expresses his mess life during reading in Patna Science College and other resources for his writing materials. The second article concerning a study of Edmund Burke's theory in “The Sublime and the Beautiful” and Romanticism in Jayanta Mahapatra's poetry is very much appealing and striking. Burke is accredited with making the philosophical distinction between the “sublime” in art and the “beautiful” in art. Burke traces the origin of the sublime to the intrinsic, instinctual habit of humans to care about self preservation. And Mahapatra's poetry is replete with pain and sublimity ties to the emotions of pain, death, and illness, fear of danger with surging images, allusions and mythic layers. The next article is an attempt to reveal the bad heart of the poet. Writing poetry is a passing phase, a thrilling experience. Poetry makes him write poems with a bad heart. He does not know what that exactly means, but it is the heart that makes one turn secretly into Someone--- a leader or loser perhaps- passing one to choose values, attitudes, and to do the not so—obvious; this heart, as it keeps on trying to hide the wounded walls of its house and at the same time asking itself for a meaning to lives.” His bad heart is didactic and sympathetic. The sweeper boys, the Cycle mechanics, the rickshaw pullers all are highlighted with superb power of empathetic poetica. The very striking poem dedicated to Mahapatra entitled “This is no place for you to be buried in” is the way of his heavenly bliss. Fourth article entitled Fractured Bonds is the key to success of life's forum and fumes of his poetry. He naturalises alienation in the sense of estrangement from society or the self, identified in philosophy, the social sciences, and literature as a central feature of modern life. Alienation comes in the

chains of powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, cultural estrangement, social isolation and self-estrangement. Silence becomes their theory; loneliness and isolation become part and parcel to ponder over hostile matters towards others. Being alienated from physics world, he joined in the venture study of muse poetry and imagination. Corruption in the society and crisis of identify alienated to be votary of silence and loneliness. The poet blossoms the vases with poetry from the ashes, remnants, graveyard, hunger, alienation, loneliness and isolation. From murderer to murdered, from master to silent slave, solitude to alienate his identity transmutes the easel of his poetry. So from night to night, the empty window in his lonely wall is the material to flourish his ensigns and animations. Though alienated his dreams remain undaunted.

In the fifth article we are feasted with the Oriya Mystic and Mythic tradition in Maqhapatra's Relationship and other poems. Mysticism is the art and science of living perfectly and it is the self knowledge that subsumes knowledge of the world. In his poetry myth, legend, and history have been associated to expose our guilt of forgetting the past glory. Legends, mystery, myth, culture, historical background form the nucleus of his poetry. Pomes like "Dawn at Puri", "Main Temple Street, Puri", "Indian summer poem", "Evening in an Orissa village", "The Orissa poems", "The Indian poem", "The Indian way" reveal his Indian sensibility and his quest for root. The sixth article is Kaleidoscopic view of Mahapatra's poetry: from 'Close the sky' to 'Shadow Space'. His "Close the sky", "Ten by Ten" (1971) consisting of forty nine short lyrics opine loneliness, love, silence. In "Svayamvara and other poems" (1979) he shows his frequency and facilities of English language and also his shortcomings in vernacular language. In "Shadow Space" (1977) he gives the ideas of helplessness, skepticism, super consciousness, nostalgia, present reality, violence, etc. He expresses helplessness at changing the world and his portrayal of the contemporary Indian life through recurrent references to the temple cities of India brings Iranian issues closer to the heart of the reader and evokes his response. The next article Nation and the narration the critics highlighted his poetic essence and his national narration. Here the moon blanched sand invites the thought of human passion of melancholy strain with the incoming waves. The amorousness of nature gives the vital spirit to have renewed impulsive tunes. The hilly paths, the seashore, the religious shrines, the glorious cosmology mingle today's realistic thoughts with psychic journey. Various sights and sounds come into the vision, touch the thematic pattern, turns the audio-visual mindscape to scroll over the blank sheet of paper and give birth to a written document. So poetry come into existent first and it is the product of momentum temporal setting caught in the net of consciousness. And this is true to Jayanta Mahapatra, the most innovative, problematic and Anglophone poets of today's India. He is poet of 'Time and moment', 'of hunger', 'of

earth' and 'of homesickness'. The stark realities of India touch his heart and he writes about – hunger, myths, rituals, sexuality, love, anger, loneliness, the self and eternity, quest for root mingling with geographical, social, cultural sources. What New England is to Frost, Dublin is to Joyce, Wessex is to Hardy, Waverly is to Scott, Lake District is to Wordsworth, Orissa is to Mahapatra. His identity bears the stamp of Orissa. Orissa is his solemnized dreamland where river Mahanadi lulls and adores his muse. The Eighth article affirms an Ecocritical study of “Random Descent”. Randomness of events in the human and the non-human domains is natural and alludes rational explanation. His poetry is implicated in the truth of chaos and the mystery of nature. Mahapatra comes to believe in the chain of ecocriticism that nature is not reducible to a concept which we conceive as part of our cultural practice. Next article is in a frame of many references and the realistic vision of his poetry. Mahapatra standing on the vast Orissa world of scenic paradigm switches from primary imagination to secondary imagination. Konarak, Bhubaneswar, Chilka, Cuttack add the beauty to it. Legends, mystery, myth, culture, historical background, form the nucleus of his poetry. Pomes like “ Dawn at Puri”, and “Main Temple Street, Puri”, “Indian summer poem”, “ Evening in an Orissa village”, “The Orissa poems”, “The Indian poem”, “The Indian way” reveal his Indian sensibility and his quest for root. In “Relationship” he again touches myths, culture, and tradition of Orissa. He shows his relation with Orissa faith, hope, dreams, and memories. “Life Signs” deals with hunger and famine--- the causes of man's moral disorder. Words are his world, his people are like God. The last article is the study of Melancholy Strain in Mahapatra's poetry. The melancholy mood is due to his personal unhappiness and miseries of the outside world. So the poet blooms the vases with poetry from the ashes, remnants, graveyard, hunger, alienation, loneliness and isolation. From murderer to murdered, from master to silent slave, solitude to alienate his identity transmutes the easel of his poetry. So from night to night, the empty window in his lonely well is the material to flourish his ensigns and animations. He invites and embraces ray of hope in ashes of pains, melancholy and misery as he wants the graveyard to flower without its corpses, and the sunlit street to shine without its shadows and he wants the government to hover like a butterfly over a garden.

