

## **Reverberation Of Women Sexuality In Jayanta Mahapatra's Poems: 'Hunger' And 'The Whorehouse In A Calcutta Street'.**

**Ms. Anu Filda Varghese**  
Assistant Professor on Contract  
Department of English  
Carmel College, Mala

### **Abstract**

This chapter writing is an attempt to represent the socio-cultural elements represented in the major poems of Jayanta Mahapatra . the way in which he portrayed the real life if Indian's makes him distinct. He captured each and every drop of life situations and portrayed everything to the heart of the readers through his poems especially 'Hunger' and 'The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street'. Mahapatra through his writings made an original contribution to Indian English Poetry, within a short span of time. The cultural elements that he build mainly focused upon his visionary world are characterized by pain and suffering, hope, poverty etc. his vision transcends all habitual frontier to regain a global significance.

**Keywords:** Hunger, Indianness, Poverty, Reality, Treatment of women.

### **Introduction:**

Jayanta Mahapatra was born in Orissa in 1928. He started his career as a lecturer in physics and later he wrote poems in English. His first volume of poems entitled 'Close the Sky, Ten by Ten' was published in 1971. His poetry moved into the spotlight all over the world. Indian poetry is known by various forms such as Anglo-Indian, Indo-English poetry etc. through his writings of Mahapatra, he vividly describes the real situations of the Indian folk. The pathetic conditions of women and how they are treated in the society, each and every droplet he has highlighted in the poems. He is the first Indian-English poet to get the Sahitya Academy award. He is the man who belongs to the group of experimentalists in Indian English poetry. He questions the existence of the self, Indian culture, spirituality etc. he has taken his own life experiences as the main themes for his writings. He has played a crucial and innovative role in popularizing post-independence Indian English Poetry. For that, he has chosen English language as a medium of writing. He is a man who casts light on the status of women in Orissa and expresses the predicament of those 'unstated things' in his poems. The poem

‘Hunger’ and ‘The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street’ are universally acclaimed poems. The double meaning of the title itself shows the pathetic and downtrodden situation of the Indian folk. The hunger due to poverty and hunger for sexual gratification is described in such a way that it catches the heart of the readers.

Women were denied in the society in the ancient times. Women were shrunk to the duties of a house maid who looks after her kin and kith. Mahapatra, the famous Indian writer made an attempt to empower the women folk of Orissa through his writings. ‘Hunger’ is a typical example for this. Prostitution is legal in India. But child sex racket, pimping etc. are prohibited in India. Mahapatra tried to focus on female sex in the poems in an alternative angle. Hunger depicts the distress over poetry and discrimination of women. The whore house in Calcutta Street portrays the condition of an alienated individual in the modern world. In this poem, the women are pictured as a tool. The job that is doing is mechanical. They are treated as a mechanical tool by the society. One after the other, they are undergoing a pathetic situation. The poem focusses on the hunger and poverty of the Indian people on a clear mirror.

Portrayal of women in ‘Hunger’ and ‘The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street’.

In most of his poems, he took women imagery as the main theme. He mainly focused on the whores, who did it as a business rather than emotional. ‘In the whorehouse in Calcutta street’, Mahapatra deployed such a condition of women in the poetry. The poem says about the man enters the whorehouse and ends with the woman asking him to leave when she is on a hurry to receive new customers. The lady doesn’t need any love or sympathy from anyone. Her business is for monetary benefit. The man actually decided to talk to her.

The beginning lines of the poem itself describes the desire for sexual gratification.

“ It was hard to believe the flesh was heavy on my back  
The fisherman said: will you have her, carelessly,  
Traiting his nets and his nerves, as though his words  
Sanctified the purpose with which he faced himself,  
I saw his white bone thrash his eyes.”

“The sky fell on me, and a father’s exhausted wile.

Long and lean: her years were cold as rubber.  
She opened her wormy legs wide; I felt the hunger there,  
The other one, the fish slithering turning inside”.

(Hunger)

Mahapatra powerfully portrayed the destitute poverty and hunger which is the another reality of Indian life; in his another poem named ‘Hunger’. The daughter of a fisherman is forced to do sex work in order to get money. The title he implemented in the poem is deliberate. ‘Hunger’ due to lack of food and hunger for sexual gratification of the customer. In way or other society plays a vital role in the pathetic conditions of the poor people. The situation forces people to do such things. The familial binding or bonding has lost among the members. The poem shows us an example where a father himself is forcing his daughter to do such a thing. The poet explains the hunger as double meanings in the poem. The long lean wormy legs shows hunger due to poverty. ‘I felt the hunger there’ shows the satisfaction of the customer. But the pathetic scene made him forget his carnal desire. The poet describes each and everything in reality. Mahapatra is a realist who presents everything in a heart-touching way.

The speaker experienced an urgent desire for sexual gratification. The demand of the flesh was too strong for him to control. From these lines the readers are getting a clear notion about the title. The writer has deployed a sort of psychological interest. The speaker, father and girl- three characters’ mind as well as their situation is clear. Speaker is tormented with an urgent desire for sex but later he feels guilty. When the fisherman says to ‘feel’ his daughter, the speaker felt like sky had fallen on him. At last when the girl opened her ‘lean wormy’ legs apart it is servile poverty that has driven the father and daughter to this pathetic condition.

In ‘The Whorehouse in a Calcutta Street’ the beginning lines,

“Walk right in It is yours.

Where the house smiles wryly into the lighted street.

Think of the women

You wished to know and haven’t”.

The reader gets a clear notion about the whorehouse prostitutes are regarded as sub-humans. The theme of indiscrimination of female sex is his poems. The contemporary reality is the great concern for him. The decline of human values in the present scenario is well depicted in his poems. Multiple images of women are presented. In poem the customer feels shame and guilty. The women there lies only

gives pleasure. But he wishes to talk to her for a long time. Love doesn't mean any values to them. Only the burning passion is involved. Women are marginalized everywhere. She is regarded as a 'commodity'. She is looked as 'flesh' only. A woman is married and there onwards she is entangled in the strings of emotional deeds. She loses her freedom there -after. Mahapatra dealt with the agonies and pains that the prostitutes suffer. They are also a part of the so called "cultural society".

**Conclusion:**

Jayanta Mahapatra deals with the theme of sex, hunger, human feelings and the real portrayal of life situations at Orissa. 'Hunger' is one kind of dramatic monologue which is based on the story of a fisherman. He has deployed suggestive imagery with sole intention of exploring the realities of Indian life. His poems are the expression of a catastrophic analysis of the society of his time which tolerate from the psychic blow. He is a poet of vision. He precisely deploys the images of women who are living their decayed life forgetting their great cultural bequest and ethical values. His poetry leads everyone to the bitterness of life rather than the colourfulness.

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