

## Editorial

Jayanta Mahapatra, one of the doyens of contemporary Indian English Poetry descended from world's stage at the age of 95, leaving behind a legacy of poetry that has contemporary as well as universal values for all lovers of English poetry in India and abroad. The meaning of being Jayanta Mahapatra lies not only in his idiom of speech but also in his social commitments. Some of his poems like "Hunger", "Indian Summer", "The Grandfather's House" and "A Rain of Rites" have, by now, achieved a canonical status. Critics like Krishna Rayan, Vasant Shahane, Madhusudan Prasad and B K Das have explored his poetry intensively and found him at par with Nissim Ezekiel, Arun Kolatkar, A K Ramanujam and R Parthasarathy in craft and social vision. A scholar of English literature feels amazed the way he, a Prof of Physics, chooses his images and symbols and expresses his social concerns in an original linguistic medium, he is local with universal concerns. His poems take us a sojourn to the places, temples and rivers of his home land Orissa, but the poems transcend topicality and elevates him to the status of a poet of universal consciousness. To read him merely as a poet of Orissa will be an injustice to him. His poetry extols the love for the lands, rivers and temples which are the epitomes of our culture and traditions but he has a sharp eye on the vices which surround them, he is out and out for change with immense pity and compassion for the human sufferings in our vicinity.

The present issue of *Dialogue* is a tribute to the memory of Jayanta Mahapatra. Thirteen authors have contributed nine research papers on various aspects of his poetry which open new vistas of understanding for the poetry of Mahapatra. Prof Alok Kumar passionately opines that we don't go to Mahapatra for topicality and contemporaneity but for the residual wisdom enshrined in his poetry. For him, Mahapatra may sound strange but it is the (forbidding) opaqueness of his poems that endears him to his readers. Dr Suresh Pande explores how through imagery and symbolism, Mahapatra has unravelled his thematic concerns of spiritual significance in his celebrated poetry collection like *A Rain of Rites*. Aisha Haleem and Mahima Gupta critically read Vijay Kant Dubey's poems on Jayanta Mahapatra and interestingly finds that Dubey's poems imbibe Mahapatra's poetic sensibility and simplicity. And Dubey's poems are conscious attempt of Mahapatra's appreciation in poetic form. Prof Jyoti Kala and Santosh Kumar in their paper read Mahapatra's *Relationship* to explore the subjective memory of Mahapatra and explicate how the varied facets of human life are reflected through his social introspection in his poetry. Dr Sonali Das's paper explores the concept of 'Homeland' in various poems of Mahapatra, and underlines his varied themes and Indian sensibility, it is the celebration of legends, myths and history associated with places like Puri, Konark, Cuttack and Bhubaneswar in poetry, found nowhere in any other Indian English poet. Dr Andleeb Zahra probes how Mahapatra's poetry transcends geographical boundaries and delves deep into cultural diversities of India, making him a poet of cultural assimilation. Dr Milind and Dr Neetu Sharma postulate in their paper on the 'whore image' in the poems of Mahapatra and highlight his serious concern for the plight of prostitutes, one of the marginalized sections of the society. Manu Joshi and Prof Sharmila read Mahapatra's various poems and emphasize his ironic vision and ethos of his Orissa landscapes and places. Ajeet Gupta in his paper explores the social realism in the poetry of Mahapatra.

The Book Review by Dr Chandrima Sen brings to the fore the literary value of Pradip K Patra's book on different facets of the poetry of Prof Susheel K Sharma and Mr Hemant Sharma's review of Sapna Dogra's book on Indian Graphic Narratives opens new discourses on the genre.

Hope the issue will add to a better understanding of the poetry of Mahapatra and promote new perspectives to the research of Mahapatra's *oeuvre*.

Happy readings...

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