**Introductory**

For a comprehensive evaluation of the artistic achievement of any poet, what we need most is the poet's locale and how it, like a potter's wheel, gives a shape to the thematic and stylistic concerns of his literary output. So I first intend to undertake a detailed survey of Mahapatra's locale and how it leaves an impact in the making of his poetry. This will be the first chapter of my work – *The Poet and His Locale*. In this chapter I will discuss in detail how Mahapatra's Indian sensibility finds best expression in his poems on and about Orissa—his birthplace and the soil to which he is rooted.

The journey of Jayanta Mahapatra through a feeling of anxiety has a very important bearing upon both the content and the form of his poetry. The second chapter, *Theme and Technique*, will deal with the intricacies of present-day existence and its impact on the matter and manner of Mahapatra's poetic output. Consequently my endeavour will be to locate the inner self of the poet which will emanate from the wide range of his poetical works.

A close reading of the works of Jayanta Mahapatra will further bring out the elementary feeling of love, though with a difference. This difference forms the crux of the third chapter, *Theme of Love with a Difference*. In a world torn by gross physicality, love is losing its subtlety and getting likened to sex. But Mahapatra's concept of love and its treatment stand in a stark contrast. His poetic world has, at the backdrop, the rich tradition and culture of the country juxtaposed to its present scenario. Hence love in Mahapatra's poetry reflects the value, sacrifice, plight and faith which go into the making of relationships and how it is gradually getting eroded in the hands of a selfish and greedy world. My endeavour will be to analyse the innovative manner of handling the theme by Mahapatra where even amidst the exploitations of women in a male-dominated society,
the poet tries to dispel the darkness with the lamp of love which is for him a psychic experience ignited by the ethos of the soil raising the spirit of life and thought to an elevated level.

The fourth chapter, **His Social Concern**, deals with Mahapatra’s unerring response to the society around him. Positing the role of a distanced spectator, Mahapatra’s poetry appears as a truthful depiction of the crisis in civilization—the degeneration of the traditional values of the society to the gruesome picture of the martyrs’ unrealised dreams. My purpose here will be to investigate Mahapatra’s singularity as a poet as to whether his poetry is able to accommodate the diverse experiences of today to recreate the past in the present.

The fifth chapter, **Imagery and Symbols**, will investigate the rich interweaving of images and symbols in Mahapatra’s poetry. The dominating feature of Mahapatra’s poetry is its constant oscillation between the known and the unknown, the conscious and the unconscious, the understandable and the ununderstandable. My objective will be to examine the fusion of the landscape and the mindscape, the real and the surreal in the images and symbols and unravel the correlation of the poet’s inner self with matters of the past and present. These images and symbols will enable us to penetrate into the throbs of Indian society.

The sixth chapter, **Philosophy and Psychology**, will embark on a study of the silent and dark recesses of the soul and its interaction with the consciousness of the outer world. My aim will be, as Indian saints and seers do, to break into the essential solitariness working deep within the poetic psyche and locate how a desperate quest for self awareness colours Mahapatra’s philosophical and psychological outlook in his poetry. Such a poetic world, which displays, in the words of the poet himself, ‘a constantly changing alignment between dream and reality’ (Mahapatra 44), has an easy
access into the objective and subjective domain which time and again merge into the core of poetic experience. A detailed study of Mahapatra’s philosophical and psychological poems will be taken up with the purpose of substantiating the mystic in the poetic persona, whose poetry is distinctly capable of dissolving the inner and the outer vision—the vision of a seer’s spirituality and a realist’s anxiety.

The concluding chapter, Mahapatra’s Poetry: “Monuments of unageing intellect” contains the summing up of the findings of my critical evaluation of Jayanta Mahapatra’s poetry. In fact, Mahapatra’s poetry is meant to stand the ravages of time. It is because the perennial value of Indian life and ethos stands on a rock of faith and Mahapatra has trodden this path of acceptance rejecting the path of desire.

This dissertation aims at discovering Mahapatra’s perception and sensibility from the viewpoint of Indian life which is permeated with such poetry that does not die and in such life, individual melts into the collective, the past into the present, the regional into the universal.
Works Cited