

# **Chapter Five**

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In my dissertation, I have tried to compare the thematic elements in A.K. Ramanujan's Relations and Jayanta Mahapatra's Relationship. The major thematic concern of both these poets seems to be, as the titles of the works under discussion suggest, 'relations' or 'relationship'.

Chapter One introduces briefly Ramanujan's and Mahapatra's lives and works. Chapter Two discusses and interprets A.K. Ramanujan's Relations in the context of the themes he has used. His themes mainly concern with his experiences of first thirty years in India, his frequent visits and field-trips and his personal and professional preoccupation with Kannada, Tamil and classics and folklore. The poems included in Relations further explore his relations to Religion, Family, Society, Nature and Foreign Land.

Ramanujan, being born in a traditional Tamil Brahmin family, was rooted in Hindu philosophy. But the long period that he stayed away from his motherland made him afraid of losing his religious depths. So, in many of his poems, he seems to be in search of the Hindu philosophy which he seems to lose. In his 'Hindoo' poems, Ramanujan dwells much on the concept of Sthitaprajnya, the theory of Karma and the theory of rebirth.

Ramanujan's views towards his family are traditional and typically Indian. In the poems about

familial relations, he asserts the same attitude. He also focusses on the estrangement between him and his wife, his love for his daughter, his deep attachment with his mother and the strictness of his father.

The relations with society are discussed by Ramanujan in many of his poems. Sometimes, he comments on its structure. He uses the animal worlds as metaphors for it. He depicts the evil in Society and ironically portrays the picture of corruption and reality. Indian joint-family system is also reflected in his poems.

Although, Ramanujan prays for the peace of the world to Lord Murugan, he does not get involved in it. And, Nature in Ramanujan's poetry does not have its distinct self, for it is always used as an image or a metaphor. His relationship with the foreign land is caused by his willing exile for twenty years in U.S.A.

Alongwith these major relationships, he has also explored the themes of alienation, relationship with past, present, future, dreams and history.

In Chapter Three, I have discussed Mahapatra's past memories, his family, dreams, history and future. The poem is set in Orissa. In the twelve sections of the poem, alongwith his complex search for self-identity, various relationships are explored one after another.

In Section One, the poet explores his basic relationship with the Earth. Like everyone's deep roots in the past, history, the poet's attachment to the land of Orissa is an inevitable consequence. Section Two brings out the poet's relationship with his father, mother, daughter

and village. It seems that he is not satisfied with his childhood memories. In Section Three, the poet has brought out his relationship with the dark realities of the society with which he wants to fight. Section Four exposes the poet's timid nature and the pretense of sleep. But he also accepts the challenge of the peace of the world. The keen observations of nature are scattered all over this section which confirm his close relationship with nature.

While treating sleep from different points of view, the poet relates himself to his inner world in Section Five. It takes him away from the dark realities of life. But his fear about the same dream-world is expressed in Section Six. In the next, Section Seven, the relationship with his 'Self' is illustrated. His search for 'five shadows' (i.e. seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching) and 'six blind men' (i.e. lust, anger, greed, temptation, pride and envy) in himself expresses his self-assessment which finally takes him to the deep-rooted loneliness and sadness. The poet's self-assessment makes him identify himself with the temple of Konaraka in Section Eight. In it, he goes to the long past to find out the power of creation behind it, he reaches to it and finds that his own roots are also very deep.

Section Nine confirms the relationship of the poet with various myths like those of happiness, death, sleep, action and the colossal temple. The final impression left on his mind is that of sadness. Getting captured by the myth of the past memories, creates the feeling of defeat and guilt. In Section Ten, thus, the relationship of the

poet with the past is stated as inseparable.

Section Eleven introduces a sudden change, a turning point to the theme, for the poet's relationship with the present is restored by the awareness of his self which was lost in the past, the fulfillment of his quest and his new journey towards happiness. And in the last, Section Twelve, the poet seeks relationship with the unknown future. For it, he bids farewell to his fear of guilt and wishes to be timeless in the space of the Sun-Temple.

Both these poets have handled the same Indian subject-matter, but in different ways. I have concentrated on certain points of similarities and differences in Ramanujan's and Mahapatra's poetry in the context of Relations and Relationship, in Chapter Four.

In these two works, there are common themes like relationship with family, society, religion, past, present, dream-world, nature and the self, and also the theme of alienation.

In familial relationships, Ramanujan focuses on his relationship with his father, mother, wife and daughter; Mahapatra regards these relationships as complementary to the relationship with society. Relationship with society is dealt with by both these poets. Ramanujan paints a representative picture of Madurai, while Mahapatra draws portrait of Cuttack. They both point out the violence in Indian society; but, Mahapatra expresses the need for removing violence in society in order to reform it.

Both, Ramanujan and Mahapatra, are deeply rooted in

Hinduism. Ramanujan, born in a traditional Tamil Brahmin family, discusses the chief tenets of Gita. And Mahapatra, though born in a Christian family, identifies himself with the Sun-Temple of Konaraka to seek ultimate salvation. They have realized that the complete devotion to the Omnipotent God only can provide them with the peace of mind and can rescue them from the fear of guilt. The fear in Mahapatra's mind is of silence and solitude, because in silence he confronts his inabilities, weaknesses to fight against the evil and violence in society. The fear in Ramanujan's mind is worldly, such as, of his father, his status, about his daughter and of losing his existence after him.

Ramanujan and Mahapatra try to connect the past and the present. Ramanujan looks at the past with the eyes of the present. He draws the picture of the changed India using the background of the glorious past and it is his imagination that tries to bridge the glorious past and the fractured present. However, Mahapatra enters into the past with the body of the present and loses his existence in it. At the end of Relationship, he wishes to be timeless like the temple. For him, the temple is the witness of history and a symbol of the past.

Both these poets have close relationship with the dream-world. Ramanujan's dream-world is related to his unhappy present; to escape from it, he enters into the dream-world. But Mahapatra's dreams are unfathomable and powerful, in which he himself gets frightened.

Nature is differently treated by these two poets. Ramanujan's nature is symbolic whereas Mahapatra's nature is hopeful and represents the happy future. The search for self-identity is one of the main purposes behind poetry for these poets. For it, Ramanujan meditates about the Hindu philosophy and Mahapatra identifies himself with the Sun-Temple of Konaraka.

Like the search for self-identity, the theme of alienation is also found in both of them. Mahapatra alienates himself from the modern world by entering into the past, but later on he overcomes it and accepts the new life happily. Ramanujan's alienation is deeper. But according to both of them, alienation is momentary and not permanent.

A.K. Ramanujan and Jayanta Mahapatra, thus, form a 'relationship' by virtue of matter and themes they use in Relations and Relationship.<sup>They</sup> leave their own different impressions on the reader's mind, though both discuss 'relations' or 'relationships'.