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Research Article

Love As Memory, Myth and Metaphysical Experience: A Critical Study of Dr. Phani Mohanty's Only in Love

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Abstract

Dr. Phani Mohanty occupies a distinctive position in contemporary Odia literature, particularly in the development and continuation of Neo-Romantic poetry. His poetic world is deeply rooted in love, longing, memory, nature, mythology, separation, desire and the inward movement of consciousness. Only in Love, the English translation of his Odia collection Kebala Premare, translated by Dr. Sonali Sahu and published by Black Eagle Books in 2025, brings together a substantial body of poems in which love appears not merely as an emotional experience but as an ontological, aesthetic and metaphysical principle. The collection travels repeatedly between the visible and invisible, the physical and spiritual, presence and absence, memory and desire, mythology and contemporary consciousness. This article examines Only in Love as a sustained poetics of threshold-crossing. It argues that Mohanty's treatment of love is constructed through a complex interaction of memory, myth, feminine subjectivity, nature, silence and longing. Poems such as "Ahalya," "Two Blue Eyes," "The Lone Woman of a Barren Earth," "Longing," "The Monsoon Is Coming," "Riverbank," "The Hope of Baitarani," "Memory," "My Beloved," "Devi," and "Enraptured by Her Love" reveal how erotic emotion gradually acquires philosophical and spiritual dimensions. The study also considers the significance of Sahu's English translation as an act of cultural mediation, examining how the translation negotiates the particularities of Odia poetic consciousness while making the poems accessible to a wider readership. Drawing upon Indian aesthetic concepts of rasa and dhvani, as well as selected insights from Romanticism, phenomenology, myth criticism and translation studies, the article demonstrates that Only in Love is not simply a collection of love poems but an extended meditation on the human need to transcend separation through memory, imagination and poetic utterance.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Love has remained one of the most enduring subjects of world literature because it simultaneously belongs to the intimate sphere of individual experience and to the larger philosophical questions of existence. It can be sensual and spiritual, personal and universal, joyful and tragic, immediate and remembered. In Indian literary traditions, love has rarely been confined to the private relationship between two individuals. Through the aesthetic concept of *śṛṅgāra rasa*, love acquires a wide range of emotional possibilities, including union, separation, anticipation, remembrance and longing. The experience of *viraha*, in particular, transforms absence into a creative and contemplative state. It is within this long literary and aesthetic tradition that the poetry of Dr. Phani Mohanty can be meaningfully located.

Only in Love, translated from the Odia *Kebala Premare*, is significant because it presents love as a recurring centre around which several dimensions of human consciousness revolve. Published by Black Eagle Books in 2025, the volume contains 230 pages and introduces English-language readers to a representative body of Mohanty's poetry through the translation of Dr. Sonali Sahu. The bibliographical record identifies Phani Mohanty as the author and Sonali Sahu as translator, while the volume itself presents the poet within the tradition of Neo-Romantic expression. The collection does not, however, merely repeat the conventional vocabulary of romantic poetry. Its poems repeatedly enlarge the meaning of love until love becomes a mode of perceiving the world, remembering the past, confronting absence and imagining transcendence.

Mohanty's poetic imagination is particularly remarkable for the manner in which personal emotion becomes connected with larger cultural and mythological structures. A beloved may appear simultaneously as woman, memory, deity, nature, mystery or spiritual presence. A river can become a site of separation; rain can become the arrival of desire; eyes can become a repository of unspoken language; an anklet can transform into an auditory sign of absent presence; and a mythological woman can become a contemporary figure of vulnerability, suffering and renewal. The poems therefore resist a single interpretive category. Their romantic surface often conceals a philosophical depth.

The central argument of this study is that Only in Love constructs love as a poetics of threshold-crossing. The poems continually cross boundaries between body and spirit, presence and absence, past and present, human and divine, individual memory and cultural memory, nature and consciousness, mythology and modernity. This threshold structure also becomes relevant to the English translation of the collection. Translation itself is an act of crossing: a poem moves from one language, cultural environment and sound-system into another. Thus, the translation of *Kebala Premare* into Only in Love can be read not merely as linguistic substitution but as a second movement of the poems across cultural boundaries.

Dr. Phani Mohanty: The Poet of Love and Neo-Romantic Consciousness

Dr. Phani Mohanty is one of the prominent contemporary voices of Odia poetry, particularly associated with the Neo-Romantic tradition. His literary career extends across several decades, and his poetic output has been marked by an extraordinary engagement with love, longing, nature, memory and human relationships. Critical and biographical accounts identify him as a major Odia Neo-Romantic poet and note his recognition through prestigious honours including the Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award and the Kendriya Sahitya Akademi Award. His poetry has also travelled beyond Odia through translations into several Indian languages.

The designation "Neo-Romantic" is especially useful in understanding Mohanty, provided it is not interpreted as a mere continuation of nineteenth-century European Romanticism. His romanticism is shaped by the cultural memory of Odisha, Indian mythology, devotional traditions and the aesthetic legacy of Sanskrit and regional literatures. His poetic lovers are not always merely lovers in the conventional sense. They may become manifestations of memory, longing, beauty, divinity or an unattainable ideal. His treatment of love therefore demonstrates an important characteristic of modern Indian Romantic poetry: the ability to accommodate the sensuous and the spiritual within the same poetic consciousness.

Mohanty's literary identity is also inseparable from his extraordinary persistence in writing about love. His poetry does not treat love as a single emotional state but as a spectrum extending from attraction and tenderness to separation, regret, despair, memory and spiritual aspiration. This range explains why the poems can remain recognisably romantic while simultaneously becoming philosophical. His language frequently appears accessible and intimate, yet the simplicity of diction allows symbolic and metaphysical associations to emerge beneath the surface. His achievement lies partly in this combination of conversational immediacy and symbolic depth.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The critical reception of Phani Mohanty has increasingly recognised the centrality of love to his poetic achievement. Earlier discussions of his work have particularly emphasised his Neo-Romantic sensibility and his sustained exploration of romantic emotion. His popularity as a poet of love is closely associated with works such as *Priyatama*, through which his poetic identity became strongly established among readers of Odia literature. Critical commentary has also noted the unusual breadth of his literary career and the recurrence of love, pain and emotional intensity throughout his poetry.

The publication of Only in Love has generated more focused critical attention. Of particular relevance is Dr. Santosh Kumar Nayak's 2026 study, "From Romantic Longing to Metaphysical Consciousness — A Comprehensive Critical Study of Dr. Phani Mohanty's Only in Love." The article reads the collection as a movement from romantic longing towards metaphysical consciousness and brings together several critical approaches, including Neo-Romanticism, Indian aesthetics,

myth criticism, archetypal criticism, eco-criticism, psychoanalysis, feminist criticism, existential philosophy, phenomenology, translation studies and comparative literature. This study is important because it establishes *Only in Love* as a collection whose emotional vocabulary extends beyond conventional romanticism.

The present study acknowledges that critical intervention while proposing a more specific argument concerning the structure of the collection. Rather than treating metaphysical consciousness as the sole destination of the poems, this article examines the recurring processes through which the poems cross thresholds between different states of being. Love, in this reading, is not simply transformed into metaphysics; it operates as the very medium through which different experiential worlds become connected. Memory, myth, feminine subjectivity, nature, silence and translation are therefore not separate themes but interconnected manifestations of this threshold structure.

This approach also makes it possible to examine the translation more closely. The English volume does not merely make the poems available to non-Odia readers. It creates a new literary space in which Odia cultural images, mythological references and emotional registers encounter English poetic expression. The question is therefore not only what the poems mean in translation but how their cultural and aesthetic energies survive, change and acquire new resonance in English.

3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The principal objective of this study is to examine the representation of love in *Only in Love* as a complex aesthetic and philosophical experience. The article seeks to analyse the relationship between romantic longing and memory, the transformation of myth into contemporary poetic consciousness, the significance of feminine figures, the symbolic role of nature, and the function of silence and absence. It also seeks to examine the English translation as a form of cultural mediation.

The methodology is primarily qualitative and interpretative. Close textual reading is combined with concepts drawn from Indian aesthetics, Romantic theory, myth criticism, phenomenology and translation studies. The analysis pays particular attention to recurring images such as eyes, rain, rivers, forests, flowers, anklets, silence, waiting and bodily touch. These images are treated not as isolated decorative motifs but as components of an interconnected symbolic system. The study also adopts a comparative orientation by considering the movement from the Odia original *Kebala Premare* into the English *Only in Love*.

Theoretical Framework: Rasa, Dhvani and the Romantic Imagination

Indian aesthetic theory offers a particularly productive framework for reading Mohanty's poetry. The concept of *rasa*, associated with Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, describes aesthetic experience as something more profound than the expression of an individual emotion. Emotion becomes aesthetically intensified and transformed into an experience capable of being

shared by the sensitive reader. *Śṛṅgāra*, the *rasa* of love and beauty, occupies a central position in this aesthetic system, while *vipralambha śṛṅgāra*, or love in separation, has generated an immense poetic tradition in Indian literature.

Many poems in *Only in Love* can be understood through this distinction between union and separation. The beloved is frequently present precisely through absence. The emotional intensity of the poem does not necessarily depend upon physical union; rather, separation produces memory, imagination and poetic speech. The beloved who is absent from the physical world remains present within the consciousness of the speaker. Thus, absence becomes aesthetically productive.

The theory of *dhvani*, associated with Anandavardhana, is equally significant. Poetry does not communicate only through its literal meaning. Suggestion, resonance and implication enable a poem to communicate what cannot be directly stated. Mohanty's poetry repeatedly depends upon such suggestion. Eyes contain unspoken words; rain suggests desire; a river suggests separation and continuity; silence suggests an emotional vocabulary beyond speech. The poem's deepest meaning often resides in what remains partially unsaid.

The Romantic tradition also provides a useful comparative framework. Romantic poetry places emphasis upon emotion, imagination, nature, memory and the inward life of the individual. Yet Mohanty's poetic consciousness is not derivative of European Romanticism. His relationship with nature and emotion is mediated by Indian cultural memory, mythology and devotional aesthetics. Nature becomes neither merely scenery nor an external object. It participates in consciousness. Rain, river, moonlight, flowers and forests become extensions of emotional states.

Love as an Ontological Experience

One of the most striking features of *Only in Love* is the gradual expansion of love from interpersonal emotion to an ontological experience. The lover initially appears to desire the beloved, but the poetic movement soon exceeds desire. Love becomes a way of recognising existence itself. The self discovers its own identity through its relationship with another. In this sense, the beloved becomes a mirror through which the speaker encounters his own inner world.

The title *Only in Love* is itself philosophically suggestive. The word "only" appears restrictive, yet it becomes expansive: if everything occurs "only in love," then love becomes the condition through which memory, beauty, suffering, creation and spiritual awareness are experienced. The title therefore proposes a paradox. Love is presented as a single principle, but within that principle exists an entire universe of contradictory experiences.

The poem "Two Blue Eyes" exemplifies this transformation. The eyes of the beloved are not simply described as beautiful physical features. They become a space containing words that have not been spoken. The sea-like quality attributed to the eyes suggests depth, mystery and immeasurability. The beloved's eyes become a language before language, a place where communication occurs without verbal speech. The poem

therefore moves from physical beauty towards epistemological mystery: what does the lover know through looking, and what remains unknowable even after looking?

This relationship between vision and knowledge occurs repeatedly throughout the collection. The eye is both organ and metaphor. To see the beloved is to enter an interior world. The beloved's body becomes a text, while silence becomes its language. Love therefore produces an alternative form of knowledge, one based not on rational explanation but on intuition, memory and emotional recognition.

Viraha, Waiting and the Poetics of Absence

If union provides fulfilment, separation provides poetry. The emotional architecture of *Only in Love* is deeply shaped by viraha. The absent beloved is repeatedly anticipated, remembered and imagined. The speaker inhabits a state of waiting in which time becomes suspended. The experience of waiting is not passive; it is an intense psychological activity in which the absent person becomes increasingly present within imagination.

In one of the poems, the speaker confronts the uncertainty of the beloved's arrival and non-arrival. The poem concludes in the emotional posture of sitting and waiting, with the days themselves appearing folded into the patient shape of waiting. The significance of this passage lies in the transformation of time. Waiting is no longer merely a period between two events. It becomes an existential condition. The lover exists inside anticipation.

This condition is intensified in the Krishna-Yamuna sequence. The speaker describes crossing boundaries, abandoning ritual constraints and moving through a difficult forest simply to reach the beloved. Yet the anticipated encounter is marked by absence: there is no voice, fragrance, anklet or flute. The Yamuna remains, but the expected presence has disappeared. The promise of arrival dissolves into silence.

The passage is significant because Mohanty transforms a recognisable cultural and mythological landscape into a psychological landscape. Krishna, Yamuna, forest, flute and anklets belong to the cultural memory of Indian love poetry, but in Mohanty they also represent the contemporary lover's experience of absence. Myth becomes a language for modern loneliness.

The poem "The Lone Woman of a Barren Earth" develops this emotional condition through a powerful feminine figure. The woman appears against an apparently barren world, yet she carries within herself tenderness, love, mercy, sorrow and beauty. Her eyes contain a constellation-like darkness; her body carries the musical suggestion of anklets; her movement through borders becomes a movement towards renewal. The image of the woman crossing boundaries and blooming like a flower transforms loneliness into possibility.

The feminine figure is therefore not merely an object of male desire. She becomes an emblem of endurance and transformation. The barren earth and the solitary woman mirror one another, but the woman also possesses the capacity to

regenerate the barren landscape through her emotional and symbolic presence.

Myth as a Living Poetic Language

Myth occupies an important position in Mohanty's poetic imagination. Yet his use of myth is not antiquarian. He does not reproduce myth simply to celebrate the past. Instead, he reactivates myth in order to interpret contemporary emotional experience.

"Ahalya" is a particularly important example. The poem begins with intimate physical and sensory associations and gradually opens into images of rain, flowers, clouds, fragrance, music, suffering, forgiveness and grace. The mythological figure of Ahalya becomes a site where desire, transgression, punishment and redemption converge. The traditional narrative is thus transformed into an emotional and philosophical meditation on the human capacity to recover dignity through love and recognition.

The importance of Ahalya lies in her movement from object to subject. In conventional retellings, she is often remembered primarily through the male-centred structure of her myth. Mohanty's poetic treatment allows her emotional and symbolic presence to become more prominent. Her transformation can be read as a movement from social condemnation towards spiritual restoration. Love becomes a force capable of recovering the self from a state of silence and exclusion.

The collection's other mythological references similarly create bridges between ancient cultural narratives and contemporary emotional states. Krishna and Radha, Draupadi, Ahalya and other mythic resonances are not simply ornamental references. They constitute a cultural vocabulary through which the poet articulates experiences of desire, abandonment, fidelity, suffering and transcendence.

The reference to Draupadi, for instance, acquires symbolic significance when garments unfold in an image recalling the inexhaustibility of her robes. The myth becomes an image of the limitless dimensions of feminine suffering and dignity. Such allusions demonstrate Mohanty's ability to transform inherited narratives into contemporary metaphors.

Feminine Subjectivity and the Beloved

The representation of women in *Only in Love* deserves sustained critical attention. At first glance, the collection may appear to follow the traditional lyric structure of a male poet addressing a beloved woman. Yet the feminine figures often become more than objects of admiration. They carry histories of suffering, memory, desire, spiritual power and resilience.

The beloved in Mohanty's poetry is frequently mysterious because she cannot be completely possessed by language. Her silence gives her autonomy. Her absence creates longing, but that longing also acknowledges the distance between the self and the other. In this sense, the beloved is not reducible to the speaker's desire.

The poems "My Beloved," "Devi," and "Enraptured by Her Love" reveal a progression in which the beloved approaches the symbolic status of the divine. The transition from "beloved"

to “Devi” is not merely a change of vocabulary. It suggests the elevation of feminine presence from romantic object to sacred principle. The woman becomes a source of illumination and transformation.

Such representation can be examined through a feminist lens, though it must be approached carefully. The poems emerge from a romantic tradition in which the beloved is often idealised. Idealisation can sometimes objectify women by transforming them into symbols rather than fully autonomous subjects. Yet Mohanty’s mythological poems also provide opportunities for recovering feminine agency, particularly through figures such as Ahalya, Draupadi and the lone woman of the barren earth. The tension between idealisation and agency is therefore itself a productive area of interpretation.

Nature, Landscape and Emotional Geography

Nature in *Only in Love* is inseparable from human emotion. Rain, river, forest, earth, flowers, clouds and moonlight repeatedly appear as extensions of the speaker’s psychological landscape. This is an important feature of Romantic poetry, but Mohanty gives it a distinctly Indian cultural and geographical character.

“The Monsoon Is Coming” is especially suggestive in this context. Rain is not merely meteorological. Its arrival awakens the senses and transforms the surrounding world. Green paddy fields shimmer, insects become musical, and flowing water acquires a silver radiance. Nature appears animated because the consciousness of the lover is animated. The external world becomes an emotional echo.

The river is another recurring symbol. In poems such as “Riverbank” and “The Hope of Baitarani,” the river suggests movement, separation, memory and mortality. A river is simultaneously continuous and changing. It remains recognisable while no single drop remains the same. This makes it an appropriate metaphor for love and memory. The beloved may disappear, but the emotional current continues.

The Baitarani, moreover, carries cultural and spiritual associations beyond those of an ordinary river. Its presence allows geographical landscape to become metaphysical landscape. The river becomes a threshold between worlds, reinforcing the collection’s larger structure of crossing and transition.

Memory as the Second Life of Love

Memory is perhaps the most important force that allows love to survive absence. When the beloved is physically unavailable, memory reconstructs presence. Yet memory is never neutral. It selects, transforms and intensifies experience. What is remembered is not necessarily what happened exactly; it is what the heart continues to need.

The poem “Memory” therefore occupies a crucial position within the collection’s architecture. Memory connects the past to the present and converts personal history into poetic material. The poet does not simply remember an event; he re-experiences its emotional resonance.

The poem “Sometimes” further reveals the instability of memory and identity. The speaker describes a body moving across caves, mountains, rivers and multiple realms, while repeatedly questioning his own control over the journey. The imagery of an exhausted bird, old memories, a scorching afternoon and a frangipani tree culminates in the persistence of a subtle glow. The glow is significant because it suggests that memory can preserve an inner light even when external circumstances become difficult.

Love thus survives in *Only in Love* not because it remains unchanged but because it is continually recreated through memory. Poetry becomes the medium of that recreation.

Silence as Language

Mohanty’s poetry frequently suggests that silence can communicate more profoundly than speech. This is particularly evident in “Two Blue Eyes,” where the beloved’s eyes contain an ocean of unspoken words. The metaphor establishes a paradox: communication is most powerful when it exceeds verbal language.

Silence also dominates the poems of absence. When the beloved does not arrive, the absence of voice, fragrance, anklets and flute becomes a language of its own. The poet does not need to state directly that the beloved is absent; the missing sensory signs communicate the absence. This is precisely where the Indian aesthetic concept of *dhvani* becomes useful. The poem communicates through suggestion.

Silence in these poems is therefore not emptiness. It is charged with emotional possibility. It contains longing, regret, memory and expectation. The unsaid becomes more expansive than the said.

Poetic Language and Symbolic Craft

One of Mohanty’s strengths is his ability to employ relatively accessible diction while constructing a complex symbolic field. His poems frequently depend on concrete images rather than abstract philosophical vocabulary. Eyes, rivers, rain, flowers, anklets and forests allow metaphysical ideas to emerge naturally.

This method prevents the poetry from becoming excessively doctrinal. Instead of announcing that love is eternal, the poet creates an image through which eternity can be felt. Instead of explaining separation, he creates an empty riverbank, a silent forest or the absence of a familiar sound.

The recurrent imagery also creates internal cohesion within the collection. The poems may be read individually, but their symbols echo one another. Water appears as rain, river and Yamuna; femininity appears through beloved, Ahalya, Devi and the lone woman; sound appears through flute, anklets and silence; memory appears through landscapes and sensory recollection. These repetitions produce a poetic universe in which individual poems communicate with one another.

Translation as Cultural and Aesthetic Mediation

The English translation of *Kebala Premare* raises an important literary question: how can the emotional, cultural and aesthetic density of an Odia poem be carried into English without flattening its particularity? Translation is never a transparent

act. Roman Jakobson distinguishes among intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic forms of translation, while Eugene Nida emphasises the importance of reproducing an equivalent effect in the receptor language. Susan Bassnett and Lawrence Venuti, from different perspectives, further demonstrate that translation involves cultural negotiation and choices concerning visibility, fluency and difference.

In the case of *Only in Love*, translation is especially challenging because the poems depend upon cultural signs that carry associations beyond their literal meanings. A word such as “Yamuna,” “Baitarani,” “Draupadi,” “Ahalya,” “Devi” or “Gandharva” does not function merely as a dictionary item. Each carries layers of mythology, cultural memory and literary association. An English translation must therefore preserve enough cultural specificity for the symbol to retain its resonance.

Sahu’s translation can be understood as an attempt to maintain the lyrical immediacy of the poems while carrying their cultural imagery into English. The translation does not need to domesticate every cultural reference into an equivalent Western image. In fact, retaining culturally specific names and images allows the English reader to encounter the distinct imaginative geography of Odia and Indian poetry.

This corresponds with Venuti’s broader argument concerning the visibility of the translator. A translation that appears completely transparent can conceal the labour and interpretive choices involved in moving a poem across languages. Literary translation is an interpretative act. The translator listens not only to lexical meaning but also to rhythm, emotional register, cultural suggestion and poetic silence.

The translation of Mohanty is particularly demanding because his poetry often depends on melodious movement. English cannot reproduce every phonetic or rhythmic quality of Odia. Consequently, the translator must seek an equivalent poetic effect rather than mechanical word-for-word correspondence. Nida’s distinction between formal and dynamic equivalence is relevant here. The goal is not necessarily to reproduce every structural feature but to preserve the emotional and aesthetic response generated by the original.

Paul Ricoeur’s conception of translation as linguistic hospitality is also useful. Translation allows one language to welcome another without completely erasing difference. *Only in Love* can therefore be viewed as a meeting place between Odia poetic consciousness and global English readership. The English text carries traces of its source culture while entering a new linguistic environment.

The title itself illustrates this process. *Kebala Premare* and *Only in Love* are not mechanically identical constructions, yet the English title successfully retains the conceptual emphasis of the original. “*Only in Love*” creates an English rhythm while preserving the philosophical suggestion that love is the primary condition of experience. The translation therefore functions as recreation rather than substitution.

The translator’s role becomes even more significant when the poems involve mythology. A translator must decide whether to explain, retain or adapt a culturally embedded image. Excessive

explanation can interrupt the lyric flow, whereas excessive domestication can erase cultural identity. The successful translation negotiates between these extremes.

Thus, *Only in Love* should be read as a bilingual literary event. The original Odia collection and the English translation are related but not identical texts. The English volume generates a new reading community while carrying forward the emotional architecture of the original. Translation thereby becomes another form of threshold-crossing, paralleling the poet’s own movement between body and spirit, memory and presence, mythology and modernity.

Love, Spirituality and the Search for Transcendence

The metaphysical dimension of Mohanty’s poetry emerges most powerfully when romantic desire begins to exceed the individual beloved. The beloved becomes a doorway rather than a destination. Through love, the speaker encounters beauty, suffering, mortality and the possibility of transcendence.

The transition from “*My Beloved*” to “*Devi*” is particularly meaningful in this regard. The feminine presence becomes sacred, suggesting that romantic love can become a form of devotion. Yet this transformation does not eliminate sensuality. Rather, Mohanty allows sensual and spiritual dimensions to coexist.

This synthesis recalls the long Indian tradition in which erotic and devotional languages frequently overlap. Radha’s longing for Krishna, for instance, can be interpreted simultaneously as romantic longing and spiritual yearning. Mohanty does not simply reproduce this tradition but brings its emotional structure into modern poetic consciousness.

Love also becomes a response to mortality. The awareness that bodies age, relationships change and people disappear intensifies the need to preserve emotional experience through poetry. The poem becomes an act of resistance against disappearance. What cannot be preserved physically may survive aesthetically.

In this sense, the poet’s “*only in love*” is also a statement about the nature of artistic creation. Poetry itself emerges from attachment, longing and the desire to preserve what time threatens to destroy. Love creates memory; memory creates poetry; poetry creates another form of presence.

Only in Love and the Contemporary Indian Literary Imagination

The importance of *Only in Love* extends beyond the category of romantic poetry. The collection contributes to the broader project of bringing regional Indian literary consciousness into dialogue with global English readership. Contemporary Indian literature increasingly moves across linguistic boundaries through translation, and such movement challenges the dominance of any single linguistic centre.

Mohanty’s poems demonstrate that regional literature is not culturally peripheral. The emotional and philosophical questions they explore—love, separation, memory, loneliness, desire, mortality and transcendence—are universal, but they are articulated through a particular cultural imagination. The

presence of Odisha, Indian mythology, rivers, agricultural landscapes and indigenous cultural memory gives these universal experiences a specific identity.

The English translation therefore has an important literary-cultural function. It enables readers outside the Odia language community to encounter the poet's imagination while retaining its regional identity. In this sense, translation does not diminish regionality; it can amplify it.

4. CONCLUSION

Only in Love emerges from this analysis as far more than a collection devoted to romantic sentiment. It is a sustained meditation on the many forms through which love enters human consciousness. Love appears as desire, longing, memory, suffering, devotion, imagination, silence and transcendence. The collection's poetic unity derives not from a single narrative but from a recurring symbolic network in which eyes, rain, rivers, flowers, forests, anklets, silence and waiting repeatedly transform personal emotion into larger meanings.

The concept of threshold-crossing provides a useful way of understanding this poetic universe. The poems cross from physical love to spiritual yearning, from presence to absence, from memory to imagination, from individual experience to cultural myth and from regional language to global English. The beloved exists simultaneously as person, memory, symbol and divine possibility. The poet's romantic imagination is therefore neither purely sensual nor exclusively metaphysical. It is relational, continually discovering new dimensions of the self through encounters with the other.

The treatment of feminine figures further enriches the collection. Ahalya, Draupadi, the lone woman and the beloved occupy different symbolic positions, yet each contributes to a broader meditation on feminine suffering, dignity, desire and transformative power. Myth is not presented as a dead inheritance but as a living vocabulary through which contemporary emotional experience can be articulated.

Nature similarly functions as an emotional and philosophical participant. Rain, river, earth and forest are not merely scenic backgrounds. They become external forms of interior states. The landscape remembers, waits, suffers and renews itself. Through this fusion of nature and consciousness, Mohanty extends the Romantic tradition while grounding it in Indian cultural and geographical experience.

Memory ultimately provides the mechanism through which love survives time. The absent beloved continues to exist through remembered images, sounds and sensations. Poetry becomes the space where absence is transformed into presence. The poet cannot defeat physical separation, but he can create an aesthetic form in which the beloved continues to live.

The English translation of Only in Love adds another dimension to this process. Translation itself becomes an act of crossing and preservation. It carries Odia cultural memory into English without requiring the original poetic world to disappear. The translator becomes a mediator between linguistic communities, attempting to preserve not only semantic meaning but emotional rhythm, cultural resonance and poetic suggestion.

In the final analysis, the significance of Only in Love lies in its insistence that love is not a single emotion with a predetermined beginning and end. It is a mode of consciousness. It enables memory, generates longing, animates nature, reinterprets mythology and gives language to silence. Mohanty's poetry suggests that what is loved may be lost, but it is not necessarily erased. Through memory and imagination, it acquires another existence; through poetry, that existence becomes shareable.

The title Only in Love can therefore be understood as both declaration and philosophy. It does not mean that human life contains nothing except romantic love. Rather, it suggests that love is one of the deepest conditions through which human beings encounter beauty, suffering, memory, otherness and transcendence. In Mohanty's poetic universe, to love is to remember, to remember is to imagine, and to imagine is to create. Poetry becomes the final form of that creation—a space in which the absent becomes present, the mortal approaches the eternal, and the personal becomes universal.

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Dr. Sonali Sahu is an author, poet, translator, literary critic and educator from Odisha. She has translated and critically explored Indian literature, particularly Odia poetry. Her acclaimed works include *The Incredible Odisha* and *From Cradle to Silence*. She is a recipient of the Mahatma Gandhi National Award 2025 and actively promotes literature through translation, research and cultural engagement.