

“SONOROUSLY FEMININE BEAUTY”: THE INTRINSIC CONNECTION BETWEEN VERNACULAR POET JIBANANANDA DAS AND THE CITY OF KOLKATA

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ABSTRACT

In this study, it has been my objective to explore the unique nature of the relationship between Jibanananda Das and the city of Kolkata. The restlessness of the poet, favouring the life in the city and sometimes longing for the peaceful native Barisal with its birds, rivers and foliage is a recurring theme for his poetry and prose. Kolkata occupies a central and somewhat ambiguous position in Jibanananda's poetry. Poems such as 'Ratri', "Footpathe-e" present a lucid picture of Kolkata in the 1940s - 'the old negro', 'the motor car', and "song of the Jewish Woman" all capture the city at night in minute detail. In the poem "Bhikhiri", Jibanananda skilfully assumes the personae of a street-beggar who calculates how many 'pice' he can collect from various streets of Kolkata. This image of the city and its people are captured almost through a photo lens realistically but always with affection and admiration. In the novel Malyaban, and the short story aptly titled Gram O Saharer Galpo there is the urge to leave the city (and its people) and embrace the peaceful and serenelife of the countryside. It is worth noting that the village/ countryside is the theme of nearly all poems in the collection Rupashi Bangla/ Bengal the Beautiful. There is one other source that accurately records his unique attachment to the city. In this study, I would try to examine select entries from Jibanananda's literary Notes/ Dinlipi. (1930-35). These notes are phrases and sentences mostly in English and of a somewhat telegraphic nature. The entries are monologues and it can be safely assumed that Jibanananda never intended to publish them. The Literary notes are perhaps a trifle overlooked in any estimation of Jibanananda but contain innocuous entries which become themes for major themes in the future. A brief article on Calcutta, entitled "This City" (1952), captured my attention; it bears testimony to Jibanananda's unique attachment to the city – a subject of many important poems. From Kolkata the "Kallolini Tilottama" in the poem "Suchetana" to "Aadim sarpini sahodarar moto ei je tram-er line" in the poem "Footpath-e", Jibanananda's desire to see a better Kolkata is evident.

KEYWORDS: *Flanerie, Dinlipi, Kolkata.*