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## **Critical analysis of “I Shall Return to this Bengal”/ partition elements in the poem “I Shall Return to this Bengal”**

Though India got its Independence after a relentless strife of almost a century in 1947, the drawing of Radcliffe line a new gloomy chapter was introduced in the history of Bengal. Hitherto undivided Bengal was ruthlessly cut into two parts on the basis of religion— Hindustan (India) and Pakistan. As a result of it many people from both of the countries became homeless in their own land. Hindu people of Pakistan had to leave for India or vice versa. As a result of this mass migration the umbilical bond with one’s motherland land was torn overnight. This bloodless discectomy made a remarkable change in the life of people. Literature was not free from the clutches of partition. Many writers had to leave their birthplace. The angst of partition has been reflected in their writings.

Jibanananda Das, generally known as a poet of nature, was also a victim of partition of Bengal. Most of the time he is considered to be the greatest poet dealing with nature after Rabindranath Tagore. No doubt he gave a special candor to the nature, but that was not free from the angst of partition. Das was born in Barishal (a village of Bangladesh) in undivided Bengal. He had an affinity with the exotic natural ambience of his birth place from his early childhood. Later he came to Kolkata for his study and career. In 1936 he went back to Barishal. In 1945 he again came to Kolkata but was unable to go back to his birth place again because the turmoil of partition was in its peak. The partition of Bengal, though barred him from going back to his birth place, he could never erase out the memory of his birthplace. Most of the time he seemed to be nostalgic in his writings. The poem “I Shall Return to this Bengal” (*Abar Asibo Phire*) from *Banalatasen* represents, apparently, the poet speaker’s love for nature but an in between the lines analysis of the poem can help us to trace out the fact that a deep angst of the heart of the poet speaker, due to partition, is ever-present throughout the *Oeuvre*.

As the poem begins the poet speaker expresses his yearning for going back to his motherland in the form of a bird like myna or fishing-kite. Very interestingly enough , the poet speaker wants to be a bird, rather than a human being. It is because he is well aware of the fact that there is a specific land for specific people but there is no specific space for the birds to fly. They do not care for any man made ‘shadow line.’ It may also be the fact that Jibanananda Das



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had a strong faith in reincarnation or rebirth (*janmantorbad*) so he was not sure about his upcoming life after death. The following lines express the poet speaker's deep love for the nature of Bengal. He seems to be nostalgic because due to partition he was unable to go back to his birthplace any more. The nitty gritty details express his sufferings and loss due to partition. Through a transferred epithet or a common image of the nature of Bengal the poet speaker expresses his pain:

“To this sad green shore of Bengal, drenched by  
the Jalangi's wave”

The above lines, apparently, depicts the nature of Bengal, but the sadness also indicates the sadness of the mind of the poet speaker who was unable to go back to his motherland for the illogical drawing of Radcliffe line.

In the second stanza the poet speaker is much more concerned about his rebirth. He pines for a life of a glass-fly or (*Sudarshan*) or a barn owl (*Lakshmipencha*) . Here also the poet speaker wants to emphasize that glass-fly or barn owl are free from all man-made demarcation line. In the following few lines there is a picturesque description of the nature of Bengal. The day to day pictures are drawn here may be because of Das,s close contact with all these things when he was in Barishal. In the last two lines the poet speaker's yearning for a free life is expressed as he utters:

“... white egrets swimming trough the red clouds  
To their home in dark. You will find me among their crowd”

In above the concluding couplet the poet speaker's hope to get a free space without any border or boundary is well discernible.

Above all it can be said that the poem may be a nature poem, which expresses the poet speaker's love for nature and natural elements but it is one of the ne plus ultra poem on the theme of the partition of Bengal. Some critics opine that das has a penchant for birds but it can



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also be asserted that in this poem the birds are mentioned to indicate unconditional freedom which was barred by the partition of Bengal.