

The Darkness of Reality and the Reality of Darkness: Tracing Magical Realism in Jibanananda Das's *Satti Tarar Timir*

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Abstract

Jibanananda Das is a persona in Bengali poetry who still inspires the poetry lovers to open their original magical vision to pierce the darkness of the human mind. Das often employs the imagery of light to suggest the unconscious darkness in the collective consciousness of the civilized beings of the modern world. Das frequently points out the hidden darkness under the dazzling light of human rationality which, for centuries, has been a sensitive and debatable issue among the true seekers of knowledge. Apparently illogical and disjointed images embody Das's unique approach to discern the wrongs in the guise of the rights. If the perspective of magical realism is critically employed to analyze Das's poetry, layers of hidden truths may emerge. The objective of this paper is to analyze the darkness of reality and the reality of darkness that is perceived through the gullible human psyche by tracing magical realism in Jibanananda Das's collection of poetry, *Satti Tarar Timir (The Darkness of Seven Stars)*.

Keywords: Jibanananda Das, *Satti Tarar Timir*, magical realism, Bengali poetry, dark reality

Jibanananda Das is regarded as one of the most reclusive poets of Bengali literature whose signature verses are considered to be soft and sublime—bathed in ample rays of stars. However, Das's vehement utterances, in which he severely denounces contemporary civilization and which should shake the minds of his ardent admirers, are less known and less recited. Das's *Satti Tarar Timir (The Darkness of Seven Stars)* is such an anthology of poems where he portrays the extreme brutalities of reality with merciless integrity. Although very few poems of this publication achieved popularity among the poetry lovers and the literary critics, the deeper layers of meanings are overlooked and unfortunately unexplored. Most of the poems of this anthology portray the ugliness, destructiveness, and the evils of the urban cities. These poems are written as mundane reports with sudden touches of fantastic natural imagery. The ardent readers are simultaneously amazed and shocked by the sudden shift from an ordinary depiction of bleak urban life to the magical beauty of nature. As dazzling lights ironically blindfold the beholder, the extremely enlightened civilization brings darkness. The maddening speed and restlessness of the modern pseudo-sophisticated lifestyle rob people of the serenity of mind. Moreover, the toxic way of life distorts the perception of reality and makes people skeptical about the ultimate reality of the cosmos. In order to decipher the enigma of the

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verses of this poetry collection, the perspective of magical realism may be adopted. It is not the objective of this paper to determine if Das was influenced by the magical realism movement. Rather this paper aims at decoding the mystery of Das's verses by discerning the meanings and the multiple layers of darkness with the notion of magical realism with the multiple interpretations of the fantastic and fabulous natural imagery in Das's *Satti Tarar Timir (The Darkness of Seven Stars)*.

Magical realism is indubitably one of the most exclusive and influencing literary movements of the twentieth century. This is a unique part of the realism genre of literature that portrays the real world possessing a trace of magic (Child & Fowler, 2000). Within a text of magical realism, the setting is still embedded in the real world, but fabulous and fantastic elements are incorporated in this world—the literature of magical realism blurs the boundary between fantasy and reality (Cuddon, 2012). While most often related to Latin American writers (for example, Gabriel García Márquez, Mario Vargas Llosa), authors from all around the globe (for example, Salman Rushdie, Günter Grass) have substantially contributed to this genre (Nazneen, 2018). In 1925 a German art critic named Franz Roh first employed the term “magic realism” in his book *Nach Expressionismus: Magischer Realismus (After Expressionism: Magical Realism)* (Bhattacharya, T. & Bhattacharya, S., 2007). Roh utilized the term to represent the “New Objectivity,” a manner of painting that was admired in Germany at the time that was a substitute to the romanticism of expressionism (Nazneen 2018). Roh used the term “magic realism” to emphasize how fantastically normal objects can manifest themselves in the real world if the readers pause and carefully observe them (Baldick, 2000). This genre grew in popularity in South America when Roh's *After Expressionism: Magical Realism* was translated into Spanish in 1927 (Cuddon, 2012). French-Russian-Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier transformed Roh's idea into “marvelous realism” (Syed, 2015). In 1955, another literary critic named Angel Flores coined the term “magical realism” stating that it incorporated the elements of magic realism and marvelous realism (Baldrick, 2000). He regarded Jorge Luis Borges as the first successful practitioner of magical realism, based on his *A Universal History of Infamy* (Child & Fowler, 2000). While the Latin American writers developed the notion of magical realism, authors had previously written stories about everyday circumstances with fantastical elements before magical realism was an acknowledged literary genre (Shikdar, 2010). For instance, Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* may be considered to contain elements of magical realism, was published in 1915, ten years before Roh worked on magic realism and way before this special category of literature appeared in Latin American literature (Azad, 2008). Certain features may be attributed to this unique genre of literature: (1) Realistic setting – the text takes place in a setting that is familiar to the reader (Nazneen, 2018); (2) Magical elements—fairytale, fantastic and fantastical elements that do not happen in everyday life. However, these incidents are presented as normal within the text (Baldick, 2000); (3) Inadequate explanation—the author purposely leaves the magic in the narratives unexplained to render it as ordinary as possible and

establish that it is a random part of everyday life (Child & Fowler, 2000); (4). Criticism of society—writers employ magical realism to offer a commentary on society, politics, religion, culture, lifestyle etc. (Cuddon, 2012); (5) Narrative structure: the practitioners of Magical Realism rarely follow traditional narrative structures with an intelligible beginning, middle, and end, and this presents a more intense experience of the poet (Baldick, 2000). Therefore, the presence of magic in everyday life—that is how magical realism is defined. The undercurrent of magic in reality apparently seems improbable and irrational, however, if we gaze deeper, this magic is an integral part of reality. This certain magic helps us to discern some undiscovered enigma of our mundane existence.

There is no sufficient consensus that Jibanananda Das intentionally and advertently assimilated and imbibed his poetry with the maxims of magical realism (Majumder, B., 2014). Some argue that it is quite a stretch or it is hardly worth it to try to find magical realism in Das's poetry as the idea of magical realism was not matured enough in the contemporary literary world when Das was creating his immortal poetry (Tripathi, 1958) (Shikder, 2010). Nevertheless, if the perspective of magical realism is activated, some interesting secret meanings will be revealed (Syed, 2015). Das is renowned for his signature enigmas in his verses, which were undecipherable by the critics for decades (Jahangiri, 2005). Many of Das's often-quoted poems are misunderstood, and misinterpreted even by the prolific critics (Azad, 2008). Das was indeed an introverted persona of solitude—he spoke little about his poetry in his lifetime (Alam, 2015). It is only decades after his death, the critics started realizing his significance (Nazneen, 2018). The literary world ignored, misinterpreted and misunderstood this amazing poetic personality and literary genius for a long time. Das too was comfortable with his introverted lifestyle (Majumdar, A. T., 2002). In *Dhusar Pandulipi*, *Banalata Sen* or *Ruposhi Bangla*, Das is easily approachable by the ordinary readers with his depiction of pure nature, emotions and love (Chakraborty, S. 2000). Most of Das's later creations are unknown where he uttered some harsh verses towards the urban cities, the complex lifestyle of city dwellers and the deceptions of human relationships (Bhattacharya, B., 2014). If the readers wish to find out how Das condemned the civilized beings for their fascination towards the darkness, they may use the lens of magical realism (Syed, 2015). Das had firsthand experience of the darkness of social life and he tried to withdraw himself from it.

The title of Das's 1948 poetry collection *Satti Tarar Timir (The Darkness of Seven Stars)* is intriguing indeed. How could the brightness of seven stars bring darkness? Through the very title the trace of magic or dark-magic of reality is evident. Das published forty poems in this anthology and some of these not only achieved popularity among the ordinary readers but gained admiration from prominent critics. The first poem is one of his most recited and beloved poems—'Akashleena'/'The Sky-Suffused One' (Alam 2015). Here the speaker of the poem forbids Suranjana to go and talk to a certain young man; moreover, the speaker begs her to return in a starlit night full of silver flames. Initially, it seems like an utterance of a jealous and broken-hearted lover. However, a careful study

should reveal that Das indicates the overwhelming preoccupation in the material relationships that make people oblivious of nature - people get trapped in relationships, and instead of finding peace, they are full of anxieties and pains; they often forget about the bliss offered by nature. The supplication for Suranjana's return is not merely towards the lovers, the speaker is begging her to return to nature as well. The question whether the speaker equates his mind to nature may be answered by Das's indication that the human mind should be an inseparable part of nature. In a relationship, the connection between the bodies is not enough as the clash of ego is inevitable in that case. If the connection is between the human minds, only then a relationship would be sustainable and would bring peace. Das suggests the magic of life when he talks about the starlit night full of silver flames - the flame is silver, not golden. The fire of stars does not burn or destroy; it is soothing and brings peace in human minds - so do true relationships which are based on genuine soul connections. The speaker continues the invitation of Suranjana's return to fields, waves and ultimately to the heart of the speaker. The deepness of the human heart is again equated with nature. The return to the human soul is the return to nature which would bring peace to humanity. The material relationships turn people mad, angry and destructive and create an immense gap between humans and nature - this fear is illustrated in the speaker's fear that Suranjana will go far away if she meets with that young man. The speaker is inquisitive about what Suranjana has to talk to the young man, what people actually share with each other in a material relationship, what is left to talk when people have no true communication. Human mind is numb by a myriad of meaningless conversations which have no true depth. Not true connection is possible if there are insurmountable obstacles among the souls. The speaker seems to have given up hope when he states that Suranjana's mind is like soil, and the young man's love invades the soil inevitably like grass. Does Das indicate the inevitability of material relationships - is there no escape from the entrapment of loneliness? The poem 'Akashleena' seems to end with a sad tone as the speaker states that the mind of Suranjana is grass - united with a certain young man. The true connection is lost and the distance is unsurpassable (Das, 1948). But is it all—do not tears and heart-breaks teach valuable lessons? Does not the agonizing distance compel human beings to return to the root of their peace? Even behind apparent frustration, a subtle ray of hope still shines. Maybe Suranjana is ultimately at one with nature as her mind is grass. In death, the distance between nature and human beings ceases to exist as the human souls manifest in the grass. It seems like a separation, but Das hints at the ultimate union after an infinite number of excruciating moments. Maybe Das still believes in the underlying magic of reality. Magic realism can be traced throughout Das's depictions of silver fire of stars and grass as a simile of love - which makes Das's lyrics pretty intriguing to decode. The so-called relationship which is supposed to shed light in our life brings the darkness of frustration instead.

The second poem 'Ghora'/'Horses', another prominent poem of Das, starts with the poets' statement about the countless dramas of material life. As long as people are alive, they carry on with their fake actions and reactions upon the

reality and keep creating scenes (Das, 1948). Das implicitly indicates that the so-called civilized beings are so preoccupied with their ostentatiousness that they are totally oblivious to their original lifestyle. Everyone carries on with their fake drama of life. Still, nature reminds about the genuine life through the demonstration of wild horses - how pure their grass-eating is on the moonlit moor. Human beings are so civilized that they separate themselves from the entire world. All the living beings live in harmony with nature except human beings - thus comes the fake drama, isolation and agonizing reality. Still nature calls in people and provides shelter. Unfortunately, human beings are stuck with their glorious industrialization and ways of life: "The sad sound of rustling straw rubs onto steel machines" (Alam, 2015). People proudly present their splendid cities to demonstrate their civilization, cannot but hide the scars and ugliness of deceptions. Humans separate themselves from nature and thus claim greatness - Das reminds the readers about the unavoidable crisis that this civilization will bring. All the bright, mechanical lights shed darkness in our fabricated reality; Das points out the lingering magic of nature in the portrayal of the neolith-silence of moonlit horses - still calls in human beings to find solace amidst the chaos of fake drama.

The third poem 'Shomarurho'/'The Venerable One' is a direct indictment towards the contemporary literary critics who are wretched in their creativity lives only on the criticism of the poets. Das challenges explicitly: "Why don't you write a poem, if you dare?" The so-called critics cannot even present a reasonable replay. They merely live on criticizing the creative ones who survived "Scavenging off the flesh and even the worms of dead poets" (Alam, 2015). They pretend, ascend on the highest thrones of the literary realm stepping on annotations and ancient manuscripts. They are experts in analysis and criticism, still, they cannot write a poem. Das pays tribute to the great poets who suffered throughout hunger, love and extremely cold - gambled with their life to achieve the elixir of poetry. In the mundane reality of human beings, there are people who strive to achieve something through their hard work - the creators; and there are also people who live on criticizing others - the scavengers. Those who are obsessed with finding faults in others bring drama and darkness; they make others forget the light of life. Das employed images like shadows, toothless, maggots to portray the image of such people. These unfortunate creatures bring pain and agony in others' lives, eradicating the tranquility of life.

The fourth poem 'Nirangkush'/'The Wayward' seems like a sweet dream among the harsh utterances of claustrophobic reality when Das illustrates the beauty of Malay seashores, ports of the white westerners and blue waves. Still, there are signs which indicate that it is nothing but a dream. Even in the dream, brown Malay sheds incessant tears beholding the blue desert of the Malay Sea—the clash between the whites and the browns is depicted with subtlety. The white colonizers enjoy a wayward lifestyle— carefree of the troubles and pain of life; however, the brown Malay shivers in fear and keeps shedding tears. Das protests against the ruthlessness of colonialism and capitalism when he foretells the inevitable war which will extinguish the dominance of the colonialists: "At the

end of the century, the revolution began to put an end to this atrocity of foreign trade” (Das, 1948) The war brings the destruction of the port, smoke comes out from the burnt huts, even churches are blood-drenched. The westerners wanted to dominate the colonies in the name of civilization, and their torches of enlightenment bring nothing but darkness. The shore of the Malaysia is unchanged, indifferent to the tortures and the torments and keeps calling people to live in harmony with nature. Das portrays the blue desert in such a masterful way that the magic of reality in it cannot be avoided.

The fifth poem ‘Wristwatch,’ explicitly indicates one of the marvels of human inventions. Human beings are exclusively proud of this specific invention. The poem begins with the post-battle silence when the soldiers are preparing for their next attack. Starlit night sheds nothing but darkness upon the battlefield. Das aptly states in the last sentence about the conclusion of their battle and death: “Till they wake up again in the infinite darkness of boundless starlight”. (Alam, 2015) Indeed, the illusive light of the great stars makes people forgetful about the surrounding dominant darkness. Human beings have been glorifying war from the beginning of human civilization. Everyone emphasizes the light that will be found after any war, people rarely talk about the abysmal darkness that a war brings - doesn’t matter how necessary it is (Das, 1948).

The sixth poem ‘Godhuli-Sandhir Nritya’/‘The Dance of Twilight’ starts with a post-apocalyptic image of a destroyed city—maybe so-called civilization ruined itself; hence the word twilight denotes the ultimate ending of the entire human enterprise. Still, nature unfolds in its infinite glory—lush green trees, unblemished afternoon and glorious sun. Das implies the inevitable ruin of the unsustainable civilization and unavoidable win of nature. Nature goes on with its eternal magic with a solitary owl who witnesses impeccable sunrises and moonrises. Magic manifests itself in diamond sparks on the water, and even in the shadow of a human skull - which undoubtedly indicates the ultimate desolation of human civilization. Das portrays certain women as goddesses who dominate their male partners and force them to commit certain acts which will wreak havoc on nature. This is a typical phenomenon where human beings regardless of their gender or race desecrate Mother Nature in order to establish their supremacy. Thousands of wars have been fought, and who knows how many more will have to be fought to build the ultimate civilization. Human beings manipulate everything, even each other to fabricate their suitable circumstances while nature is destroyed. People are preoccupied with war and business; they rarely have time to behold the beauty of nature. Nature will heal itself but wretched human beings’ suffering and madness will remain unresolved in the darkness of the scorching light of their civilization, which is aptly illustrated in this poem.

In “Jeisob Sheyalera’/‘Foxes’, Das depicts the image of the foxes which start their eternal hunting in the darkness. Darkness, therefore, implies the invasion of the hunters and the lamentation of the victims. Even the fallen moonlit snow seems like a white corpse. - it does not give us an optimistic image. Human beings are dead inside and Das laments the poverty of wonderment in a dead

society (Das, 1948). The imagery of death continues in the next poem 'Shaptak' ('Septet') in which Das expresses his skepticism regarding the existence of life after death. Simultaneously the impossibility of the eradication of darkness is implied. The motif of 'seven' is repeated with the notion of inevitable darkness and the transient existence of human beings. Das portrays the existence of a certain 'Sarojini' who died, and according to Das, is mingled with nature at last. Does Das assert that death is the only step for human beings to unite with nature? Again, Das expresses his wonder, how human beings assimilate with nature through death. Magic is evident in the saffron-light-drenched sky. Still, that magic is unreal like a disappeared cat—an empty trickery. Das again reminds us about the futility of the craftiness of the human beings. It does not matter how clever people are because everything is undone through death and ultimately nature will have the last laugh.

The futility of human endeavors and advancements continues to be portrayed in the next poem 'Ekti Kobita'/'A Poem', where Das continues depicting the ruin of an ancient civilization - a desolate palace, once enlightened by the light of progress, now in the ruin of darkness. Magic appears when Das speaks of a bright flame that does not burn anything: produces no heat (the connection with the cold silvery flame can be traced), therefore Das portrays a flame that sheds darkness in the lifeless, cold palace. Das again suggests that regardless of the mighty and influence, a civilization is unsustainable and doomed to be destroyed if it loses connection with nature. The depiction of helplessness and loneliness makes the reader realize the true identity of the white stork: the ultimate ruin, death. Everyone needs to depart alone, sooner or later, however glorious its existence, everybody needs to return to dust. Das illustrates the dark visions in cold flames, white storks and in lonely departure, and compels the readers to contemplate upon the darkness of the reality or the reality of darkness. In the second part of the poem, Das reflects on how rivers flow throughout the dark night - here rivers represent nature and nature is not afraid of darkness, it flows in its own pace. On the other hand, human beings are afraid of darkness and they cannot stand the absence of light (Das, 1948). However, it does not matter how strong the kerosene-light is, it is doomed to go off - artificial light cannot drive away the darkness of reality. Das speaks about the ancient wars where old kings puppeteer their soldiers in vain. They sought for treasures but themselves turned into stones and dust in futility- they fabricated their own mirage, restlessly ran towards it and brought in their ultimate ruins. All the great warriors embraced their death and left their beloved city. Das suddenly brings the readers back to reality where he portrays a cough-drenched bathroom - signifying diseases and decay, an unavoidable consequence to experience. In spite of the inevitability of destruction, human beings keep on building their houses of cards - with a faint hope to reveal the ultimate enigma of existence.

In 'Avivabika'/'The Guardian' the retrospections upon death are continued, which is synonymous to darkness. Human beings live as if they will never die - yet they lose their beauty and elegance in course of time. They procreate and give birth to their future generations in hope of immortality. They cannot accept death

or darkness - this resistance ironically imparts negativity and darkness inside, in the soul. Fear turns people into enraged beasts who blindly dominate the surrounding, create animosity with nature, enjoy temporary wins but ultimately admit defeat. Who is the guardian of this hoard of infuriated beasts, who compels them to live an agonizing race of life? Das raises questions again to make the readers think about their obsessions and monstrosity to build up the civilization of darkness. There is still hope, if human beings return to the sun, life, horizon - nature, the true guardian; people have severed their roots and made up a toxic but intoxicating lifestyle. In the next poem 'Kobita'/'Poem', Das keeps on talking about people's obsessions with maintaining a toxic way of life - scavenging on toxic pleasures - like a bunch of mad masochists, torturing on selves and others. People do not know other ways to achieve success - as if deviating from this dark path will turn them astray (Das, 1948). The weak will be the victim of millions of deceptions in this civilization, but nature will never turn anyone away - it will embrace anyone who needs it with elixir or poison whatever it contains. Only human beings can ensure their own safety by maintaining the purity of nature or by not polluting it. Das keeps portraying the magical details of nature. People are restless, mad and blind to behold it. The deadly unavoidable entrapment of the darkness is further illustrated in the next poem 'Monosoroni' ('The Gateway to Mind') where Das explicates the toxic self-imprisonment of the human soul far away from nature. People not only keep living like insects, they accuse their destiny and carry on with their destructive lifestyle. Many great souls tried to awake people from their deadly slumber and failed in spite of their sincere efforts. People are absorbed in the darkness, ignoring the light of truth. However, "Truth comes out itself". Human beings are proud of their eventful history - avoiding the blunders they committed in the past - and they project the darkness of the past to the future. The magical reality of nature is still portrayed in the golden sun, in the crystal wings of wasps and in the grasses of deserts - the eternal struggle of existence in the embrace of nature (Das, 1948). Some brave souls strove to drive the darkness away in futility; still their legend of failure will keep waking more courageous warriors in the future. Das portrays the fact that most of the people have succumbed to darkness, still there are rebels of light who struggle incessantly to establish the reign of light.

In 'Nabik'/'The Sailor', Das introduces us with the agonizing experience of a sailor who has lost his ship - without a ship, the sailor has no identity, no existence; without his ship, the sailor is stuck in the perilous ocean. Das implies that most people are sailors who have lost their ship - their existence, purpose of life. Nature is still tranquil with golden sunray-drenched seashores and palm trees, yet cannot extinguish the darkness in the sailor's mind. Das states: "To the blonde priestess the sun is an egg of the bird of paradise;" (Das, 1948). This imagery is too magical to be real; still, Das put this imagery in contrast to that of a dark room full of skulls. The blundered history—of Babylon, Nineveh, Egypt, China and Ur—keep repeating, and the reign of eternal darkness prevails. Human beings merely find transient solace in nature, cannot think of living a harmonious life - is it too barbaric for their civilized self-image? What people have done to

their cities to build it as the pinnacle of advancements is depicted in the next poem 'Ratri'/ 'Night'. Das portrays: "Leapers unscrew a hydrant and lap up water; /...Like a ram rasping, a motorcar sputters." (Alam, 2015). The night is synonymous with darkness, moreover, the city is in a diseased and polluted shape - still the city-dwellers live a speed-crazed lifestyle, as if under the charm of a dark magic. Das keeps on narrating the distressed visage of the man-made city. To live in cities is to live in deception - this deceitful lifestyle turns them dry. The deception puts its signature in sights, smells, sounds, touches and tastes of the glorious urban marvels. Das compares the civilized urban nights to the nights in Libya; the difference is people here are forced to put on clothes to cover their shame (or darkness). Is this civilization barbarism and savagery in disguise? Is the enlightenment darkness in disguise? This very question is continued to the next poem 'Laghu Muhurto'/'Mundane Moments' where Das speaks of some aged beggars who are at the end of their lives and happily awaiting their deaths. Even the grey and arid wind of the city cannot snatch their serenity away, in a playful manner they are judging what is fair and what is unfair in this world (Das, 1948). Is death really better than this lifestyle of darkness? The beggars enjoy their last moments and celebrate their entire life (or the approaching death); they relish the last mockeries and insults of the city dwellers with the last draught of water from the hydrant. Das suggests the irony of life where the dead are offered the best medicines. Insects and rodents laugh at the city people who live in illusions - such is the darkness of reality and the reality of darkness.

The poem 'Haansh'/'Ducks' seems like a temporary magical escape from the agonizing reality as the light intensifies the darkness. The incessant begging for a blissful moment illustrates the vehemence of pain. In 'Unmesh'/'Awakening' Das again returns to the ruin of civilization where hearts are frequently broken and left to bleed. Civilized beings are again mocked as if they are "the jesters who have reached on the back of donkeys". Das laments about the infinite dark night where every hope is lost - the entire life is a sad saga of loss and pain. Frustration and exhaustion is intensified when Das expresses his doubts about being alive - he is even almost certain that human beings are more savage than animals. Das keeps portraying his weariness in the next poem 'Chakkhusthir'/'Astounded' where he speaks about his indifference towards the mechanical lifestyle. While his mind is extremely tired of this bloody life of monotony, he suddenly gets a magical vision of golden crops and a dark lake. Only nature can amaze human souls with its magic - which is driven away from the glorious cities.

In 'Khetey Prantorey'/'In Crops-Fields', Das depicts the lifestyle of ordinary village farmers. Here the pace of life is comparatively slow but peaceful. Farmers, hardly aware of the monstrous flow of the civilization, work together with their cattle. There are no pretensions in this rustic lifestyle - this way of life is beyond the conception of good or bad (Das, 1948). Das chooses this simple lifestyle over that of the city because here the sun offers abundant light to eradicate the darkness of mind. Still this humble life of the farmers is endangered by the approaching city dwellers' threats of bloodshed. Nature cannot but retreat,

it is driven away by the hungry beasts of darkness. The poem 'Bivunno Chorus'/'Miscellaneous Choruses' starts with the call of death and darkness. People dare to ignore the invitation of doom, and race restlessly throughout the nights, mornings and afternoons realizing that they are shelter-less at last. They cannot but walk on the urban-paths, earn their livelihoods and mingle with the popular ideas. Trapped in the ancient scriptures, forced to live like others, compelled to commit the necessary sins - human beings still hope to enjoy the bliss of life. Death reminds its existence, every now and then, along the roads filled with multitudes of corpses - awaiting the second death. There are no genuine connections among city people, they obsessively rush towards their fabricated heaven, witnessing the sunset - the inception of darkness (Das, 1948). Das carries on depicting people's addiction to enigma - they do not know what they search for, they are confused about what they need, their convictions are obscured by the complexities of mechanical life. Materialism is winning against life. People love to keep delivering their ostentatious lectures until they are overwhelmed and stopped by the force of applause. Is the glory of life in its chaos, scrimmage, massacre and enmity? Pessimism towards life gives birth to dark superstitions, fear and frustrations. Das never forgets to escape to the magic of nature and find hope from the blades of grass, rivers, eternal sun rays - which temporarily drives the darkness away. Das's magical realism is more evident in the next poem 'Swavab'/'Disposition' where he illustrates a magical image of a woman silently walking along the golden shores of the eye-river. Das promptly drags us back to harsh reality where "millions of people often die like obsessed fleas (Das, 1948)." Still, magic is hidden in human souls like a secret hope. Sometimes, people are blinded by fake reality, which Das explicates in 'Pratiti'/'Realizations' and in 'Bhashito'/'Spoken' as delusion towards the darkness. Throughout myriad imageries of contemporary life, Das suggests civilized beings' obsession towards the restlessness of modern lifestyle and against the purity of nature. In 'Srishtir Teer-e'/'On the Shore of Creations', Das portrays the maddening toxicity of urban lifestyle which makes people doubtful about the bliss of nature. As if the darkness impersonates the light and snatches peace away from people's souls.

Jibanananda Das draws admiration from the readers even in the twenty-first century. For several decades, his mighty utterances are being recognized, appreciated and analyzed more and more from various perspectives. The intention of this paper was to scrutinize Das's notion of darkness throughout the anthology. Examining his puzzling and illusive verses from the perspective of magical realism, the paper aimed to discern how dark the reality is, what the reasons are behind this darkness and how to overcome this terrible darkness. Das's poems of this anthology are like mundane documentary reports of reality weaved with his signature fabulous details of nature. His subtle suggestions, word-plays, pauses, enigmas and intentional shocks enthrall his poetry admirers and inspire them to dig deeper into the depths of his poetic universe. Available resources are not adequate enough to establish Das's deliberate affiliation with the international movement of magical realism. However, a careful study of the

poetry of Das's matured period will definitely reveal the traces of magical realism in his verses - this paper wished to demonstrate that endeavor. It is feasible to reveal deeper layers of meanings as perspectives are infinite. This paper will meet its success if it can inspire the future poetry admirers to dive into the fathomless abyss of Jibanananda Das's psyche.

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