

Chapter IV

AN ANALYSIS OF DEROZIO'S POEMS IN THE LIGHT OF BENGAL RENAISSANCE

A. The Contemporary Poetry in Bengal: The Background:

In order to understand the origin of Indo-Anglian Poetry at the hand of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, the characteristics of contemporary literary scenario in Bengal in the closing years of 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th century should first be discussed in details.

Bharat Chandra of the mid –eighteenth century is regarded to be the last representative of mediaeval Bengali poetry which figures gods and goddesses influencing the lives of the men and women on earth. Between Bharatchandra whose poetic activities ceased by the third quarter of the eighteenth century and Iswar Chandra Gupta of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, there is a big gap which may be termed as the first transition period of Bengali literature for it marks the first great advance from the old to the new. The changes that took place in the period are many and of far-reaching consequences and everywhere transitional in character. In politics and social affairs, the conflict between the old and the new was gradually taking shape, and there was unrest and uncertainty everywhere consequent upon such conflict. In literature although the ancient trend of thought and feeling lingered partially in the popular 'Kavi-Songs', 'Tappa-Songs', 'Panchalis' and other indigenous forms of literature, the British contact with the new wave of ideas and perceptions started bringing about changes in literary matters, form and temper. The domain of literary adventure was enlarged. The literature between the last quarter of the 18th century and the first quarter of the 19th century began to be marked by great urge for individual liberty. The impulse of individual liberty led the poets to respond to contemporary influences felt in the society. Despite access to new ideas and methods, the old tradition in literature still lived on. Poets writing in Bengali

inherited old literary traditions in theme and form. Still their poetry reflected national sentiment which was in link with the socio-cultural background of the period under discussion.

The gap in the range of Bengali Poetry between the death of Bhatat Chandra in 1760 and the rise of Iswar Chandra Gupta as a poet was filled by 'Kavi-songs', 'Tappa-songs', Panchalis'. Rasu, Haru Thakur and Netai Bairagi are some of the remarkable names in this field. 'Kavi-Poetry' is an entirely home – spun production- kindly, genial and indulgent by nature or in spirit. It awakened popular enthusiasm and was characterized by simplicity and lucidity of utterance which drew its strength from language and ideas of the people themselves who begot them. The Kavi poets served literature in their simple and homely way by furnishing a stimulus to the emotional life of the country. They were able very often in piercing through the gauds and trimmings of an effete literary tradition coming direct to the passion and emotion which is found to throb and pulsate in an individual. Some pieces of 'Kavi-poetry' are endowed with fine flash of sentiment. They are not considered poetry of high order with artistic finish or fineness of sentiment. 'Kavi – poetry has in its sweep love- lyric marked by a striking secular strain.

A 'Tappa' is generally taken to be a melodious lyric of the erotic type in which eroticism connotes wanton or ribald sensuality. Tappas are spontaneous and free. The masters of Tappa sang of their own feelings, joys and sorrows, triumphs and defeats. They, so to say, brought the note of subjectivity in the contemporary poetry. The chief marks of their poetry are an outburst of the personal element, an overflow of sensibility, an enfranchisement of the passion and the imagination and introspective element. They were votaries of nature. In the matter of form, ideas and general tone also they did not venture to go beyond certain limits. They preserved in a degree the old posture and the old manner, but in spirit and temper they heralded the new age. They were intermediaries between the old and the new poets; despite casting a lingering look behind they stood at the threshold of the new age of poetry.

During this period devotional songs which marked a departure from 'Tappa' songs began to flourish. While Tappa writers like Nidhubabu, Sridhar Kathak or Kali Mirza often passed on love songs to devotional songs, the writers of devotional songs, like Ram Prasad and Kamakakanta, on the other hand, seldom condescended to the more mundane theme of personal lyrics. The devotional songs, especially of Ram Prasad, got popularity as a reaction to the comparatively arid thralldom of conventional verse. Moreover, these songs were the life-long realization of an intensely spiritual nature. The tone is essentially that of a secular lyric.

Closely allied to 'Kavi' and 'Panchali' as spices of popular entertainment were the 'Yatra' which emerged in the literary realm of Bengal between 1800 and 1825. This form of literature like the productions of the Kaviwalas was extemporized and was meant to contribute to the transient pleasure of its audience and much of it was of the ephemeral type. So the Yatra began to degenerate. This degeneration was almost synchronous with and was, therefore, hastened by the change of taste and literary fashion of the 19th century which came to regard all these forms of literature as out of date and contemptible. With the spread of new ideas and new literary methods, a regular stage was gradually established and dramas written in imitation of European models, tolled the death-knell of the old yatra which still lingered but found the same place in popular favour.

In the history of modern Bengali poetry the contribution of Iswar Chandra Gupta of the second quarter of the nineteenth century is important. His importance as a poet is more historical than intrinsic. In his poetry we find the mantle of mediaeval poetry as he showed his fondness for alliteration and punning and a coarseness and scurrility which he obviously inherited from the 'Kaviwalas', but modern tendencies made their mark in his themes which are rich in social consciousness. Iswar Chandra Gupta was conservative and spared no pains to unlock his unfriendly and, at times, uncharitable reaction against the thinking and doing of a newly evolving anglicised society; and this reaction was the mainspring of much of the satire and banter of his poems. He was popular in his time as a journalist besides being a poet. Naturally his

poems share the merits and demerits of Journalism; the contemporary popularity of his poems is, therefore, no sure index to their intrinsic value. The patriotism in his poems may be noted as a special feature. This patriotic element was novel and fresh and it widened the appeal of his poems. For another reason he is historically important. He was able to attract a group of writers and poets who came to the limelight of literary creation through his journal 'Sambad Prabhakar'. These rising poets and writers include Rangalal Banerjee, Madhusudan Datta and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. They did their literary apprenticeship in the 'Sambad Prabhakar' under direct patronage from Iswar Chandra Gupta.

Iswar Chandra Gupta introduced the spirit of patriotism in Bengali poetry. This was the motive-force of almost all the narrative poems and literary epics, written during the second and third quarters of the nineteenth century. Rangalal Banerjee, Madhusudan Datta and Bankim Chandra Chatterjee expressed patriotic feelings through their literary works. The urge for patriotic and heroic poetry led to the growth and development of nationalism in the mid-nineteenth century. The themes chosen by the poets had to substantially transform for adjusting to the prevailing conditions and the hopes and aspirations of the people of the country. This transformation or adjustment helped the poets considerably in making old and retold themes acceptable and attractive to the readers of that period.

B. Derozio: The Making of the Poet:

1. Derozio's Poetic Career:

In the beginning of the 19th century the East India Company was more or less the master of the situation in India. In 1813 the commercial monopoly of the company came to an end and the British in India took up educative and civilizing functions apart from administration. The restrictions on the missionary activities were lifted. The demand for English education was on the increase because through it the access to Western thought and philosophy was easy; the study of English literature, history and geography was possible. A wave of change in social, political, religious and cultural plane knocked at the door of Bengal. The writers of the first quarter of the

nineteenth century were influenced by radical changes of thought in different phases of the nineteenth century. A writer lives in the society. Environment, social, economic and religious tensions first influence his life and thought and then pass into the literature he produces. Calcutta as the commercial as well as intellectual centre of British India felt at first the wave of Western thought and culture; because it (Calcutta) received a much greater exposure to the dynamic impact of the modern West than any other Indian city. One reason for Bengal's greater responsiveness to the new ideas was that "the great Brahmanical Tradition of Hindu India never acquired in Bengal the degree of influence which it had in other parts of the country".¹

The modern sensibility which came from Europe found in the Bengal Intelligentsia a deep and sustained responsiveness that was extraordinarily creative. The reason behind it was that Bengal first received the Western education through the medium of English. For being acquainted with the Western, especially with English literature, philosophy, history and geography, a fascination for composing literature in English grew strong. It was quite natural because in matter and manner Bengali literature especially poetry lost its charm. In artistic finish, in fineness of sentiment, in style and temper also the poets who emerged in the literary circle did not feel drawn to Bengali literature. Against this moribund condition of Bengali language and literature novel thoughts, form and manner cast an irresistible charm upon the budding poets and writers of that period. So English Language became the natural choice of literary expression and in this way it heralded the dawn of Indian English literature. Thus Indian English literature was an offshoot of the literary Renaissance caused by the introduction of English education in India. K. R. S. Iyengar writes "A renaissance of Indian literature and culture was the result and creative Indian writing in English was but one of the many forms that this Renaissance took".²

In the wake of Renaissance the creative writing in English was first found in Bengal and Derozio was a pioneer in this field. Rabindranath Tagore's comment in this connection is worth quoting; "Bengal's response

through literature to the call of the West is something unique in the history of the modern East".³

"That call", observes R.K. Dasgupta, "first reached our ears through Derozio..."⁴ Derozio, half –Indian, half - Portuguese was a disciple of David Drummond who had drunk deep of the metaphysics of Scotland and left his country in 1813 because of his proneness to free thinking. He closely watched the precocious and impulsive Derozio with interest and fed him with all that was best in the poetry and philosophy of the West. Derozio imbibed the spirit of free thinking considerably from his teacher Drummond.

When Derozio was fourteen, he lost his father. He was compelled to discontinue his studies for maintaining the family. On leaving school in 1823 he became a clerk in his father's office, but the drudgery of the desk had no fascination for him. Thomas Edwards writes in this connection, "The four walls of an office and a clerk's stool were speedily relinquished by Derozio; and at the age of sixteen in the varied work and life of an indigo –planter at Bhagalpore under the hospitable roof of his uncle Johnson, and the kindly eye of his mother's sister, the lad Derozio for a time found congenial".⁵ In Bhagalpore he came under the soothing influence of Nature. The clam and tranquil environment of this small north Bihar town upon the Ganges, the scenic beauty and idyllic milieu of the surroundings, a quite neighbourhood-all these contributed to nourish his creative faculty. The bud of his literary genius began to flower during the three-year stay in Bhagalpore. Moreover, the stay coloured his attitude to Nature and made him creative. Thomas Edwards writes, "It is here at Bhagalpore, with the ripple of the Ganges in his ear, and the boats of the fisher and the trader borne on the-tide, out of whose broad bosom rose the Fakir- inhibited rock of Jungheera, that the youthful poet drunk in all those sweet influences of nature and much of human nature, which indelibly impressed themselves on his intellect and imagination and stirred him to the production of his most sustained effort in poetry, "The Fakir of Jungheera".⁶ While living at Bhagalpore Derozio witnessed a panoramic view of life which had a lasting impression on his mind. Thomas Edwards gives a beautiful description of that panoramic view of life. He writes, "Here at

Bhagalpore, there fell in Derozio's ear and eye, and lingered in his memory, the splash of oars in the river: the greetings and gossip of women round the well; the creaking of the yoke: the patient toil of the ryots in their fields: the sounds that happy children make at play...."⁷ Again he writes, ".....the glorious panorama of an Indian sunset, when in the west clouds wreath themselves in slow majestic motions and unfold their changeful, chameleon tints, deepening into blackest night, and day and its glories seem like a glorious dream of beauty, swallowed by darkness".⁸ Derozio had realization of love at Bhagalpore. It is here at Bhagalpore that Derozio realized what it is to love and to be loved.

Derozio used to send poems for publication to 'India Gazette' of Dr. Johnson who had well-acquaintance with Derozio's poetic power from his school days. He published his poems under pseudonyms like 'Juvenis', 'Henry', 'East Indian' and the like.

2. The Contemporary Social Background :

Derozio grew up into a society that came into the contact with new ideas. The foundation of Bengal's social fabric began to be tremendously shaken as it was in a very moribund condition. Religious superstition, in the main, ate into the vitals of Bengal. The misrule of the British with economic exploitation, injustice to the natives, and physical oppression for nothing made the people's life miserable. When Derozio grew up in Calcutta, the system of slavery was in vogue which he himself experienced. Most people used to sell their children for poverty. Besides, the system of 'Sati' was prevalent. Rammohun Roy made a movement against it and ultimately he succeeded in abolishing the system through a regulation passed on 4th December, 1829 by William Bentinck. Polygamy and early marriage with their serious and harmful effects created scars on society. The sufferings of the young widows presented a very pathetic story of womanhood. The greatest of the evil from which the women would suffer was the denial of education. References may be made in this connection to two remarkable letters published in the "Samachar Darpan" on 14th and 21st March, 1835: "Still some women manage to get some education and ventilated their grievances".⁹ Some educated

women had knowledge of religious literature; because the study of religious literature was considered to be a pious recreation by the ladies in the respectable families.

Derozio grew up in the society of Calcutta stifled with slavery. While the poor in their desperation would sell their women and children, the rich would keep a good number of slaves as a mark of their status. Open trade of slave was in vogue then in the open market. "In 1785 William Jones in connection with a verdict declared on a suit in the Supreme Court mentioned the miserable plight of the slaves".¹⁰ The social life of Bengal exhibited another kind of malady during the last quarter of the 18th century Bengal which lasted till the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It was infanticide. The family of childless woman would take a vow to sacrifice the first born child as an offering to the Ganges. Such vows were taken on other religious grounds also.

Derozio's stay in Calcutta and Bhagalpore stirred his revolutionary mind. When he lived in Calcutta, he saw the inhuman torture inflicted upon the slaves; they would be sent from Calcutta to other places. In Bhagalpore he had the experience of witnessing the torture inflicted upon the farmers cruelly by the English indigo –planters who used to force them to cultivate indigo against their will and denial of it would bring them unspeakable misery and suffering. The inhuman system left an indelible mark on Derozio's mind and he fervently dreamt of the freedom of the slaves in his poetry. In the magazine, 'East Indian', Derozio directly advocated the right and freedom of all.

The Natives of India did not recognize the British rule, especially the rule of the East India Company; rather they nourished grievance in their heart against the Company's rule. They were in a mood to make revolt against the reign of the company. In an article, 'Colonization', Derozio writes "The most superficial observer must perceive that India is maintained only by Military force. Withdraw it, and the boasted opinion of the natives, instead of supporting, would immediately prove the cause of the utter subversion of the

empire". Derozio not only protested against the misrule of the company and cruel tyranny and oppression of the indigo-planters on the farmers of Bengal but also took his pen against tortures of the landlords on the people. In an article, 'Cultivation of Hindustan' in 'Kaleidoscope' February, 1830, he spoke about the oppression of the native landlords on the farmers: "Of their cruelties towards the ryots little needs to be said, as they are pretty generally known".¹¹

Derozio enthusiastically supported Rammohun's movement to abolish the system of 'Sati' and was highly hilarious when it was abolished on 4th December, 1829. In reaction to his immense pleasure he composed a poem for 'India Gazette', 8 August, 1831:

"Hark, heard ye not? Widow's wail is over
The storm is passing, the rainbow's span
Stretch from north to south; the eboncar
Of darkness rolls away; breezes fan
The infant down; and worn wing held stir
Comes trembling into decay! O! Can the sun be far?"¹²

Derozio also welcomed Lord Bentinck and Raja Rammohun Roy in his poem, "On the abolition of Sati"

The society in which Derozio grew up was thus chained with a lot of superstitions, social and religious and free thinking was beyond imagination. The soil of Bengal in the early part of the nineteenth century was stained with a lot of negative forces which suppressed man's thought and reason. Derozio drank the nectar of western education, culture and philosophy and brought about a revolution of thought in Bengal.

3. Influence of Western Philosophers:

The nineteenth century, especially the first quarter, is remarkable in the history of Bengal as it saw the emergence of revolutionary thoughts and movements of far reaching results. The last quarter of the eighteenth century offers a picture of decay relating to social and religious superstitions. So the change which was in sight in the beginning of the nineteenth century for

radical ideas associated with society, religion, culture and politics had dazzling effect for the people. The wave of Western education and philosophy came to India through the channel of English education. Derozio acquired the knowledge of Western philosophy from his student life in Dharmatala Academy of David Drummond. Drummond had the reputation of being a poet, a scholar and a free thinker. As sceptive and rationalist he was a staunch follower of David Hume. He doubted the existence of God and expressed his faith in man as his own master. He was also influenced by the humanistic ideas of Hume. From Drummond young Derozio imbibed the intoxicating freedom-urge of the French Revolution, (1789) and a passion for freedom of thought. Liberation possessed his soul. He also knew Bacon and Locke and was familiar with the philosophical ideas of the French encyclopaedists who started investigation through rationalism. The clergymen of the Roman Catholics were his major targets. They include Volni, Voltaire, Rousseau, Hallbath, Helvitiu, Dederu and La Metri. Among them Voltaire, Rousseau and Volni were monotheists while Hallbath, Helvitiu and La Metri were atheists. The latter group did not believe in the existence of God, immortality of soul and punishment consequent upon holy and unholy service. David Hume as an English radicalist did not believe in miracles. He tried to trace the origin and history of religion on the basis of natural and scientific method. He regarded religious rites as nothing but the activities prompted by the vested interests of the priests and clergymen. For about two centuries (17th and 18th) the revolutionary thoughts and ideas regarding social, religious, political and economic life created a stir in the domain of thought of the Western people. The message of this new philosophical thoughts and idea came to Bengal through the channel of Western education. The Hindu College of Calcutta was then the main centre of Western education. According to the founders of this College it was the main channel by which real knowledge may be transferred from its European sources into the intellect of Hindustan.

As a student Derozio was acquainted with the philosophical ideals of the West and as a teacher of Hindu College he tried his best to impart his knowledge to the brilliant students of the Hindu College. Derozio used to teach European History and literature in Hindu college. His ideas of history

and concepts of philosophy were based on the theories propounded by Hume, Bacon, Maupertui, Voltaire, Rousseau and some other leading European scholars. They carefully studied the history and revolutionary philosophy of France and were deeply stirred by the wave of a similar revolution in Europe in 1830.

4. Derozio's views on poetry:

Derozio firmly believed that a poet must have a mission to remove the miseries of the people. This notion of mission grew out of his contact with the current problems of society, the philosophical ideas of the West and his stay at Bhagalpore. On 22nd January, 1830, he wrote an article in the "India Gazette", in which he discussed the function of poetry and the mission of a poet. Poetry to him was something that refined and purified the springs of life, it was an instrument for elevating and improving man's moral and intellectual nature. He wanted to see a radical reform among the poets. He wrote, "Let it be aim of the present age to open new springs, let the mind engage in voyages for the discovery of happiness; let the poet abandon war, misanthropy, romance and false feeling, and let his enthusiasm be on that side which espouses man's best interest; let it be his object to improve, while he delights and to promote the advancement of society."¹³

It is clear then that Derozio looked upon the poet as one who must be alive to the duties he owes to the society. He had deep love for the country, despite being a Eurasian; he not only thought it his duty to instil the love for Truth in his disciples but also to foster a love for the country among his countrymen. He had an unflinching interest in Indian lore, local customs and legends. His love for his country was free from any sort of parochial outlook. Being a Eurasian he criticised the British in power in India for their oppression, arrogance and impatience with the natives. He warned that the English must pay penalty for this attitude to Indians. This warning, no doubt, sprang spontaneously from the spirit of patriotism. In a lecture in 'East Indian', 17th December, 1831, he said, "In a few years the Hindus will take their stand by the best and the proudest Christians; and it cannot be desirable to excite the feelings of the former against the latter. The East Indian complains of

suffering from prescription, is it for them to prescribe? Suffering should teach us not to make others suffer. Is it to produce different effect on East Indians? We hope not".¹⁴ Derozio's broad outlook became manifest when he placed a proposal in connection with the claims and rights of the Eurasians. He held that "The admission of East Indians to certain rights does not preclude the possibility of other classes of the population also securing for themselves the privileges to which they are entitled. If East Indians were permitted to enjoy all privileges they now seek, it would be impossible to withhold the claims of others. Their enemies have tried to set both the European and the native against them by saying that they seek exclusive privileges, well knowing that if they once entered the breach, there would be many to follow".¹⁵ He had firm conviction that the problems of the deprived as well as the oppressed are common and they must be united to solve their problems irrespective of caste and religions. He gave a clarion call to it in the following words: "All the zeal of a will force would have been employed in vain, if the abolition of slavery had depended upon his individual exertions".¹⁶ During the publication of "East Indian" he strikes the cord of broad and universal awareness which is steeped in humanism irrespective of colour, creed, and religion. In the manifesto of the magazine, Derozio wrote, "To prevent any misconception to which the name of paper may give rise, the proprietor begs to state that his journal will advocate the just rights of all classes of the community".¹⁷

It can, therefore, be well said that Derozio's literary output bears the stamp of his experience and thought. It is his poetic output which is the quintessence of his philosophical thoughts and ideas that helped blossom Renaissance in the first three decades of the nineteenth century.

C. Analysis of Derozio's Poems:

1. Introduction: The achievement of Derozio as a teacher is so remarkable that the poet in him is so often overlooked. The reason is that he is better known as an inaugurator of new age and leader of the group, 'Young Bengal' than as a poet with new perceptions based on the revolutionary ideas of Hume, Bacon, Rousseau, Voltaire and other Western Philosophers in the context of India under the British rule. Besides being an outstanding social

thinker, he was however a poet of considerable power. He took a pioneering role to express the revolutionary ideas through the whole gamut of his literary output, especially poetry. Derozio is "modern India's first patriot to give expression to that patriotism in verse, the first to sing Freedom that lights the altar of the soul with everlasting flame, the first to contemplate an intellectual renaissance for an ancient civilization through new perceptions', the first to exalt reason as an instrument of progress".¹⁸ R. K. Dasgupta says, "The power of his verse comes from the power of this poetry of life and we may miss that power if we fail to relate it to that life".¹⁹ This is not so with most of the greatest of poets whose poetry needs no gloss from the story of their lives. Derozio was so young that he could not master the art which gives poetry a life of its own, independent of the life of its maker.

Derozio had neither the genius of Keats nor the freakishness of a Chatterton. We should not take into account the fact that his verse is only, "a feeble echo of the voice of Byron and Moore"²⁰ and "his style is marred by an abundance of oriental imagery".²¹ He never concealed his enthusiasm for Byron. In spite of being oriental and derivative in composing poems of English he had a voice of his own. For writing poems in his early twenties he lacked perfection in diction and style. But his verse shows some other qualities. Bradely- Birt characterizes Derozio's poems as "extraordinarily mature considering his years"²² and as "showing a remarkable command of language and beauty of expression".²³ According to him, Derozio's poetry shows "unbounded enthusiasm, wealth of imagery, and a passionate resentment to wrong, though it lacks originality and undoubtedly owes much to Byron and Moore".²⁴ While tracing the influence of Byron, Moore and L.E. Landon on Derozio E. W. Madge comments: "these were the literary idols of the day, and it may well be understood that to break away from fashionable models would for a youthful and inexperienced writer only spell disaster".²⁵ From E. M. Madge's comment it is clear that Derozio's derivative nature of poetry is quite natural in view of the fashion of the age. As a poet young in age Derozio lacked diction and style. But he did not lack "truth of experience which is the very breath of Poetry".²⁶ R.K.Dasgupta is of the view that there is an intensity of feeling in Derozio's verses which is unmistakable. It is a feeling which gave

his lyrics their power, which gave his conduct its nobility and grace and gave him the courage to hold on to his convictions when they were assailed by his adversaries. He quoted the following lines from Derozio's poetry:

"My mind that wandered once like summer bird
From twisted brake and bush on wildest wing.
Swift as its own desires, must fall at last
Even from those sweet ideal worlds it made:
And, like my native earth, which once a star
Blazed through the pathless ether, must I roam,
Darkness without, within consuming flame."²⁷

This feeling gave Derozio a voice. This voice is the "voice of the new humanity of the new universe"²⁸ that emerged in the early decades of the nineteenth century, "a universe of infinite despair and hope".²⁹ Derozio has expressed this voice in his poems like 'The Fakir of Jungheera' with "a spirit of courage and hope that is found among the poets of the Romantic Movement of English literature in the nineteenth century".³⁰

2. Classification of Derozio's Poems:

Derozio's poetic career was short, lasting only for about six years from 1825 to 1831. During this period he published two volumes of poetry – 'Poems' (1827) and 'The Fakir of Jungheera: A Metrical Tale and other Poems (1825)'. Apart from the poems included in these two volumes of poetry, we also get 19 unpublished poems of Derozio. His poems may be classified into the following categories:

a) Those which are absolutely Indian in their context and perspective: only the language is English 'The Fakir of Jungheera' (a long verse narrative with a little of balladic element in a sense), his 'magnum opus', is the finest example of the first category. Besides, 'To India- My Native Land', 'Enchantress of the Caves', 'The Ruins of Rajmahal', 'Song of an Indian Girl', 'Song of Hindustani Minstrel', 'On the Abolition of satee', 'David Hare' are the most notable representative pieces of this section.

b) Those that have certain European backdrop: historical, literary or otherwise such as 'Thermopylae', 'Greece', 'Greeks at Marathon', 'The Grecian Sire and the son', 'Address to the Greeks', 'and Sappho'. Besides, 'Italy', 'Tasso' and 'Anecdote of Frances I' are based on political and cultural histories of Italy and France.

'A Song Tuned in Portuguese Air', 'A Portuguese Song', 'Romeo and Juliet' and 'Yorick's Skull' are some poems composed after taking cues from some delicate emotional and philosophical problems raised in Shakespearean plays. 'New Atlantis', 'Love's First Feelings', and 'Golden Vase' are the poems which are written in the styles somewhat resembling some contemporary British poets.

c) Those which have some universal appeal, such as humanism or urge for freedom like 'Freedom of the Slave', 'Morning after a storm', 'Poetry of Human Life' and 'Independence'.

d) A few poems are written in the context of certain personal feelings. Mention may be made of 'Here's a Health to Thee Lassie', 'Addressed to Her, who'll Best Understand Them', 'Sister – in – Law', 'Sonnet to the pupils of Hindu College,' 'The poet's Grave(I)' and 'The Poet's Grave (II)'.

e) The poems which cannot be grouped into any category belong to miscellaneous section. 'Ode from the Persian of Hafiz' and 'A Walk by Moon Light' may be mentioned in this connection.

3. The Fakir of Jungheera : A Tale of Love and Romance:

The longest and the most ambitious work of Derozio is 'The Fakir of Jungheera', a narrative idyll often hailed as a classic of the new spirit and voice of the humanity at large. Derozio attempts to tell a long tale combining adventure and romance and exposing the social evil of 'sati'. The theme and setting of this long poem render him worthy of regard 'as a minor but genuine member of the Romantic Movement'.³¹ The Story- line of this narrative poem is somewhat unique, because the social background of the period during the

composition of this long poem was the least congenial. Through the 52 sections of the poem Derozio describes the strange vicissitudes in the unfortunate life of a Brahmin widow, Nulinee. The first canto begins with a sequence of Sati rites; Nulinee is moving towards the pyre of her dead husband amidst ritualistic incantations. Then Nulinee slowly climbs upon the pyre of her husband which is yet to be lit. She starts offering her prayers to the gods. Just then Nulinee's former lover, a Muslim youth who has become the leader of a gang of bandits after being refused by the girl's family, reaches the cremation ground with his followers. He rescues his beloved from the pyre and flees away with her to live a happy life in the rocks of Jungheera.

In the second canto we find Nulinee's father being humiliated at the incident of the bandit's daring act, praying to the Nawab of Rajmahal for a redress. Accordingly the royal forces began to search for the culprit. The confrontation between the royal forces and the followers of the outlawed bandit is imminent. In the ultimate sequence of the narrative it is found that the lifeless bodies of the two lovers are lying on the battlefield in a close embrace.

The story of the long poem is believed to be based on the ideological tenet of Derozio. The theme of the romantic tale is very outstanding. B. Alphanso Karkala's observation is worth quoting here. He writes, "Though Henry uses all the essential ingredients of a romantic tale in the manner of Byron or Moore at times even accepting pre-Wordsworthian poetic diction, what is more important in his poem is his theme – his attempt to expose the social evils of a decadent society with greater subtlety than Raja Rammohun Roy's outright denunciation".³² Derozio depicts "the inhumanity of 'sati', the false morality of the women and the hypocritical chanting of the Brahmins".³³ With such an understanding, "real yet manly pathos, imaginative thought and appropriate diction that one wonders whether a Hindu would have written in the way he did".³⁴ Alphanso Karkala further remarks, "At a time when Eurasians were not accepted either by the Europeans or by the Indians, Henry, a child of two cultures, identified himself with his native land and wrote purely on Indian themes with a reformer's zeal".³⁵ A century later, Edward

Oaten thought of Derozio as a man who sharing the blood of the European and Indian 'put the pathos and passions of his sensitive nature into his metrical tale, 'The Fakir of Jungheera'.³⁶

The absorption of the Western influence acted as a liberating force and the poets of the early part of the 19th century Bengal exhibited reformistic zeal through poetry. Derozio took the pioneering role in this respect. V. K. Gokak remarks: "The championing of the Indian widow starts with Derozio".³⁷ C. Paul Varghese comments that Derozio's ardour for social reform shows itself in this poem, "The Fakir of Jungheera. The first nine sections of the poem, present through a series of evocative images, the picture of the young woman, Nulinee who is taken along in a procession accompanied by horses and trumpeteers to the altar of a pyre. There Nulinee, a young widow, will be burnt to ashes alive, according to the custom of 'Sati'. Nulinee, enrobed in white, approaches the altar which has been idealized by the chorus of women:

"On to the altar, and scatter the flower,
Sweeten the path as ye wander along;
On to the altar I another blest hour.
Bring to her spirit the Kinnura's song."³⁸

The chorus of women justifies the practice of 'Sati':

"Such is the boon that to her shall be given;
Myriads of ages for her are in store;
She shall enjoy all the blessings of heaven,
Till heaven, and its blessings themselves are no more".³⁹

Moreover, the chorus of women gives us an idealized picture of Sati:

"Happy! thrice happy I thy lord shall there meet thee.
Twined round his heart shalt thou ever remain,
Happy! bright angels are longing to greet thee,
Tuned ate their harp-strings, and ready their strain".⁴⁰

The chorus of Brahmins describes the bustling activity before sacrifice idealizing the custom of 'sati' at the same time. The description is very vivid:

"Scatter, scatter flowers round,
 Let the tinkling cymbal sound;
 Strew the scented orient spice,
 Prelude to the sacrifice;
 Bring the balm and bring the myrrh,
 Sweet as is the breath of her
 Who upon the funeral pyre
 Shali, ere Surya sets, expire".⁴¹

The invocation of the Sun by the chief Brahmin is the climax of the religious custom relating to 'Sati'. The chorus is the relentless conscience of the Hindu traditions presented ironically by the poet to suggest a point of view he does not share. The chorus and the invocation are part of the pattern of superstition the poet wants to expose. Amidst the loud beating of drums and tinkling of cymbals Nulinee is brought to the altar. Then the poet comments on the world's unfeeling way:

"O! this is but the world's unfeeling way
 To goad the victim that it soon will slay;
 And like a demon 'tis its custom still
 To laugh at sorrow, and then coldly kill".⁴²

From the comment made through the above quoted lines it is clear that Derozio wants to expose the hypocrisy of the Brahmins and the women and satirise the social custom that slays human beings in the name of religious practice.

Satire becomes a part and parcel of the narrative framework of the poem. The satire is counterpointed by the poet's appreciation of the woman's liberty in matters of choice which is suppressed under the social customs of the time of Derozio in Bengal as "mean ye cruel".⁴³ Since Nulinee, the heroine, loves a person other than her husband, the poet does not approve of the torture that the Brahmins inflict on her to self immolation on the funeral pyre of her husband. The question the poet raises is as follows:

".....Could she be,
While by her husband's lifeless form, unmoved
If ever she that lifeless form had loved?"⁴⁴

Derozio warns all of his time that nobody should tyrannize over the womankind through misjudgement and misrepresentation.

The poet's profound sympathy with the women persecuted under the cruel social customs finds expression time and again throughout the poem:

"Alas! that woman e'er should be
Bowed to the earth with misery,
And that her soul from pleasure's sky
Should like a meteor fall from high
.....
.....
.....
.....
But ah! most sad when woman gay
Must swan-like sing her dying lay!"⁴⁵

Derozio portrays the horrible performance of the 'Satee' with a profound note of pathos and irony as is found in the following lines:

Full soon the link of being's chain
That holds Nulinee yet below,
Shall be for ever snapped in twain –
And then adieu to mortal woe!
Before the pile she bends her brow,
With all affections she must part,
And those that cling to earth must now
At once be severed from her heart. –
And from her head the wreath she takes,
Seven circuits round the pile she makes,
And now with baleful brand on fire,
She slowly mounts the dreadful pyre.⁴⁶

Through the story Derozio has built a poem of love and social prejudices also. Derozio points out the price that socially unsanctioned love must pay.

From section XXII of canto 1 to section XVI of canto 2, Derozio paints an idyllic scene of love and romance between Nulinee and her robber –lover who rescues her from the immolation on the pyre. Derozio portrays the love between Nulinee and her former lover in a very romantic manner. The poet shows that the love between Nulinee and the robber –lover is born of free choice. Derozio conceives love also as a noble passion that transcends the ephemerality of our ordinary existence. Evidently, he wrote under the influence of the Romantics and his concept of love is a synchronism of emotional idealism, mediaeval romanticism, and renaissance humanism.

In 'The Fakir of Jungheera' love as a noble passion ennoble a man and makes him brave. The outlawed Fakir saves Nulinee from the funeral pyre. At that moment Nulinee is overwhelmed by her passion of love and she confesses her love for him.

“Like life to hope, she clung to him
For now was severed sorrows chain.”⁴⁷

In an ecstatic moment of reminiscence and hope Nulinee unfurls the layers of her memory:

“In calm, in shine, in storm and strife
Thou, thou hast been my light of hope”.⁴⁸

In depicting the romantic love between Nulinee and her robber- lover Derozio uses 'moon' and 'moon light' as recurring symbols

“How beautiful is moonlight on the stream
How bright on life is Hope's enchanting beam
.....
.....

How soft upon each flower is fair moonlight -
 Making its beauty more serenely bright",⁴⁹

Again,

"How sweet to sit upon a bank, and mark
 The soft moon looking on little bark".⁵⁰

The poet portrays the pleasure of love between Nulinee and her lover in the following lines

"O! this is joy, like that to angel's given
 Filled to the brim, the heavenliest cup of heaven
 Her Robber – love and young Nulinee share
 Each bliss as perfect as the heart may bear"⁵¹

The intrepid fakir has firm conviction that he will defeat his enemies in the battle against the nawab's soldier. This conviction comes from his love for Nulinee that makes him utter:

"A daring conquest must my hand achieve;
 And 'tis my promise, ere another chief
 Shall be selected for thy love's relief,
 Once more to lead them to their prey alone,
 Then quit forever, and be all thine own"⁵²

The separation between Nulinee and her lover is imminent for a stroke of misfortune which is symbolized by a storm. In section XIII of Canto 2 Derozio gives a touching description of that storm.

The fakir must go to the battle-field. So the words and expressions of the parting moment of the lovers swept by romantic passions are pointers to the realm of love to which they live. They are not willing to be parted but the situation is compelling. Nulinee says,

"And must we part so soon? An hour from thee-
 A single moment – were Eternity
 When thou are gone alas? What Can I Find?
 To fill the dreadful vacuum of mind?"⁵³

Nulinee cannot think of her present existence without her robber lover. Is any other person will fill the vacuum of her mind? Nulinee herself finds the answer in the loving company of her robber-lover. She says,

"Thy home's my bosom – come, and rest the here!"⁵⁴

Nulinee shudders at the thought of being parted from the sweet and loving company of her lover. This feeling leads her to say

"Nay – I will cling to thee – O! tear me not
From thy embrace – is all, is all forgot?
Are those fond vows which once to me were given
Gone like thin clouds by winds for ever driven?"⁵⁵

In Derozio's concept of love Honour is very important. So the Fakir cannot listen to the earnest requests of Nulinee to stay with her and he declares, "Nay, I must leave thee"⁵⁶ as

"Honour at stake, it were degrading thee
Here to remain in soft captivity,
Thou would 'st despise me were I meanly driven
To slight the promise to my comrades given"⁵⁷

So the Fakir with his comrades joins the battle against the soldiers of Shoojah at the request of Nulinee's father to do justice. The cry for battle was in the air; -"The earth convulsed as if quaked with fear?"⁵⁸

The Fakir and his band of outlaws are routed. The Fakir himself falls wounded and the tide of life begins gushing out fast from his heart. Derozio as a poet gives a very touching description of it in some telling words.

Ah! there a bold Moslem writhing lay,
And gasp by gasp was life ebbing away."⁵⁹

At last the Fakir succumbs to the fatal injury caused by valiant battle against the forces of Nawab Shoojah and becomes vanquished. Derozio writes,

"The tide of life fast gushing from his breast –
The spirit struggling for eternal rest!"⁶⁰

Nulinee had fear in her mind as her life was steeped in suffering imposed from without. She was in quest of her lover in the battlefield and found her lover dead. Here Derozio's poetic expression deserves our careful attention not only for Nulinee's plight but also for the poetic beauty:

"She placed his head upon her bosom fair,
Watching the spirit as it ebbed, pale and care
Had steeped her heart in sorrow's bitter stream,
And on her brow a melancholy beam
Like moonlight fell upon a drooping flower."⁶¹

Nulinee's hope and aspiration regarding love and new life with the Fakir have been shattered into pieces. Her existence on earth becomes meaningless. She is also found dead, her arms 'fondly ivying'⁶² the corpse of the Fakir. It is very evident that Nulinee welcomed the new life with the Fakir and she died with the desire and the dreams of life's beauty in her heart. So Derozio writes

"..... all powerful charms
Even death had failed to conquer – her lips seemed
Still parted by sweet breath, as if she dreamed
Of him in her embrace"⁶³

Derozio's concept of love is not only associated with the idea of honour as reflected in the Fakir's resolve to fight, but also with sacrifice as shown in Nulinee's death with the death of the Fakir. This is an example of love idealized and sacrificed "par excellence". In the first part of the poem Derozio tries to show an attempted sacrifice in the name of love and duty falsely

imposed on an unfortunate young woman for some superstitious social customs.

Derozio raises a question about Nulinee's love :

" Think'st thou she dreams of love, and love for whom
The parted dead whose home should be the tomb"?⁶⁴

Then he leaves the matter of love to Nulinee when he writes,

"Hers was a heroine's choice..."⁶⁵

Again he says that Nulinee has been brought to pyre of her dead husband against her will

"And see! she comes unto death's festival
As to her bridal bed."⁶⁶

He does not like to see Nulinee as

"... a toy for others play"⁶⁷
as "The heart is free, and gives itself away."⁶⁸

The superstitious custom of 'Sati' suppressed the desire of her life. He says,

"The various passions in her bosom caged,
All wildly maddening war chaotic waged."⁶⁹

Nulinee's mind suffers from stress and strain for the inhuman torture and while the first part of the poem, 'The Fakir of Jungheera' is, as has been said earlier, an attempted sacrifice, the second part shows a willing sacrifice that glorifies and ennobles love. Sacrifice forced by superstition and sacrifice dictated by love are contrasted. Derozio says,

"Life's sunniest hour is when th' enraptured soul
Yields, willing captive, to Love's sweet control."⁷⁰

For Derozio, love in its noblest aspect is an ever sustaining power that obliterates our awareness of the harsh realities and agonies of life and death. Its radiance invests man with a feeling of new existence and triumph:

"Those wild emotions love alone bestows
Ecstatic fancies which but once can be,
Making us quite forget Mortality."⁷¹

The frequent use of the imagery of heavenly bodies and references to precious stones, flower and dreams in 26 and 27 sections of Canto I underline the celestial nature of the love between Nulinee and the Fakir and endows it with a halo of immortality.

4. The Note of humanistic secularism in the Fakir of Jungheera:

The Renaissance outlook of Derozio leads him to bring in the note of humanistic secularism in his poetry. He always stresses on man and man's fundamental hopes and aspirations irrespective of caste, colour and religion. Pallav Sengupta notes in the union between the star – crossed lovers – a Muslim Fakir and a Brahmin Girl, Nulinee, Derozio's effort at achieving religious harmony, which he calls "progressive harmony".⁷² But the theme of the metrical tale and the sub – plot – 'The Legend of the Shusan', based on 'Betal Puncheesa' which a student of the Hindu college brought to him prove that the metrical tale strikingly reflects Derozio's humanistic secularism, rather than his zeal for religious harmony. In the poem under discussion an upper caste Hindu girl and a Muslim youth fall in love but he is compelled to marry someone else and becomes, out of frustration, a lawless tough. They are united dramatically after she is rescued by him from the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. Her former lover takes her to the safe abode of the rocks of Jungheera with the kindling hope and dream of building home. Their eternal impulse of love breaks the barrier of established custom of society and religion. Nulinee descends from the funeral pyre ignoring the caste of her former lover and the reaction of the society to which she belongs on account of her free-choice Derozio suggests free choice of love of Nulinee in the opening line of section XII, Canto I :

"Hers was a heroine's choice",⁷³

as she cannot think of her love for a man "whose home should be the tomb"?⁷⁴ Similarly, after rescuing Nulinee from her husband's funeral pyre, the Fakir takes a vow by which he breaks the religious barrier,

'No more to Mecca's hallowed shrine
Shall wafted be a prayer of mine.

.....

.....

Henceforth I turn my willing knee
From Alla, Prophet, heaven, too thee."⁷⁵

Considering the prevailing social background of Bengal at that time it may be said that Derozio has bravely drawn a sequence of events where religious conservatism is sacrificed at the altar of love steeped in humanistic secularism. Derozio's secular outlook, born of humanism, is well reflected in another incident of the poem. Nulinee's father felt humiliated as the Muslim Fakir, Nulinee's former lover, rescued Nulinee from the pyre and went with her to the rocks of Jungheera. So the humiliated father prays to the Nawab of Rajmahal for a redress. The Muslim ruler does not hesitate to help a Hindu subject (Nulinee's father) to get his grievance redressed against a Muslim 'outlaw'. Here Derozio glorifies the stand of the Nawab of Rajmahal who is above religious narrowness in his royal duty of justice and truth. This secularism is an offshoot of his humanistic outlook that may be traced to his schooling under the care of David Drummond who came to Calcutta bringing with him the voice of the new humanity looming large slowly but steadily in the soil of Bengal at first and championed humanistic secularism.

5. The Note of Mediaevalism in the poem:

In 'The Fakir of Jungheera' ' Derozio's idea of mediaeval romanticism is well expressed in his selection of place for narrating a tale of love and romance against the backdrop of a superstitious religious custom of 'Sati' of the Middle Ages. In the poem we get an episode of love in the sub-plot-'The Legend of the Shushan' which strengthens the idea of love of the mainplot. In his own writing to the notes of the poem he mentions the source of the metrical tale: "Although I once lived nearly three years in the vicinity of

Jungheera, I had but one opportunity of seeing the beautiful and truly romantic spot. I had a view of the rocks from the opposite bank of the river, which was broad and full, at the time I saw it, during the rainy season. It struck me then as a place where achievements in love and arms may take place, and the double character I had heard from the Fakir, together with some acquaintance with the scenery, induced me to find a tale upon both these circumstances".⁷⁶ In building the tale of the poem, he writes, "..... I have taken a licence with the fact which thus assumes a more romantic character".⁷⁷ It is quite natural for Derozio to be romantic in narrating the tale of love, war and battle as he was well – acquainted with the 'Preface to the Lyrical Ballads' published in 1798 by Wordsworth and Coleridge . 'Preface to the Lyrical Ballads' heralded the movement of Lyrical Ballads which was welcomed by Derozio for the first time in India. As a result of the wave of it we get a poem like 'The Fakir of Jungheera' from Derozio's poetic genius.

The Muslim – Fakir, Nulinee's former lover, shows chivalric attitude to love of mediaeval period. Nulinee's rescue by him from the funeral pyre of his dead husband reminds us of the Knights of the Middle Ages of England who used to save their lover braving dangers whatsoever. The Fakir becomes desperate to do as honour is involved with his love. For materializing his dream of love and home he is ready to fight against the soldiers of the Nawab of Shoojah; The Nawab sent soldiers to redress the humiliation of Nulinee's father. Then the battle between the forces of the Fakir and the Nawab takes place. Derozio gives a spirited account of the battle which is surcharged with the air of mediaeval battle. He uses the symbol of 'storm' to suggest the impending battle and writes many lines about it. The battle is heard. Derozio writes,

"And the shout that rushes through silence on high
Like the tempest's voice is the battle –cry."⁷⁸

Again he writes,

"Strike! 't is the demon, deep, in his breast
Let your lances be gilt and your sabres find rest."⁷⁹

Derozio was well-acquainted with Walter Scott's metrical romances and the flash and spirit of battle – action of Scott inspired Derozio in his description of battle between the comrades of the Robber – chief and those of Shoojah in 'The Fakir of Jugheera' He writes about it in section XX, Canto II. Some lines may be quoted from this portion to show his art of description of the battle-scene:

"Each robber has taken his sabre and shield,
 And bounds like a blood hound new – split of the shield,
 Heard ye the horrible roar of the gun?
 Destruction is raging, the battle's begun
 Another dread peal! And a flash again
 With a flickering light illumines the plain"⁸⁰

As a result of the fierce battle soldiers lose their lives. Derozio gives a poetic description of it in the following lines:

"The youthful, the gallant are falling around
 Like corn just reaped on the damp cold ground
 And the blood flows fast of the fallen and falling,
 As if it came forth at the spear-point's calling?"⁸¹

In the battle Nulinee's lover fights valiantly and his courageous fight dispersed the royal soldiers and caused huge harm. The Robber-chief also dies heroically to the last drop of his blood to emerge victorious in order to come back again to Nulinee for promises to keep but he could not. Derozio's description of the death of the Fakir displays his gift of poetic expression:

"Ah! There a bold Moslem writhing lay,
 And gasp by gasp was life ebbing away;"⁸²

Nulinee's reaction to her former lover's death can be felt by the long – cherished love that broke the barrier whatsoever. She is, as if, petrified in grief as her desire and hope of living with the fakir is shattered into pieces and she cannot believe it. Is it not a reaction expected of a lover who has been turned into a toy at the hands of those who negate the eternal impulse of love and life

in youth? In the battle-field Nulinee finds the body of her lover and Derozio expresses her poignant emotion thus:

"She bends her form, beholds, and stands fixed and mute:
Is it a dream, or does the night deceive?
She looks again – she trembles – must believe
'T is he – that robber – not victorious now –
The cold death damp descending on his brow."⁸³

Nulinee cannot bear this stroke of misfortune and she is also found dead embracing the dead body of her lover. In this way he perpetuates her spell of love through her death and her love conquers over death. Derozio writes :

"Even death had failed to conquer – her lips seemed
Still parted by sweet breath, as if she dreamed
Of him in her embrace."⁸⁴

In his description of the royal court of Shooja at Rajmahal Derozio gives us a glimpse of his acquaintance with royal courts of the mediaeval period. About the beauty of the royal court he writes;

"The lamps are lit in the Mussulman's towers
And soft is the song in his emerald bowers!
And sweet's the sitar that the minstrel hath strung
And sweeter the lay that the Georgian hath sung – "⁸⁵

Derozio portrays the beauty and grandeur of the lamps upon each marble wall, in these lines,

"Those lamps are all of glittering gold
Like sunset gleaming o'er the sea,
And scented is the store they hold
As ever maiden's locks may be."⁸⁶

In the royal court of Rajmahal the prince is presented by Derozio typically in the way the Muslim princes are presented:

“On carpet bright of velvet green
 Whose broidered rim with gold is shining,
 With pearls the glittering lines between,
 The prince is all at ease reclining
 And golden cups and goblets bright
 With spices sweet from Lunka’s isle,
 And sherbets all like liquid light,
 Sparkle around him there the while.”⁸⁷

In the royal court of the nawabs always maidens stand in welcoming position as mark of royal grandeur and glamour and custom. It is clear in the following lines:

“Behold a young Cashmerian girl
 With cheek of rose, and neck of pearl,
 Before him stands – the fairest star
 Burning in beauteous skies afar.
 Might trembling shrink away to vie
 With the pure lustre of her eye.”⁸⁸

Apart from the description of the royal court of Nawab Shoojah, Derozio’s sense of mediaeval tradition and custom springs from his use of a side-plot in the narrative that strengthens the theme of love in the main plot. The side-plot is entitled ‘THE LEGEND OF SHUSHAN’. In it we get a sequence when ‘pretini’s (female ghosts) appeared and tried to allure the meditating young man in many ways which included singing seductive songs resembling the ‘tappa’ both in spirit and words. The ‘tappa’ was very popular then.

So in depicting the scenes of love, romance, battle, royal court of Shoojah and using the folktale – like side-plot with a sequence of pretini’s song to allure the meditating young lover, Derozio has been successful in

creating mediaeval atmosphere. In doing so, poetic beauty of the poem is not impaired.

6. The Fakir of Jungheera : Indianness of Theme:

'The Fakir of Jungheera' is remarkable for the Indianness of its theme. Derozio has Indianised his theme of love by relating to a Hindu widow's pitiable plight on the pyre of deceased husband. It shows the prevailing inhuman custom of 'Sati' that led to many deaths. The atmosphere of the poem has been Indianised through a flawless depiction of a Hindu rite being performed according to the shastras. There are some words and expressions in the 'Hymn' contained in the poem which have striking similarity with some Vedic imageries. This 'Hymn' is addressed to the 'Sun- god' in connection with the Sati- rites as narrated in the poem.

The idea of the sun-god is taken from the Vedas. The reference to the 'eternal seven' and 'wheeling minstrels of the court above,' 'giver of good', 'good of immortal mind', the god who sits on a 'golden thorn', the god who devastates cloud, thunder, and darkness and creates rainbow, fragrance of flowers, sylvan shades of the forest and the beauty of woman – all have their comparable counterparts in Rig-Veda. The following sooktas (Verses) of the Rig-Veda and certain parts of the Upanishad's will give to the allusion made above- Rv. 1/50/8-9; 1/35/2-15; 10/37/1-12; 6/71/13; 7/1; 7/45; 1/22/5-8; 1/115/4; 4/46/6; 1/164/52; 5/41/2; 5/82/1-6; 7/73/1-4; 7/63/4; (Brhadaranyak Upanishad; Janak-Yajan-Balkya sambad: Chhandygyopanishad: Shwetket Upakhyan). Incidentally, there are two more portions in "Jungheera" where similar images and allusions can also be traced out by and large.

In an explanatory note appended to this 'Hymn', Derozio clearly mentions about the Vedas: "The Vedas, which are supposed to contain the essence of wisdom, declare in various places, wherever language of praise is employed, the project of such praise is the Deity of Brihm. Thus fire is Brihm, water is Brihm; a number of other substances are defined in like manner. It is necessary to state that all prayers in the ceremony of female immolation are addressed to the 'sun' ".⁸⁹

Everyone wonders about Derozio's knowledge of it. No record suggests so far that he read the Vedic literature in original. Perhaps he read Sir William Jones' 'Extract from a Dissertation of the Primitive Hindus'(1874) that included a few 'Hymns' addressed to some of the Hindu deities, including 'Surya' that also in turn resemble Vedic hymns addressed to the sun-gold, in nature and expression alike . H.T. Colebrooke wrote an article in 1805, viz. "on the Vedas or sacred Writing of the Hindus." Leaving these sources of the Vedic knowledge, probably the English translation of the Rigveda of Horace Heyman Wilson, a noted vedic scholar came to his hand as it was published in the middle of the nineteenth century. Krishna Mohan Banerjee, Derozio's student, became a Vedic scholar in his later days. From Krishna Mohan Banerjee and the other students of the Hindu College he may get help about the Vedic collection. All these sources were probably utilized by Derozio.

The, 'Hymn to the sun' and other ceremonial details create a very suitable Indian atmosphere in the poem. In 'The Fakir of Jungheera' Derozio beautifully describes the beauty of the Ganges, the flitting butterfly, the honey-sipping melodious bee, the sun-lit stream. This description makes us feel the pulse of the vibrant life of the Indian nature that flows on and on. In 'The Fakir of Jungheera' Derozio writes,

"The sun-lit stream in dimple breaks,
As when a child from slumber wakes,
Sweet smiling on its mother –there
Like heavenly hope o'er mortal care"⁹⁰

Really, the music of the murmuring ripple of the Ganges had a healing effect on his poetic bent of mind that inspired him to compose poetry keeping the background of the Ganges in mind. Shivnath Shastri aptly comments, "while staying at Bhaugulpore the boy Derozio used to stroll alone on the bank of the Ganges, and composed poems."⁹¹

Butterfly is an inseparable part of Indian nature and its movement in nature presents a spectacle of beauty. Derozio's minute observation does not miss it. He writes,

"From field to field the butterfly
Flits- a bright creature of the sky;
As if an angel plucked a flower
From fairest heaven's immortal bower."⁹²

The beauty and grandeur of a honey sipping melodious bee as inevitable part of Indian nature does not go unobserved to the eyes of Derozio. He writes,

"And wildly roving there the bee
On quivering wing of melody
From shrub to shrub enamoured his,
Then, like a faithless lover, flies
Giddy and wild even as he sips
Their honey from the flowret's lips".⁹³

This sort of natural description strengthens his theme of Indianness and it comes out of his deep love and respect of his country i.e. India.

7. The Note of Patriotism and Respect for India's past Glory in 'The Fakir of Jungheera':

The culture of Renaissance is not characterised by a single dimension but by a multidimension. As a result of inquisitiveness the humanists began to reveal the past glory and culture as enshrined in the past literature. This tendency led the western scholars and artistes like- Petrarch, Alberti, Picco, etc. to explore the wealth stored in Greek and Latin. This cultural wave came to the shore of Bengal through western education and it changed the outlook of the intellectuals of Bengal at first in India. The intellectuals of Bengal showed a deep interest in the pure and pristine culture of ancient India which lay hidden so long under the veil of ignorance. William Jones and other orientalisists of the West showed great interest for India's past culture as

contained in its classical literature. According to Amalesh Tripathi this tendency may be called 'traditional modernization'.⁹⁴ In Bengal this tendency to trace the past glory of India was turned into a great desire by- 'One of the strangest figures of Bengal Renaissance, an Anglo-Indian Derozio.'⁹⁵ He was so called as he was very popular among his students for his patriotism, profound knowledge and wisdom. This appreciation about Derozio was echoed by Rajnarain Basu later in 1874 in his book, "Ekal Ar Sekal". He says there "Derozio loved this land deeply looking upon it as his own country. Derozio's patriotism, nobleness, his profound knowledge and wisdom impressed some of his students so much that they used to stay in his company. On account of his birth in Bengal and mixing in the company of the Bengalees, he became a typical Bengalee and forgot the fact that he was the son of a fair complexioned man."⁹⁶ Derozio for the first time in Bengal expressed the note of patriotism in his sonnet "To India- My Native Land" which is included at first in his metrical tale, 'The Fakir of Jungheera'. It may seem a matter of mystery that the first poem of patriotic note is composed in English by Derozio. But its historical ground may be traced to the historical thought of Bankimchandra. In an essay, "Bharat Kalanka" included in the first part of his "Bibidha Prabandha" later in "Bangadarshan" in 1872, Bankimchandra wrote, 'We have mentioned in this essay the two of precious gems acquired by us from the thought-store of English—love of all independence and establishment of race. These two were not known to the Hindus.'⁹⁷ With a profound and reverent admiration from the ancient, rich lore of India and in spite of his Eurasian Origin, Henry remained, Srinivasa Iyengar says; "wholly Indian in spirit and aspired to be India's national bard."⁹⁸

Derozio's intense awareness of the greatness of India's past glory is manifest in many of his poems. The contrast between the past glory of India and the plight of the present made Derozio apostrophize his country thus:

"My country, in thy days of glory past
A beauteous halo circled round thy brow"⁹⁹

In 'To India- My Native Land' Derozio goes to the extent of imagining India as a goddess because of the halo of her glory. Derozio is so confident about the greatness of India's past that he desires to review and recollect the same with passionate devotion:

"Well –let me dive to the depth's of time,
And bring from out the ages that have rolled
A few small fragments of those wrecks sublime."¹⁰⁰

The sublime past provides a marked contrast to the decadent and stagnant conditions of the present. The awareness of this contrast leads the poet to a sad lament:

"Where is that glory, where that reverence now?"¹⁰¹

Derozio's another sonnet, 'The Harp of India' recalls the glory of the past of India through an image of the musical instrument which produced sweet sound once upon a time but is totally silent now:

"Thy music once was sweet"¹⁰²

The imagery of an unstrung harp hanging from a withered tree in a deserted place and a young wayfarer stretching out his hand towards it, vividly portrays the Indian decadence at the beginning of nineteenth century. Derozio poignantly describes India as,

"Neglected ! Mute and desolate art thou
Like ruined monument of the desert plain ..."¹⁰³

He finds out the cause of the neglected state of India when he says,

"Silence hath bound thee with her fatal chain."¹⁰⁴

Unlike his Eurasian community which clung more to Europe and the ruling class than to India and her masses, Henry Derozio asserts his love of

India's past glory and tries to revive it in spite of his poor ability. Even he will in his dying breath sing in defence and in praise of his country :

"O! Many a hand more worthy far than mine
 Once thy harmonious chords to sweetness gave

 Those hands are cold –but if thy notes divine
 May be mortal wakened once again
 Harp of my country, let me strike again".¹⁰⁵

As Derozio had reverence for India's past glory and culture, he used abundantly Indian myth, legend and imagery. M. K. Naik rightly points out: "Derozio is pioneer in the use of Indian myth and diction."¹⁰⁶ Pallav Sengupta points to this aspect of his (Derozio's) poetry. He quotes Derozio's own note on the poem: "That Derozio adopted the Vedic prayer to the Sun in his poem is a clear indication of this admiration of India's ancient glory as enshrined in her scriptures".¹⁰⁷

Out of Derozio's love for India's past glory his sense of nationalism and patriotism got a new lease of life in his poetry. It made a maiden mark in the journey of Indian English poetry in the dawn of the Renaissance in the early part of the nineteenth century.

8. Nationalistic Feeling in 'The Fakir of Jungheera' :

The discovery of the glorious past of India together with a new awareness of the same led to the resurgence of nationalism and patriotism among all the Bengalees during the early part of the 19th century. This finds an eloquent expression then in English Poetry of Bengal.

Derozio was the first Indo-Anglian poet to give utterance to intense nationalism and patriotism. He was truly an Indian poet in the sense that he identified himself with the Indian ethos and felt acutely about the conditions of his country. In an age when nobody thought of India's misery under a foreign

rule and Indian nationalism was still unborn, Derozio sang about India's glory and grandeur with a perfect authenticity of patriotic fervour.

Derozio is not only the first patriot –poet of the Bengal Renaissance period but the first champion of reason and progressive ideas in his national and patriotic outlook.

In 'The Fakir of Jungheera' we get flashes of sentiments .Here the beauty and majesty of the motherland are superbly expressed by Derozio :

"O! Lovely is my native land.
With all its skies of cloudless night
But there's a heart, and there's a hand
More dear to me than sky most bright.
I prize them –yes as though they were
On earth the only things divine
The only good, the only fair _
And O!-that heart and hand are thine."¹⁰⁸

Again Derozio says,

"My native land hath heavenliest bowers
Where Houris ruby –cheeked might dwell,
And they are gemmed with buds and flowers
Sweeter than lip or lute may tell."¹⁰⁹

9. The love For Liberty in 'The Fakir of 'Jungheera':

Derozio was born in a transition period of Bengal .Actually from the last part of the eighteenth century reevaluation of the established ideas and attitudes to life and to the world started as an impact of the revolutionary ideas of Western philosophers and thinkers. Its wave naturally came to Calcutta for the first time as any process of change takes place in urban areas for the first time. Calcutta also witnessed this reevaluation of established ideas and attitudes to life as it was culturally in process of change due to concentration of different types of people .Derozio grew up in this period. Education from Drummond's school made him acquainted with the new philosophical ideas relating to life, education and above all the world . So he had profound respect for liberty. The goals of the French Revolution and the teachings of the great

Indian reformer Raja Rammohun Roy inspired Derozio in his involvement with the ideals of liberty, equality, justice and social progress. He was one of the first Indo – Anglian writers to contemplate an intellectual renaissance through literary and philosophical perception .As a teacher he had enthused students with liberal and national ideas. According to Piery Chand Mitra, “He used to impress upon his pupils the sacred duty of thinking for themselves –be in no way influenced by any of the idols mentioned by Bacon-to live and die for truth- to cultivate and practice all the virtues shunning vice in every shape”.¹¹⁰

Derozio's passion for liberty is well-expressed in 'The Fakir of Jungheera'. The theme of this long poem presents a glimpse into revolutionary idea and thought. In the poem a Muslim Nawab sent soldiers to rescue a Hindu woman, Nulinee who was taken away by a Muslim robber-chief. Apart from this matter, both the robber-chief and Nulinee crossed the barrier of their respective religion to build their home for love. Both of them courted death to respect their love. To them loyalty to love is more dignified and glorious than the loyalty to superstitious religion that does not emancipate man and woman in any way. Actually 'The Fakir of Junghreea' expresses Derozio's desire for liberty in a unique way.

Derozio's passion for liberty has found expression in 'The Fakir of Jungheera' from the angle of love between the Muslim robber-chief and Nulinee. Nulinee became a widow when she was young .She was bought to the funeral pyre of her dead husband against her will only to maintain the cruel religious system of 'Sati'. Derozio's mind was moved and he says

“Think'st thou she dreams of love for whom
The parted dead whose home should be the tomb”.¹¹¹

Under the burning spell of liberty Derozio leaves the matter of love to Nulinee and says, 'Hers was a heroine's choice.....'¹¹²

Nulinee was brought to the pyre of her dead husband against her wish:

"And see! she comes unto death's festival
As to her bridal bed"¹¹³

Nulinee's plight is pitiable at the hands of the religious conservatives. Derozio does not like to see Nulinee as "a toy for other's play" as "The heart is free, and gives itself away". The age-old superstitious religious customs of 'Sati' suppressed the desire of her life. He writes,

"The various passions in her bosom caged
All wildly maddening war chaotic waged"¹¹⁴

10. Other Renaissance elements in 'The Fakir of Jungheera':

In Derozio's concept of liberty Honour also occupies a very significant place. He seems to have taken the cue from Moore (After the Battle in Irish Melodies) and Thurtell's 'History of France' (referred to in the hand-note to his poem, "All's lost save Honour), but he elevates it to a plane that neither of them has done. Indeed, honour plays a pivotal part in his concept of love, battle and in his personal life. In 'The Fakir of Jungheera' Derozio's concept of Honour is reflected through love and faith. In this poem the "Fakir" is highly motivated by matter of honour. When Shooja's soldiers attacked the Fakir's cave, the latter prepares to go to battle. He does not waste a moment in spite of Nulinee's entreaties to stay with her, for

"Honour at stake, it were degrading thee
Here to remain in soft captivity".....¹¹⁵

He cannot take the risk of losing the faith pinned on him by not joining the faithful followers in the battle-field. To Derozio honour is very important and this sense of honour leads him to write.

"Thou would'st despise me were I meanly driven
To slight the promise to my comrades given."¹¹⁶

Derozio's sense of honour is wounded when he finds India's spectacle of decay and he laments.

"Where is this glory, Where that reverence now?"¹¹⁷

He not only laments but also promises to bring back the honour and glory of India through these lines,

"Well- let me dive into the depths of time,
And bring from out the ages that have rolled
A few small fragments of those wrecks sublime
Which human eye may never more behold"¹¹⁸

Truth of experience, as has been said earlier, is the very breath of all poetry. Derozio got this experience from his short life which was full of thorns. He lost his parents in his early age and was burdened with maintaining the family. The termination of his service at the Hindu college was a bitter experience for him. In his poetry we feel an intensity of feeling that surrounds his bitter experience. To us Derozio appears to be a poet of human affection, sentiments and sorrow. He has equally a deep awareness of the nature of suffering and the pathos of human existence. He has an intuitive sense of the tragic and reflective awareness of the anguish of life. "The Fakir of Jungheera" is a tale of man's inhumanity to women. A sense of tragedy and melancholy permeates whole of the poem. Nulinee's physical and mental suffering in "The Fakir of Jungheera" during her movement towards the pyre is heart-touching. Derozio writes.

"What though the rose has vanished from her cheek,
Her eye speaks more than ever tongue may speak
That large black orb too eloquently tells
All that within her suffering bosom dwells"¹¹⁹
He also presents a picture of Nulinee's mind in the following lines,
"Her softened glance reveals the suffering mind
Gentle though racked, though agonized resigned"¹²⁰

He can delve deep into the minds of young widow as expressed in Nulinee. In this poem, as in other poems, Derozio deeply sympathises with the mental agony and miserable plight of the widows. V.K.Gokak rightly says, "The championing of the Indian widow starts with Derozio"¹²¹

One of the dominant themes in all Derozio's poetry is the tragedy of unfulfilled passion. Derozio himself led a life of unfulfilled desires and was hunted out by the wrathful guardians of an orthodox society. He was accused of misleading the students of the Hindu College. In 'The Fakir of Jungheera' he (Derozio) presents a picture of unfulfilled passion when Nulinee is found near the funeral pyre. He says,

"As flits the insect round the flame
So wheels the heart round passion's
Their blindness, madness still the same,
Alike in pangs they both expire"¹²²

Tom Paine's 'The age of Reason' was published in 1810. In Bengal after 1810 a sincere effort in building an age of reason was found. It was initiated by Derozio. Derozio read the pages of Tom Paine's, 'The Age of Reason' and he intended to establish an age of reason in Bengal. He was an uncompromising man in whom revolutionary spirit was very dominant. Being inspired by his sense of reason he raised his revolutionary voice against the prevailing superstitions. Hence he was an eyesore to the conservatives, especially of the Hindu society. He paid the penalty of it when his service was terminated from the Hindu college on the charge of misleading the students. The prevailing society of Bengal was in the grip of different superstitions and religious cruelty, child marriage, polygamy, slavery and many other inhuman customs. The overall social situation prompted Derozio to raise voice to relieve the society. The students who got English education in the Hindu College and other seminaries in Calcutta had the taste of European Philosophy and culture. Derozio protested against the inhuman social and religious customs and the English-educated students helped him considerably. Sir Roper Lethbridge aptly observes, "Most of those who had received their education in the Hindu college and the other seminaries in Calcutta were fired with the desire to do away with every thing that was old and embrace every thing that was new. "Cast off your prejudices, and be bold in your thoughts and actions" was their watch word; and there was at the time a new force at work to foster this independent spirit".¹²³

Derozio inspired his students of the Hindu College to build an age of reason that gave a tremendous blow to the foundation of superstition. He equally tried to show it through his poetry. In 'The Fakir of Jungheera' he voices his vehement protest against the inhuman practice of 'Sati'. This inhuman social custom moved him very much. He was also deeply moved by miserable plight of the Hindu widows that resulted mostly from unmatched marriage and child marriage. The 'Kaulinya' custom in the Hindu society was also responsible for it. In a small article added to 'The Fakir of Jungheera' Derozio raised his voice against the religious superstition of the Hindu society. He says, "Satee" is a spectacle of misery, exciting in the spectator a melancholy reflection upon the tyranny of superstition and priest-craft. The poor creatures who suffer from this inhuman rite, have but little notion of the heaven and the million years of uninterrupted happiness to which their spiritual guides tell them to look forward".¹²⁴

The story element of 'The Fakir of Jungheera' revolves round an incident of 'Sati'. Nulinee, a young Brahman widow is about to be burnt on the funeral pyre of her husband ;but a tremendous conflict between her misplaced sense of religious duty and her own desire to live grows in her mind and torments her. Suddenly she is carried away by a robber-chief, her former lover. In the mountain,

"Her robber-lover and young Nulinee share
Each bliss as perfect as the heart may bear"¹²⁵

Though Nulinee and her lover are found in love-lock in the new abode, their happiness does not last long. With a band of soldiers sent by the Nawab Shoojah at the request of Nulinee's father, a battle ensues. After a valiant battle Nulinee's second husband, who snatched her from death himself, dies. Finally Nulinee also dies and finds peace in death as she breathes her last on the battle field lamenting over her second husband's dead body.

The rescue of Nulinee from the funeral pyre of her dead husband by her former Muslim-lover points to Derozio's fight against religious superstition.

It is not one-sided. Nulinee renounced her religion to respond to the call of love; similarly for love the Muslim robber-chief –turned lover unhesitatingly utters:

"No more to Mecca's hallowed shrine

.....
 Shall wafted be a prayer of mine
 Henceforth I turn my willing knee
 From Allh, Prophet, heaven, too thee!"¹²⁶

That Derozio was free from religious superstition is beautifully expressed in these lines. Here he glorifies love leaving aside religious superstition of Hinduism and Islam. Derozio's fight against superstition is voiced in other poems also.

11. Renaissance elements in other poems:

Rammohun Roy fought against the inhuman custom of 'Sati'- burning of Hindu widows. We quoted from the authority of the best religious books against the custom of 'Sati'. Bentinck removed this age-old superstitious custom in 1929 through legislation in the teeth of orthodox protests. Derozio welcomed this historic event passionately by composing a poem named, "On the Abolition of Satee". His onslaught against 'sati' is sharper than before. He begins his poem in this this way.

"Red from his chambers came the morning sun
 And it frowned dark Ganges, on thy fatal shore,
 Journeying on high, but when the day was done
 He set in smiles, to rise the blood no more,
 Hark! Heard yet? The widow's wail is over".....¹²⁷

In this poem his hatred against the priest-craft, instrumental for materializing this inhuman custom is well-expressed in the following limes:

"The priestly tyrant's cruel charm is broken
 And to his den alarmed the monster creeps".¹²⁸

In the poem Derozio marks the end of this evil custom though the imagery of the rising sun, so long covered with the darkness of the night on the bank of the Ganges. He sang of Bentinick's historic achievement against the evil custom of 'Sati'

"He is the friend of man who breaks the seal"¹²⁹

The helplessness of woman is portrayed here and he dreams of social revolution at the end of the poem when he writes,

..... morning's herald star
Comes trembling into day, O can the sun be far?¹³⁰

Derozio's 'Song of the Indian Girl' makes us feel the excruciating suffering of a widow caused by the heinous custom of 'Sati' as he (Derozio) himself was deeply moved by it. In this poem superstitious religious custom is not only mentioned but the resultant outcome of it is poignantly unravelled through a widow. Derozio's penetrative insight into the simmering sufferings of a widow is presented in these lines.

"My dream was bright, but it past away,
The thought so sweet is gone –
And hope hath fled, like a rainbow's ray,
Or a beam of the setting sun!
But I am left, like an autumnal leaf,
To the Pitiless world, and the blast of grief."¹³¹

The state of a woman before and after the widowhood has been unlocked in some telling words and expressions. This was the general pathetic picture of the Indian widows portrayed by Derozio in the poem. In 'The Fakir of Jungheera' and 'On the Abolition of Sati' his voice against the superstitious custom of 'Sati' is more evident than here.

That Derozio has expressed his passion for liberty in 'The Fakir of Jubgheera' has been discussed before. His passion for liberty is equally well

pronounced in his short poems. Derozio got distinct inspiration from the occidental culture. Greece and its people provided him with the impetus to compose poetry. As teacher of the Hindu college Derozio used to teach Greek history and the two epics of Homer. Even prior to that, during the formative period of his poetic career, he composed a number of poems which derived lot of inspiration from the brave and patriotic anecdotes of the Greek history. In this regard mention may be made of the poems, 'The Greeks at Marathon', 'Address to the Greeks' 'Thermopylae' and 'Freedom to the Slave'.

For Derozio Greece was a symbol of liberty, a glorious civilisation which valued freedom better than life. The ancient battle of Thermopylae (480BC) and the recent battle of Marathon (1825AD) are simply historic instances to show the Greek's love of freedom, courage and sacrifice. The Greeks seem to believe that.

*"He who dies his land to save
Rests within a glorious grave."*¹³²

In the "Address to the Greeks" the same sentiments are repeated with more militancy. The fighting Greeks are encouraged, the tenacity of the ancient Greeks is recalled and the historic role of Greece in preserving freedom is eulogized:

*"The ground that ye tread, by your fathers was trod
Their bloodshed for freedom has hallowed the sod"*¹³³

In "Address to the Greeks" Derozio inspired the Greeks to the march of victory in battle:

*"Strike, strike, as your fathers of old would have done
Unite and the field with your liberty's won!"*¹³⁴

Derozio reminds the Greeks of their past glorious history for inspiring them in the battle against the Turkees. The background of the poem "Greece" is this: two women, some children and a few non-military persons are arrested

by the Turkees and later brutally burnt to death. On this ghastly incident the European countries remained silent and it moved the poet very much more so as Greece contributed a lot to the European civilization.

Derozio wrote this poem to express this hope that Greece would attain freedom surely one day by her own effort. Derozio's passion for liberty visualizes the ultimate victory in the freedom struggle against the Turkees :

"Will Europe hear? Aye No-ah! No-
She coldly turns from thee,
Thine own right arm, and battle-blade
Must win the victory"¹³⁵

To celebrate the victory of the Greeks in the battle of Marathon Derozio composed the poem, "The Greeks at Marathon" The triumphant march of the Greek has begun and the heroes of Sparta will never bow their heads; by *courting death for the freedom of their country, they will take abode in a place where fame will always prevail.* So he writes,

"This is freedom's hallowed earth,
Hallowed by a deed of worth;
Let another such be done
On the field of Marathon,
Seek we freedom? Grecian, on!
Freedom's field in Marathon."¹³⁶

Derozio ventilated his passion for freedom and liberty in his poem, "Independence". At the outset of the poem he compares the inherent human urge for freedom with the flame of a tiny earthen lamp. The flame after glowing temporarily succumbs to a stormy wind. At this point the poet utters,

"My heart and shall that little lamp".
"My glorious image be....."¹³⁷

He visualizes the universal spirit of independence in the mirror of his own heart. And as his heart "Will" not "Tremble", thereby, the spirit of "Fearlessness" would be intertwined with the emotions for independence.

The very indomitable spirit of independence is reflected equally in the poem, 'The Freedom to the Slave'. In 1827 when it was written, the ugly system of slave trading was in full swing in a number of countries including India. Contemporary newspapers in Calcutta regularly carried advertisements of selling and purchasing of slave in and around the city. One shudders to read the accounts given in the Bengali newspapers like 'Samachar Darpan' of official records preserved in the Calcutta-High Court. 'The Very words denoting slaves came to be used as synonym for servants (Dash, Dashi) and they were treated as such though they had no civil liberty, or right to leave their master's service'.¹³⁸ To start with Derozio quoted a line from Thomas Campbell :

"And as the slave departs, the Man returns".¹³⁹

Campbell was a special source of inspiration to Derozio. Here he took a cue from him and thereby echoed the spirit of humanism. A slave is told that he has ceased to be a slave there after. Henceforth he won't have any master and would be regarded a free person. Different feelings that gradually overtake the mind of the slave are portrayed by Derozio in an emotional yet sombre and resolute language :

"He knelt no more, his thoughts were raised
 He felt himself a man
 He looked above the-breath of Heaven
 Around him freshly blew
 He looked upon the running-stream
 That 'neath him rolled away
 Then thought of winds, and birds and floods
 And cried, "I'm free as they".¹⁴⁰

The slave who attains freedom at first thinks of winds, birds and flood; then an awareness grips him:

"Oh Freedom there is something dear
 E'en in thy very name,
 That lights the altar of the soul
 With everlasting flame"¹⁴¹

The poet then pays a glowing tribute to the men who all over the world have been fighting against slavery :

"And glory to the breast that bleeds
Bleeds nobly to be free !
Blest be the generous hand that breaks
The chain that a tyrant gave,
And feeling for degraded man
Gives freedom to the slave."¹⁴²

The note of humanism that we find here forms the core of Derozio's progressive philosophy and his world view, too has been very distinctly reflected in these lines. Derozio believes that emancipation from slavery ennoble a man. This is not true about a slave only, it is true about all persons as freedom is the greatest possession of all. In his another poem "Anecdote of Francis – I." Derozio presents the French emperor who after being released from the Jail of Spain enters into his own land and this joy is only comparable to the joy expressed by the released slave after a long slavery. In the third stanza of the poem "Anecdote of Francis – I" Derozio describes his feelings in this way:

"Before him, all was fairest France;
Behind his dungeon Spain;
Above him was the light of hope
And he was king again."¹⁴³

In Derozio's concept of liberty, as has been discussed earlier, Honour is an inseparable element. The sense of honour is profoundly felt with the passion for liberty. Honour and liberty are interlinked. Derozio's idea of honour is tinged with a colour. The heroes of Derozio's poem, though vanquished are very careful about 'honour'. Francis, the vanquished hero of the poem, "All is Lost, save honour", for example, does not feel ashamed in his defeat, for he knows that though every thing is lost to him, in him "Honour remains".¹⁴⁴

Francis also tells others not to shed tears for those who have laid down their lives for saving the honour and independence of France.

"We should not weep for them; they rest
Unconscious of our cares;
Who envies not their bed of death?
For Honour still is their's!"¹⁴⁵

Francis' sense of honour kindles his mind to regain his lost kingdom and Derozio presents this picture of his mind in these lines:

"Save Honour, all is lost, but still
While Honour yet remains,
It fires me with the hope to break
The conquering tyrant's chains."¹⁴⁶

He (Francis) is proud to think that neither he nor his men flee from the field, nor does anyone submit to the enemy ignominiously:

"Against my warrior band was laid
Full many a lance in rest,
But every foeman's lance was broke
Within a hero's breast!"¹⁴⁷

Francis brings back his liberty and associated with it the sense of honour. Derozio presents a pen-picture of Francis' joyous mind in the following lines,

"A King again, a king again!
What joy was in his breast!
Possessing all that e'er his heart,
Could wish to have possessed."¹⁴⁸

Francis now compares his state of liberty to the state of bondage and describes his pent-up feelings in these lines and feels himself honoured:

"But late a captive in his cell,
 Now broken was his chain;
 What were his feelings when he cried,
 "I am a king again!"¹⁴⁹

The tragedy of unfulfilled passion is linked with Derozio's life. He led a life of unfulfilled desire and was haunted by the wrathful guardians of an orthodox society. Though young, he could delve deep into the mysteries of worldly life and had a sensitive awareness of the cruelty, sorrow and anguish of the world. There is a touch of *inexplicable pain in his meditations*:

"Mark this bleak world, ye shall find,
 'Tis cold, relentless and unkind,
 The sufferer rarely meets relief,
 But, like the yellow autumn leaf
 Is driven by every fatal gale.
 Where sorrows wound, and woes assail"¹⁵⁰

A strain of inconsolable anguish is born out of a sense of shattered dreams and it pervades Derozio's poetry. The pain of loss, frustration for emotions and a growing consciousness of the futility of human efforts are present in most of the poems. The pensiveness of a pentup nostalgia is seen in sonnets like 'Yorick's Skull', 'Dust', 'The Poet's grave and larger poems like 'Song of the Indian girl' and 'Hope'.

"I've dreamed of better days; but when
 My joys were in their birth
 The blast of ill blew wild and then
 My castles fell to earth"¹⁵¹

The imagery of the autumn leaf violently tossed about in the blast of grief repeatedly appears in Derozio's poetry.

'The Poet's Grave', 'Death', 'My Best Friend' are sonnets in which Derozio is concerned with the theme of death as the deliverer. Death comes as a happy release from this mortal life. Only in another life man could attain

the full knowledge and truth which he has been diligently seeking throughout his short life. Through the doors of death one enters a sunnier world.

Though acutely conscious of the suffering and sorrow of human existence, Derozio does not relapse into a mood of despair. Even in death man is likely to resore the 'Vanished bliss'.

"But man's eternal energies can make
An atmosphere around him, and so take
Good out of evil"¹⁵²

In fact Derozio approached death and suffering fearlessly and calmly as is evident from 'The Poet's Grave'. Derozio lived life intensely; his sensitive mind was alive to the sadness of things and the tragedy of experience to lead a happy life. Yet he writes,

"O tyrant Fate; thus shall I vanquish thee
For out of suffering shall I gather pleasure."¹⁵³

A paradox in Derozio's faith is his occasional wooing of Hope. Love and hope are the preludes to a life of unearthly bliss. The life-long quest of the poet had been to discover some sort of an imperishable love-hope syndrome in a black and murky world of insidious human environment. Thus the poet accepts that life is a mixture of sorrow and joy, pain and pleasure.

"The roses of our life must have their thorns
And storm and sunshine burst on us alike."¹⁵⁴

Derozio's meditation on the mystery of death on the one hand and his concern with beauty, love and hope on the other hand lend a peculiar charm to his poetry discernible only in the poetry of the metaphysics like Donne and Marvell. His poetry is a harmony and his life was a simple and courageous one and even as he had lived, so he died brave noble in death.

D. Summing-up:

An analysis of the Poems of Derozio shows that his poems reflect all the characteristic features of Bengal Renaissance. Through his poetry Derozio spreads the ideals of nationalism and universalism in our country. He initiates the struggle against the religious fundamentalism through his poetry. His relentless quest for Truth and Reason is also expressed through the poems and last, but not least, his poetry is vibrant with the spirit of patriotism and ideal of humanism.