Chapter Two

Influence of English Romanticism on the Poetry of

Henry Derozio
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Greatest of teachers, pathfinder of rationalism, and forceful warrior against the practice of widow-burning.

- Rosinka Chaudhuri

One of the highest gifted and most accomplished of Eurasians, HENRY LOUIS VIVIAN DEROZIO, poet, philosopher and free-thinker.

- Thomas Edwards

The only Indian who is credited for the inception of Indian Poetry in English, ironically, is a progeny of a mixed parentage with an English first name and a Portuguese surname: Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (1809-1831), being memorialised as ‘Indian Keats’, is often considered as India’s first ‘national’, ‘modern’ and ‘Romantic’ poet who ignited the flame which melted a coal-tar of a set order and set up an appropriate path for the generations to follow, later known as the Young Bengal Movement or the Bengal Renaissance. At a very tender age he ascertained himself with his poetic instincts, knowledge of English, and with the broad and liberal thinking against the blind, firm and disgraceful customs of the society. He was one among who realised rigid orthodoxy of the time and raised a voice against with his greatest yell.
Derozio was born on the 10th April 1809, as Thomas Edwards records in his famous biography of Derozio, i.e., ‘Henry Derozio, The Eurasian Poet, Teacher, and Journalist’,

...in the house which stands to this day on the 24-Pergunnah side of Circular Road, at the head of Jaun Bazaar Street. Derozio’s father, who was descended from a respectable Portuguese family, named ‘DeRozario’, occupied a highly respectable position in the mercantile house of Messrs. J. Scott and Co., in Calcutta; and must have been a man of some means, for the house he dwelt in was his own property, and his children received the best education that could then be procured in Calcutta. (2)

Derozio’s mother as Nair avers

That Derozio’s mother, Sophia, was an English woman is beyond any dispute. However, more than whether Derozio, a product of mixed parentage, was genetically more ‘Anglo’ than Indian... he was irrefutably rooted, physically and emotionally, to the land of his birth and upbringing and thus was Indian at least equal to if not more than those who lay claim to Indianness solely on this basis of their genes. He was the first spark that kindled the flame of awakening which soon transformed itself into an inferno cleansing and rejuvenating the masses who sinned in submitting to decadence, having forgotten the awareness and dignity of the self. Lambasting obsolete and inhuman customs and traditions, Derozio volunteered to take the initiative to restore India’s bygone and by then forgotten
pride vide poems like ‘The Harp of India’. As one who ushered in the first phase of Indian English poetry, Derozio was simultaneously a subject and a master of the peculiarities of the socio-political situation of the time. (Nair 24)

As far as Derozio’s biographical details are concerned, Nair says ‘much was lost to the vagaries of time’ before Thomas Edwards; his principal biographer could record whatever details he could in his biography ‘Henry Derozio: The Eurasian Poet, Teacher and Journalist’ in 1884, more than 50 years after the death of the poet. Besides this, E V Madge’s paper titled ‘Henry Derozio: The Eurasian Poet and Reformer’ presented at a meeting on December 10, 1904 at YMCA, Chowringhee provides interesting highlights of the poet’s life and times. Bradley Britt too, among others, in his introduction to Poems of Henry Derozio: A Forgotten Anglo-Indian Poet throws important light on the events that formed his life.

A well-researched and detailed biography of Henry Derozio, I intend not to repeat the same but shall highlight on the aspects of his life which moulded him as a literary figure.

Sophia was Francis Derozio’s first wife, after whose death he married Anna Maria Rivers, who too was an English woman but who died childless. It was death of his mother and perhaps a short-lived love-affair with an unnamed girl that urged Derozio to compose autobiographical poems like
'Good Night’ lamenting a tender lady. Henry, the second of their five children, died in 1831 of cholera at the age of twenty two. It can also be mentioned here that Frank, the eldest child, who according to Thomas Edwards, ‘led a worthless life’, and committed suicide at the age of twenty, Claudius the third child, younger to Henry by five years, educated at Scotland, too died young like his two elder brothers. Derozio composed a poem entitled ‘To My Brother in Scotland’ expressing his concern about the well-being of his brother Claudius when he was at Scotland. Sophia among all the children died youngest at 17 in 1827, whereas Amelia died at the age of twenty two in 1835. The poet shared a very cordial relationship with Amelia who empathized with him in his personal and literary activities. Also, he wrote a poem ‘Sister-in-Law’ to her which is a humorous and racy poem when she was pestering him to marry. It is very natural that these important events of his life were one of the sparks for him to pen autobiographical poems later in his life.

Derozio’s early childhood was an enviable one as he was fortunate enough to be educated at the Drummond’s Academy in Dhurramtallah, the best private school of its kind in those days at Calcutta. Eight years at the academy from 1815 to 1823 were formative years for Derozio. As Thomas Edwards avers:
The naturally imaginative, impulsive and powerful mind of Derozio was quickened and spurred into action under the clear, incisive, logical guidance of David Drummond, the crooked backed, broad minded Scotchman, who for eight years, from the day Derozio entered his school a child of six, till he left it a lad of fourteen, watched him with interest, and aided the rapid development of his splendid powers of intellect and imagination; and before the age of twenty, six years after he left school and entered on the work of his short life, his acquaintance with the literature and thought of England, and so far as these could be attained through the medium of an English translation, his knowledge of the best thinkers and writers of European celebrity, was of such a character as to mark him off, at that early age, as a man not in any degree inferior to, and in some respects far in advance of, any of his contemporaries of any nationality in India. (5)

In Drummond’s Academy, he was a bright student, highly influenced by reading widely on the French Revolution, Robert Burns, Tom Paine and the Romantics, he developed liberal thinking under the guidance of his school master. Drummond and Burns’s influences were reflected in his poem ‘A Dramatic Sketch’. He was also fascinated to the contemporary style of English literature and was encouraged for making Byronic school his model for most of his writings. The seeds sown in this academy achieved full fruition when, in 1826, he joined The India Gazette as a sub editor which was inspired by Dr John Grant, the editor of The India Gazette, who knew Derozio’s genius ever
since he was a student at Drummond’s Academy. His sense of gratitude to Dr John Grant can be understood in his poem ‘The Neglected Minstrel’. Derozio made himself heard through the several articles that he published in the various magazines and periodicals like The India Gazette, The Calcutta Literary Gazette, the Indian Magazine, The Enquirer, The Calcutta Magazine and Hesperus. He edited The Kaleidoscope and The East Indian. The Parthethon was the result of the endeavour of his students at the Hindu College which he joined, in the same year, as a Professor of History and English with a monthly salary of one hundred and fifty rupees taking care of his financial worries and helping him to set his mind free to concentrate on the aspects that his heart loved the most.

Afore joining the college, when his father died, the fourteen years old, Henry took up clerical employment with M/s Scott and Co. where his father was earlier employed, an occupation that did not suit his temperament. Hence, he shifted to Bhaugulpore to join his uncle-in-law’s indigo plantation where he composed his long narrative poem – ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’. With an objective to publish the poem, he went to Calcutta where he heard about a vacant faculty position in the newly established Hindu College in which he applied and was selected.

At the Hindu College, Derozio’s ideas, inspired by Tom Paine’s Age of Reason, the great philosopher and philanthropist, were so radical and revolutionary that they shocked and shortly stupefied the Hindu society of
the nineteenth century India ridden by class, caste and superstition, would have ensured him a place in history, if not his poetical works. With this college, Derozio discovered himself, and he came to be known as an unorthodox scholar, thinker and teacher who shook the moors of a very conservative nineteenth century society of Calcutta. The chief reason for Derozio’s success lay in the magical rapport that he struck with his students, who considered themselves his companions in the task of moulding a liberated society. Together, they debated the social and literary issues both within and outside the college premises. Soon the informal gatherings at Derozio’s place grew in fame and with more people, even those not associated with the college, wanting to participate, it led to a more formal ‘Academic Association’. This debating club was frequented by the likes of Raja Rammohan Roy, the most prominent Indian philanthropist and social reformer of the times. Besides him, Alexander Duff, the Christian missionary and educationists like David Hare and Dr Mill among others contributed to the academic atmosphere of the association by their intellectually stimulating debates on social, religious, political and philosophical issues.

As a teacher, Derozio was one who inspired his students to read Paine’s *Age of Man* and to think differently from what tradition and the orthodox society dictated him to do. However, the society soon hit back by making Derozio quit the Hindu College. He was forced to resign in April 1831
by the college management, which buckled under severe pressure from the sceptical parents and other members of the society who were terrified about, what they believed was, his incapacitating influence over their wards. Derozio put in his papers but not before he gave a spirited defence. In his letter to the managing committee of the Hindu College, he cited six reasons as to why the action proposed against him was unjust. He wrote:

It would, however, be unjust to my reputation which I value, were I to abstain from recording in this communication certain facts which I presume do not appear upon the face of your proceedings. Firstly, no charge was brought against me. Secondly, if any accusation was brought forward I was not informed of it. Thirdly, I was not called up to face my accusers, if any such appeared. Fourthly, no witness was examined on either side. Fifthly, my conduct and character underwent scrutiny, and no opportunity was afforded to me of defending either. Sixthly, while a majority did not, as I have learned, consider me an unfit person to be connected with the College, it was resolved, notwithstanding, that I should be removed from it, so that, unbiased, unexamined, and unheard, you resolve to dismiss me without even the mockery of a trial. These are facts. I offer not a word of comment. (Edwards 61)

Through these rejoinders, one can understand Derozio’s level of intellectuality and rational thinking. The same year as he was forced to quit the profession that he loved the most, he breathed his last. Besides the
agony of losing his job, he suffered the loss of his brother, sister and father in quick succession. All these and cholera ensured that the precarious poet died young, inspiring comparison with the Romantics and especially young poet, John Keats, who died young too, with their promises yet to be fulfilled. While comparing the two, Mr Oaten avers: ‘in both men there was a passionate temperament combined with unbounded sympathy with nature. Both died while their powers were not yet fully developed.’ (59) William studied that

Derozio submitted himself completely to English romantic influences. The model he set up for himself was of a ‘Christian’ Byron. He even lived the role; just as many westernized Indians had adopted an English life-style in clothes and language, so Derozio donned dandified costumes and galloped through Calcutta on an Arab horse. (15)

Derozio is, as Naik observes,

...imagery and diction (though he also employs allusion to Western classical myths with equal competence): e.g. ‘Highest Himalay’ (‘Poetry’); ‘Gunga’s roll’ (Song of the Indian Girl’); ‘Chandra’s beams’ (‘The Eclipse’), ‘Sweet Sitar’ (‘Song of the Hindoostani Minstrel’) etc. (24)

As a poet Iyengar finds,

Derozio was obviously influenced by the Romantics—notably Byron, Scot, Moore; but he knew his Shelley and Keats also very well. (35)
S K Chakrabarti mentions about influence on Derozio which was developed in two stages: first, ‘Formative stage’ at Drummond’s academy and secondly ‘Creative Stage’ at Bhaugulpore. The second stage was developed under the influences of the English poets. Derozio’s sensibility as a poet is essentially romantic and his poems have a romantic flavour. The ideas and modes of expression may have been borrowed to some extent from the contemporary English poets but the sentiments and spirit are genuine. The essence of his poetic personality is occasionally ‘passionate, romanticism of Man and Nature, derived principally from Byron and Wordsworth’. (H. M. Williams 12) Also, it is marked by a wistful melancholy, escapism and flights of imagination which come to the English Romantic poets. Rosinka finds a set of poems written after 1831 remarkable in themselves as in ‘Mood of Mind’ for instance, ‘the poet enunciates, with a lyric intensity and tone that gestures at Shelley’ (xxiv). He was a fan of Byron, Moore, L.E.L. (Letitia Elizabeth Landon), and in particular Percy Shelley. (Chaudhuri xxxviii) A systematic and evaluative study of his poetry may explore more Romantic influences. Therefore, with Derozio began a new dawn in form of Indian Writing in English that is revived in the recent years for its historical as well as artistic importance.

In his too brief poetic career, Derozio published two volumes of poetry: *Poems* (1827) and *The Fakeer of Jungheera: A Metrical Tale and Other Poems*
(1828). Naik finds the shorter poems under the strong ‘influence of British romantic poets in theme and sentiment, imagery and diction, with some traces of neo-classicism.’ (23) The latest anthology of Derozio’s poems, which is studied for this research, is entitled *Derozio, Poet of India*, published in 2008 by Rosinka Chaudhuri, divides his poetry in the following phases: The India Gazette Poems 1822-28, Two Volumes in 1827 and 1828, Poems composed in 1829-31 and Posthumous poems.

**NOTE:** All the quotations of Derozio’s poems in this study are taken from Chaudhuri (2008).
2.2 INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH ROMANTICISM ON THE POETRY OF DEROZIO

A good deal has been said regarding the style of Derozio that it is but an echo of Byron, Moore, and Mrs. McLean (L.E.L.), “exaggerated idealism and pictures of passion.”

- Thomas Edwards

History of Indian English Poetry is just two century long. It was in and around 1900 that Indians attempted at writing in English to foreground the emergence of Indian writing in English. In case of poetry, Derozio is the pioneer Indian English poet to have penned as early as the first quarter of the nineteenth century has its immense contribution to the form in the formation stage of the development of Indian poetry in English. Derozio had no predecessor and thus his attempt and experimentation were going to set the tone and trends and pave a path for the writers to come. The simple question as what inspired and influenced a poet with such a short life in the earliest times to pick up his pen as an Indian to express his sensibility in the masters’ language? This has been the interest of all critics and scholars to study the influence on young Derozio reflecting nationalist and reformative zeal. It is natural that the tracing the influence would direct the scholars to their contemporary English sway by Romantics.
Through the study of life, work and times of Derozio, it is evident that influence of Romantic poets is remarkable. Chakrabarti notes such influences with various views of the critics like Dr. Sengupta who grudgingly acknowledged European classical and European philosophers’ influences in the poetic works of Derozio, ‘Mr. Verghese stresses the derivative nature of Derozio’s poetry, specially in the “expression” of his subject-matter.’ (13)

Further supplementing Mr. Verghese he quotes Edwards and adds:

Mr. Verghese echoes only the general sentiment of the majority of Derozian critics who insist that his style is an echo of Byron, Moore and L. E. Landon.²⁶ There can be no gainsaying that not only regarding the expression of his subject-matter, but sometimes even regarding the subject-matter itself... he is indebted to his favourite English poets. (14)

On this one cannot avoid Edwards, his principal biographer, who argues for such influences:

Derozio’s idea was, first, to gain the ear of the public by singing to them in the prevailing fashion of the day; and then, having gained a hearing, to strike out in that style in which his own nature would most vigorously drape his song. (146-147)

‘Fakeer of Jungheera’ (1828) is, born of an embodiment of literary influences and genius, idea, enlightened social concerns of a native ‘poem of two cantos without a plot and with few incidents’ (Edwards 148) narrated in 2050 lines in English when Derozio was barely nineteen. ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’
'is his most representative and most sustained work' (Nair 31). It may be summarised in brief as: a young Hindu widow, Nuleeni, is forced to perform a rite of Sati and she is rescued by her former lover – a Muslim boy who became Fakeer as orthodoxy of the society did not allow him to marry her. In a raid, before he could marry her, he is killed and Nuleeni is found dead in the arms of her dead lover. They became victims of the society. ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’ is remarkable not only for Derozio’s secularism and reformist zeal, but also for the Indianness of his theme.

The introductory verses of Derozio, often, begin following a poetic custom. In ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’, imitating the English Romantics in simple adornment, Derozio followed their style of centralizing the main theme in epigraphs of both the cantos:

Affections are not made for merchandize.-
What will ye give in barter for the heart?
Has this world wealth enough to buy the store
Of hopes, and feelings, which are linked for ever
With woman’s soul? (173)

Derozio pens the second epigraph for canto II in which he centralises the theme in following words:

There may be cankers in the sweetest rose,
Eating into its heart. The lightning bright
That cuts ethereal space with speed so great,
As ‘twere upon an angel’s errand flying,
Kills, though ‘tis beautiful. Alas! Alas!
The cankered rose, the lightning, and young Love
Are in their natures like. (199)

In the description of Nature, Wordsworth’s influence may be noticed in particularly two manners: firstly, Derozio’s love of Nature; in his choice of words in the opening lines like ‘wing’, ‘wind’, ‘wandering’, ‘flower-bells’, ‘creep’, ‘grass’, ‘breathing’. Beside this vocabulary, he pens deep descriptions of elements of Nature. For instances, flowers of different kinds like ‘amaranths’, ‘cameeni’, ‘lily’, ‘rose’, ‘cypress’ etc. as well as of animals and insects like deer, raven, bee, moth, bulbul, dove and scorpion, and create an acute image of nature with a call for ‘Back to Nature’. Secondly, concept of a divine presence in nature; Derozio’s concept of the presence of God in Nature has been a cry of Wordsworthian Pantheism which has been mirrored in a description of beauteous Natural scenery of Bhaugulpore and Jungheera. This beauteous Natural scenery is one of the inspirations for Derozio to pen the poem as Nair mentions in:

One very important relationship that played a role in Henry penning the *The Fakeer of Jungheera* is that of his mother’s sister who married Mr Arthur Johnson, an Indigo Planter, and shifted to Bhangulpore. It is this place with its breathtaking landscape, which include a river with a rock rising out of it that inspired Derozio’s masterpiece *The Fakeer of Jungheera*...he shifted to
Bhaugulpore to join his uncle-in-law’s indigo plantation. (Nair 26)

The description of this beauteous Nature, possibly, is also invoking the Divine presence or Muse in the Nature in opening lines of the poem which has been a convention of Western epics (and the Romantics). The first canto begins with the picture of gloom in Nature, with the narration of landscapes that reflect the emotional state of the central personages: ‘The sun-lit in dimples breaks, / As when a child from slumber wakes, / Sweet smiling on its mother-there, / Like heavenly hope o’er mortal care’ (174)

Nature, in this poem, can often be compared by juxtaposing it with the first and the second generation Romantic’s use of Nature. Derozio’s descriptions of winds, the sun, butterfly and bee in the opening stanza are mysteriously elaborating the movements in the nature. It is narrated sensually and to create a mysterious atmosphere in accordance with the character of Fakeer and Jungheera’s rock,

High on the hugest granite pile
Of that grey barren craggy isle,
A small rude hut unsheltered stands-
Erected by no earthly hands;
And never sinful foot might dare
To find its way unbidden there. (176)
Derozio mentions Fakeer as ‘the demon – cause of all!’ with these lines: ‘The pleasant forced his home to flee, / The princely maiden’s treachery, / Her youthful lord’s untimely fall— / And he, the demon—cause of all!’ (176)

It has been one of the characteristics of Indian writing that Nature changes incorporating with the theme, character or pertaining to any temperaments or situations in the work. Derozio further mystifies Fakeer in the next stanza under Byronic influences:

Alas! In fairest seeming souls
The tide of guilt all blackly rolls;
And then they steal religion’s ray
Upon its surface but to play:
As o’er the darkest sea a gleam
Of brightest sunshine oft may beam,
Gilding the wave while dark beneath
Are lurking danger, woe, and death. (176)

The mysterious description in the poem remains indebted to Byron’s mysticism. The character of Fakeer seems to be following the traits of Byronic Hero – an anti-hero. Nair states on the ambiguity around the character of Fakeer as:

For the advocates of love and liberty, like the poet himself, this lover of Nuleeni is indeed a Fakeer, a living embodiment of the most divine of all human emotions- love, a man who has renounced all that is material in his quest for the bliss of love, a
man who had no qualms about extinguishing his material self, to gain the ultimate bliss possible only through his union with Nuleeni. Thus, while he is the saint for the disciples of love, he is the villain for those who consider the divine emotion of love, as a means for furthering immediate material goals. He is a dacoit only for those uninitiated into the divine ways of the heart, for they would consider him a criminal because he has tried to rob the unfair society of something it holds in high esteem – its age old exploitative traditions and customs. (37)

With this ambiguity, Derozio portrays Fakeer as a Byronic Hero who has a troubled past, though being a Muslim boy, disdained customs and traditions of the society and loved a Hindu Brahmin girl named Nuleeni. As society did not allow him to marry her, he decided to live a lonely natural life in an exile as an outlaw and outcast life of an unnamed bandit chief Fakeer. He rejects the social norms at the extent that he fiery rebels against the people who force Nuleeni to accomplish the rituals of Sati. He rescues her and later in the poem struggles in the battle-field with the ruler Prince Shoojah and his army until he is killed.

Derozio’s sensation for beauty is described in the beauty of Nuleeni under the Romantic shower as a lady who is ready to sacrifice herself for the sake of denouncing tradition of the society and people.

The rites of that eventful hour
One lovely form is gliding there
As if ’were pure embodied air,
With face half veiled, enrob'd in white,
She, like a blessed child of light
Amidst her maidens seems to rise,
Like Chandra in the jewelled skies! (177)

Derozio also sensually narrates Radhika with Romantic imageries: ‘Her eyes seemed made of the pure star-light, / And her face was mild and sweet;’
(208) The first canto ends with the romantic lines: ‘Like life to hope, she clung to him, / For now was severed sorrow’s chains; / Away had passed the tempest grim, / And joy in sunshine beamed again.’ (194) Derozio’s sensual feel and his sensation of beauty in line ‘And beauty lies pillowed on Love’s gentle breast’ echoes Keats’ ‘Pillow’d upon my fair love’s ripening breast’ (Wu 1433) also studied by Chakrabarti as the following lines from ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’: ‘Farewell !—alas ! that melancholy word / Comes spell-like on the heart whene’er ‘tis heard’ (218) reflect the Keatsian pattern of ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ ‘Forlorn ! the very word is like a bell / To toll me back from thee to my sole self!’ (Wu 1397)

The title of the poem, i.e., ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’ (1828), semblances Keats’s poem and its title, ‘The Eve of St Agnes’, published in 1819, in which Keats describes a saint namely Agnes while Derozio in ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’ describes a bandit chief the Fakeer remains unnamed in the poem. Nor it can be merely a coincident that both central characters in the poems are very
virtuous persons, following a religious tradition both adopted to live a
lawless life and both the poems include the religious and tantric rituals but in
different contexts, of course. Also like ‘The Eve of St Agnes’, ‘Fakeer of
Jungheera’ ‘is long on indices and short on narrative function’ (Mehrotra 57).
Also, Derozio’s following stanza seems to reflect Keats ‘La Bella Dame Sans
Merci’: ‘O! Why at this hour in the dark Shushan / Is the Prince Jogindra
sighing? / Sure that cannot be a dwelling for man / Where the loathsome dead
are lying’ (206)

Derozio embodies love in hope which is a universal idea in the poetry
of Romantics. Further, the idea of inter-relation between love and hope in
‘Fakeer of Jungheera’ Derozio seems to borrow from Romantic poetess Letitia
Elizabeth Landon (1802-1838) who later known as Mrs MacLean as in ‘O!
Love is strong, and its hopes ‘twill build / Where nothing beside would dare; /
O! Love is bright, and its beams will gild / The desert dark, and bare’ (204)
later lines ‘For youth and love their hopes will build / Where nothing beside
would dare; / And they both are bright, and their beams will gild / The desert
dark, and bare.’ (204) Also ‘There was that conscious firmness in her tone / -
Which Hope but lends to trusting Love alone.’ (217) Derozio’s sensation for
truth is reflected at the beginning and at the end of the first canto which was
purely Romantic and sensual in composition. Also, Nuleeni and Fakeer’s
desire of love expresses the same spirit of immortal love as an ultimate truth
in ‘Bright in the scroll of doom I see / The bliss that is reserved for me / With all the good whose ebbless flow / Is only dreamt of here below.’ (186) Further she says for her immortal love: ‘For all the bliss that must be mine: / The bliss all other bliss above- / Love! Love! Immortal boundless Love!’ (186) While Fakeer affirms his Romantic love as:

‘And oh! If brightness more may be
‘The future beams so bright to me.—
‘No more to Mecca’s hallowed shrine
‘Shall wafted be a prayer of mine;
‘No more shall dusky twilight’s ear
‘From me a cry complaining hear;
‘Henceforth I turn my willing knee
‘From Alla, Prophet, heaven, to thee! (198)

The Romantic characteristic of medievalism and Hellenism employed in a dream technique can also be discerned effectively as influencing style of Derozio. The description of folklore of ‘The Legend of Shushan’ in a dream technique included in ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’ is a Romantic characteristic of medievalism and Hellenism. It reminds of a Romantic chivalric hero in a gothic atmosphere. Following it in Indian context, Derozio, revitalizing and reinterpreting the Indian myths, folklore and history, too, brings the ancient, traditional and gothic story of Prince Jogindra and Radhika at cremation ground, taken from the popular Indian folktale of King Vikramaditya and Vetal or the supernatural spirit which is also composed in a traditional ballad
form which in a way also shadows a traditional Romantic form. Derozio in his notes of the poem mentions about the inspiration for the inclusion of the legend in the poem:

A student of that excellent institution, the Hindu College, once brought me a translation of the Betal Puncheesa, and the following fragment of a tale having struck me for its wildness, I thought of writing a ballad, the subject of which should be strictly Indian. Shushan is a place to which the dead are conveyed, to be burnt. In conformity with the practice of eastern story tellers, who frequently repeat the burden or moral of the song, have I introduced the “O Love is strong”, and co. wherever an opportunity offered:– (235)

Adding to sources of allusion and imagery in the poem, William says that Derozio attempting Indian themes ‘drew upon Hindu as well as Greek mythology as sources of allusion and imagery.’ (15) This also mirrors Byron’s use of myths and legends of Greece. Derozio, possibly, tried here to incorporate with Byron’s poetry. Commenting on the inclusion of such episodes in ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’, Rosinka Chaudhuri writes:

Derozio wishes here to include in his narrative verse tale a ballad that would incorporate a Gothic atmosphere, popular among the English Romantics but characteristically for Orientalist poetry, this was to be done through the medium of a ‘strictly Indian’ subject. Not only content, but form too was
altered to suit his needs; the style in this section belonged properly to the English ballad form...(38)

Romantic characteristic of medieval atmosphere can be observed in the end of the second canto which reassures the medieval ideas, and in the description of pre-battle state of Fakeer and the prince Shoojah in the following lines: ‘Like the tempest’s voice is the battle-cry,- / The cry of the Moslem ringing afar, / The dreadful herald of madness and war / To hear it ascending the thunder is dumb- / Arm and up, for they come, they come!’ (219-220) There is a medieval atmosphere created in the further lines of the battle which is an important Romantic trait of the poem: ‘Now Robber-chief! Once more, once more / And the field is thine, and the triumph o’er!’ (222)

The poem also radiates the Byronic love for liberty – ‘liberation and emancipation of woman’ in the couplets like: ‘On to the alter, and scatter the flower, / Sweeten the path as ye wander along; / On to alter! Another blest hour / Brings to her spirit the Kinnura’s song.’ (179) Derozio mentions (addresses) the Indian gods with short descriptions in Western manner: ‘the god of light’, ‘god of this beauteous world’, ‘god of this glorious universe’, ‘creator of the day’, ‘god of th’ immortal mind’, ‘god of eternity’ etc.

Derozio has followed Romantic trait –simplicity of style in his most of poetic creations. ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’ is no exception with inclusion of some events. The poem’s ornamental language, disenchantment and un-fulfilment
theory of love follow Mrs MacLean’s poetry. Also, Scott’s much-loved metrical romance and spirit of battle action influenced the form of ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’. For instance, in its description of battle between the men of the Fakeer and of Shoojah. Derozio’s this poem, like most of his other poems, is also narrated in lyric form with two cantos. There are two contradictory views expressed about the plot of the poem: it is a ‘poem of two cantos without a plot and with few incidents’ (Edwards 148); secondly, ‘The Fakeer is a poem of two Cantos with an insignificant plot’ (Chakrabarti 47), which suggests that there are at least two plots: main plot, viz., a story of Fakeer and Nuleeni and a subplot, i.e., story of prince Jogindra and Radhika. Actually, it is well plotted to juxtapose the Romantic against medieval legend. He sings of the tragic hero who sacrifices for the sake of love. Derozio experimented the story of Jogindra and Radhika in a traditional ballad form which is a wonderful conflux of Romanticism and Indian-ness with two Romantic characteristics: First, simplicity of style as it is written in a traditional ballad form, and secondly Medievalism and Hellenism in Indian context as it goes back to ancient/medieval era of India in the following lines: ‘O! why at this hour in the dark Shushan / Is the Prince Jogindra sighing? / Sure that cannot be a dwelling for man / Where the loathsome dead are lying.’ (206) S K Chakrabarti succinctly avers for form, technique and style of ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’ while writing about Derozio’s indebtedness to English poets like:
Walter Scott (for his ‘metrical romance’ form and description of the battle action between Shoojah’s men and those of the Fakeer), Tom Moore (for his patriotic sentiment), Shakespeare (for his idea of “star crossed” lovers) etc. the idea of the Fakeer’s feat of rescuing Nuleeni is also borrowed from English Literature. Even Campbell’s agonized reference in The Pleasures of Hope (The widow’d Indian, when her lord expires, / Mounts the dread pile, and braves the funeral fires!) to the cruel picture of Sati rites might have appealed to him. Echoes of Byron may be heard in the impassioned style of the poem. (41)

‘Fakeer of Jungheera’ is Indian in theme but often its style and narration represent English Romantic bent. Naik studying metres of the poem finds that Derozio,

uses the iambic four-foot couplet for straight-forward narration, but adopts a slower line for the descriptive passages and the anapaestic metre for the spirited account of the battle, while the choruses of the chanting priests and the women round Nuleeni’s funeral pyre are in trochaic and dactylic measures. (24)

continues the intense romanticism of man-woman love such as was seen between the Fakeer and Nuleeni and between Prince Jogindra and Radhika.’ (42)

‘The Maniac Widow’ is a poem narrating the tragic tale of a widowed lady driven to lunacy by the death of her warrior husband in a battlefield. The introductory lines of the poem like his chef-d’oeuvre ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’, centralize the theme of gloom by narrating longings of the central personage for her dead husband. To describe widow’s feeling of loss and hope Derozio uses of nature, especially, of the second generation Romantic poets, in the words like ‘wind’, ‘dark’ and also in the later phrases like ‘on the wave’, ‘on the plain’, ‘on the rock’ and ‘the hill’. Natural elements in the poem seem to be directly retrieved from the Romantics in the words like ‘Anemones’, ‘roses’, and ‘lilies white’ and in the lines like: ‘Ye waters bright that beneath me roll!! / Tell me, where is the light of my soul— / On the mountain-top, on the boundless main, / By the pebbly beach, or the desert plain?’ (98) These lines express the lady’s yearning enhancing the poetic charm. Like Keats narrations of sensual ecstasies, Derozio narrates lady’s ecstasies with a sensual touch in widow’s longing to kiss her husband, as Nair writes, ‘In a very Keatsian fashion, Derozio narrates how the lady waits for her husband’s kisses’ (43) as in: ‘And his burning lip he’ll press to mine / With kisses to pay for the wreath I’ll twine.’ (97) Apart from these sensual touches, Derozio also describes hope
in the suffering reminding Mrs MacLean’s use of hope: the widow hopes for reunion with her husband when she says ‘They said—but the tale I will not believe;— / My love could not leave me thus to grieve — / I know he is nigh—but it gives me pain / To watch and weep till he comes again!’ (98) The poem ends with a hope: ‘I’ll break the dark spell that has bound thee so long, / And wake for my loved-one the sea-harp and song.’ (100) Derozio also creates a sense of Byronic mysticism by creating gothic atmosphere in the following lines:

Long years have rolled; and fishermen say,
That every year, on that sad day,
Strange sounds are heard—and the waters rush
Like passion’s tumultuous, maddening gush;
Then all is silent—and then a strain
Like Syren’s song is heard on the main,
Sweeter than music of waves below,
And thus, they say, the song doth flow:— (100)

Along with these lines the supernaturalism is also reflected recalling S T Coleridge when Derozio narrates how even after many years of the widow’s death; her spirit still waits for union with her husband.

‘Ada’ is a poem representing an Indian theme of central character Ada’s choice of spending her life with a person of her choice against the rigid orthodoxy of society by eloping with her lover. The introductory verses are an
epigraph, following a Romantic custom, foretells the story—the fate of all true lovers, in this very imperfect world of ours, is doom. It states: ‘A history of passion;—and like all / That Love has part in, full of hope, and fear, / And cold despair, and madness, which at last / Destroy the heart and brain that once they seize.’ (154)

Another aspect of Romantic poets, Nature, seems to be an inseparable part of the poem. Here, nature changes as per Ada’s circumstances. By juxtaposing Romantic tendency for ‘Back to Nature’ and the poem, it can be observed that words and similes used in the poem like: ‘moonbeam’, ‘breeze’, ‘waves’, ‘sweet blue lake’ and so on collaboratively inspired by a Romantic spirit and in such a nature a lover proposes Ada. Derozio creates an acute sense of Romanticism here by narrating an atmosphere supporting a marriage proposal. Nature incorporates Ada’s emotion when she listens the proposal silently. Derozio also pens Wordworthian nature in the beauty of island on which Ada and her lover lives in with a very sensual and positive note:

’Twas sweet to list the lark’s wild song,
And watch the wave as it rolled along;
’Twas sweet to see the broad sun set,
When his beams and the waters kissed and met
But sweeter than all it was to see
Ada as blest as woman may be. (155-156)
There is an amalgamation of the Wordsworthian nature and second generation nature in this poem when her lover joins the ranks of war in lines as: ‘…The waters flow / Gurgling, in darkest hue below’ (157) and also in later lines ‘Now, o’er the lake, when day-light die… / Each sound that’s wafted on the breeze, / Each gentlest rustling of the trees…’ (158) Emotions, love and hope interweaved with each other at several points in the poem: first in the epigraph, second in Ada’s action of eloping leaving behind her father, parents, and family, and third when nature waking her hope in the following stanza: ‘Each sound that’s wafted on the breeze, / Each gentlest rustling of the trees, / And every tone that meets her ear / Wakes her fond heart to hopes most dear.’ (158) Also, the later lines of the poem noted as ‘With so much woe ‘twere bliss to die: / And soon that awful day of doom, / Shall, like relieving angel, come!’ (159-160) Derozio expresses the misanthropic feeling in a manner of Byron in the following lines:

Mark this bleak world, and 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; (159)

‘Ada’ is penned in a lyrical form mostly following a rhyming scheme of aa, bb, aa, bb with a sudden change in one or two stanzas.
‘The Bridal’ is a poem which is one of the finest examples of Byron’s spell on Derozio. It is a short poem of Romantic love and its power over life to destroy. It is inspired from ‘An Autumn in Greece’ which Derozio himself foretells in the preface. The poem exhibits Derozio’s reading of Byron and his inspiration which was stirred by Byron and his love for Greece. Derozio brings the theme of hope and love in the lines: ‘Like Hope expecting Love’s return, / With thoughts that in her bosom burn’. (113) Also, the very familiar attempt to build up the Byronic mysticism has been attempted, here too, not very successful, by Derozio: ‘The lutes are soft, and songs go round; / The flowers are fair, the lamps are bright:- / Why comes the bridegroom not tonight?’ (113)

The poem, ‘The Enchantress of the Cave’, displays many Romantic influences. The title of the poem, like ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’ is derived from Keats’s ‘The Eve of St Agnes’, seems to be inspired by Keats’s poem ‘La Belle Dame San Merci’. There are two epigraphs quoted from Byron and Moore’s oriental Romances—‘The Giaour’ (1813) and ‘Lalla Rookh’ (1817), are respectively fragmentary narratives. Derozio, too, incorporates with these poems and narrates oriental Romance, a tale of true love couple with a description of the glorious Hindu history of the pre-Mughal days which was encouraged by Romantic trait of medievalism and further poem incorporates with the metre, i.e., iambic tetrameter like ‘The Giaour’, which was a very
favourite metre with the English Romantic poets, this cannot merely be a co-
incident. Derozio begins the narrative with a description of nature and
supplements the Wordsworthian nature, creates a Romantic environment and
sets the theme of Romantic love-spirit:

To youthful hearts the spreading sky
Might seem a curtained canopy,
A silent sentry every star
That on them looked, and watched afar,
With earth their couch of paradise—
Such visions flit ‘fore lovers’ eyes!

…It was a lovely, soothing night,
And all was beautiful and bright—… (129)

Apart the title of the poem, the narrative settings of the poem, at some extent,
follow Keats’s ‘La Belle Dame San Merci’. Derozio tries to create a mystery in
the poem by repetitively asking: ‘Why seeks Nazim the Witch of the Cave?’
(132) and by attributing Nazim traits of Byronic hero in the lines he himself
answers: …(Nazim seeks) ‘the Witch of the Cave…to know if all / Goes right
and well in his distant hall; / How fares his sire, and how his son, / But chief
the wife whom his heart doats on.’ (132) These lines reveal the intensity of
Nazim’s Romantic love which shows poet’s sensation for beauty and truth.
Nazim undertakes the difficult journey on a dangerous terrain on his steed
and finally reaches the cave inhabited by ‘the hag so wan and grim’. (133) A
supernatural environment is created while even in the initial stages, a hint is given that the Witch may not be so wan and grim as she seemed at first sight. The Witch, then, addresses the visitor and tries to find out the intentions to the ‘dreary and dark’ cave when he could have gone in search of ‘Jemshid’s gem’ or ‘The Seal of the fifth king’ or many such riches. Nazim’s love spirit is reflected when he politely tells to Witch after listening her long discourse that all the riches in the world pale in comparison to the love that his wife and he share and that all that he desired of the Witch was to know about the well-being of his wife. He says:

‘And oh! I could not calmly die
‘Until I knew that all was well
‘With her who claims my latest sigh—
‘If thou thus much to me canst tell,
‘If this thy dark, prophetic eye
‘Can see— I seek nor sign nor spell.’ (137)

Nair quotes Dasgupta referring to Thomas Campbell’s (1777-1844) inspiration on the poem from a passages of ‘The Pleasures of Hope’ wherein Campbell: “refers to the Muhammadan conquest of India and all the miseries that followed from it. Here the poet pays a high tribute to the indomitable spirit of the people of Hindustan who did not sell their soul to the invader.” (53) Derozio also represented patriotic spirit in the poem by suggesting that the Hindu valour of the bygone days is a ‘spirit of the past’ and that it existed ‘Ere exiled
Freedom looked her last / On this delicious orient clime!’ (131) Commenting on Derozio’s treatment of the glorious Hindu past and Muslim bravery, Rosinka Chaudhuri writes:

Derozio was influenced by the prevalent fashionable Western interest in an exotic Muslim culture. At the same time, almost in opposition to that interest, Derozio’s demonization of Muslims (and, as we shall see, his glorification of ancient Hindu India) is a local, immediate and colonial project, conceived in the academic research of Orientalist scholars in Calcutta. The paradox in Derozio’s verse was that he was an enthusiastic exponent of both schools of thought, extolling Muslim cultural achievements while at the same time denouncing the perceived aggressive and war like character of Muslims. (44)

Studying the Muslim terms Chakrabarti observes:

Derozio takes from Byron some of the Moslem terms to create the correct Moslem atmosphere in the poem: ‘Afrit’ (‘a kind of Medusae’ – Derozio’s footnote to the word in The Enchantress) and ‘Eblis’ (‘the Muhammadan Pluto’ – Derozio’s footnote).

(17)

‘The Golden Vase’ is a love poem set in the medieval India, a style of Romantics, in the midst of Hindu-Muslim war. Through this poem, Derozio expresses his desire for joining the battle of freedom like Byron. He wanted to join the freedom struggle of his land. The poem narrates a story of a woman who clings to a Golden Vase, a symbol of her lover, who has left her to defend
his motherland against the invading Muslims. This theme reminds one of Keats’ ‘Isabella’. Both the central characters, Isabella and a beloved in ‘Isabella’ and ‘The Golden Vase’ respectively, are possessive about their gifts of love. Derozio inspired by Keats’s ‘Isabella’ and also by her pot of basil, portrays the character of a woman with a golden vase to which she clings on. The narration is prefaced by an epigraph, here, again, Derozio follows the poetic custom of the Romantics of prefacing the poem by an epigraph, centralizing the core theme of the poem:

With love’s sweet tokens many things are linked;
Words made of music, glances which could speak,
And sighs that rose like incense from the heart:
These are reflected in love’s sacred gifts,
Even as a mirror shows the form before it. (250)

The poem opens with a passionate description how a woman is clinging the vase shows intensity of her passions for her lover:

See, how she hangs upon that golden vase!
As if each flower it holds were a sweet thought…
…Her arm
So white, so delicate, so gently twined
Around the golden neck of that bright vase
Looks as ’twere made of moonlight. (251)
These lines are mirroring Romantic mannerisms of sensation for beauty and truth along with the dominance of emotions. After the battle is over and possibly won, the lover returns to his beloved in the guise of a minstrel and very romantically sings: ‘Were I that vase-forgive the thought! / My bliss would be divine; / And I would bless my golden lot / For that soft arm of thine.’ (253) The song over, Derozio romantically sensualizes the end of the poem with a description of a kiss when beloved recognizes her lover: ‘Her lip is pressed to his for whom she lives, / Her arm entwines not now the vase’s neck, / But the hands that embraced the vase now / taken from the gift, it fondly clings / Like a sweet tendril to the giver.’ (253)

‘The Neglected Minstrel’ is a narrative poem of a bard who sings a tale of another unfortunate tragic life of the neglected minstrel to his beloved. Derozio again pens an epigraph to the poem like his other poems following the tradition:

Like the harmonious nightingale he lived,
A lone inhabitant of sylvan scenes;
And to the passing gale his minstrelsy
With breaking heart he gave; for save the gale
None visited him there—he had no friend! (242)

Set in a dramatic manner, it opens with a Wordsworthian use of memory, trying to rekindle, in the mind of his beloved, the beautiful moments of love
spent in the lap of nature rejuvenating the fond memories. Derozio followed here the Romantics’ source of happiness in recollecting memory:

   Thou canst not have forgot it; for ‘twas there…
   …As the hot sun at evening hour came down
   To cool his burning brow in the gilt wave,
   And hear the breeze’s vesper orisons:—...
   …To those wild birds which on the branches sang
   Perhaps unto each other lays of love,.. (242)

Derozio uses rich natural imagery as in ‘Like music from a shell, woke blissful thoughts / Like fragrance out of flowers in his fond breast, / And delicate as those which float in dreams— / The essence of delicious Poesy!’ (244) The Romantic spirit of love is possibly the first interpretation of the following line ‘He loved:- O! love and song are twins, and they / Have aye been linked together from their birth.’ (244) The poem also reflects the Byronic influences in an emotional outburst: ‘O Memory! / Canst thou not also die when all we love / Sinks like the lost star from our sight?’ (244-245)

    In the same, Byronic manner, Derozio also poses as in the outburst of grief found in the ending lines of the poem:

   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 flam. – (246-247)

Further, Chakrabarti, also, observing Byron’s great appeal on Derozio’s verses:

He wrote a poem entitled *Heaven* in imitation of Byron’s “Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle” etc. (*The Bride of Abydos*, Canto I / Stanza I). But it is not always that one finds in his poems ‘echoes’ from Byron. Byron has provided the inspiration, not always the tone and temper of his poems. (22)

In the poem, the narrator, perhaps autobiographically, equates the love that the bard, in his narration, had for his beloved with his own love for his lady love ‘He wore her in his heart as I do thee.’ (244) Thus, there was Romantic love, song and bliss in the air.

‘The New Atlantis: A Fragment’ is one of Derozio’s less famous, longer and love poems. It is once again following Romantic tradition opens with an epigraph grabbing the main theme of the poem:

How sweet ‘twould be
To live upon some distant lonely isle
Where all is beautiful; to sit and watch
The stars as they come smiling up the sky;
And then to gaze upon the face we love,
And find the eyes there brighter than the stars! (237)
Following the epigraph, thus opens the poem with the beauteous description of isle full of Romantic imageries of Nature like Wordsworth in joyous mood for Romance and Love:

'Twas a green solitude; a fairy haunt,
Set like an emerald in a golden sea
Upon the vast Atlantic; and so like
Those isles of which the poet only dreams,
That he who once might visit the sweet spot
Would deem kind nature in a joyous mood
Had made it only for Romance and Love! (237)

Derozio’s Wordsworthian natural imageries like ‘weary sun’, ‘ocean-bride’, ‘sea-born treasures’, ‘blue world’ and so on in the poem set the fashion in which Romantic poets used to write. His description of Natural beauty of the isle reminds one the Romantic poets. Wordsworthian concepts of ordinary and extra-ordinary Nature seem to be more reflected in the poem with the minute description. The coloured and rich imageries further enhance the Romantic mood of the poem: ‘The pink and azure shells / Left on the sunny shore of that fair island’ (238) and later the lines: ‘A legacy of sweetness, were to be / Partaker in the bliss enthusiasts paint.’ (238) The poem also echoes love and hope of Romantic poetess L.E.L. as in ‘With radiant sunshine; on their path of life / Flowers of eternal freshness had been strewed / By gentlest seraphs’ hands; and Hope had set / Her rainbow in the sky; it promised peace
And happiness for ever.’ (238) This intermingling of love and hope is perpetual in the poem:

Here – (a fit dwelling place for two fond hearts
That never needed more society,
But clung unto each other, and remained
Inseparable, like first love, and hope)

…

But oh! the rays
Which made their arch of hope so beautiful
Were all perpetual; they ne’er took wings-
Herein they were unlike realities (238)

Commenting on the influence of L.E.L. Nair writes:

This poem seems to have been written under the influence of L.E. London. There are many passages that remind us of L.E.L’s poems. For instance, the way Love and Hope are shown to be inseparable echo L.E.L’s ‘Death and Youth.’ (95)

Also, Coleridge has been mirrored in the following lines: ‘He loved red roses, jasmines, and all flowers / Which make the soul soft, musical, and sweet / As an Aeolian harp.’ (239) John Keats’s poem has also been reflected in the following imagery: ‘…and whispered words / Melodious as the poet Nightingale’s / Sad fall of music when he woos the rose! – ’ (240) Keatsian image of the Moon as Queen Moon ‘Clustered around by all her starry Fays’ (Garrod 208) in ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ is reproduced in this extract with an
Indian look: ‘Young Eric oft had seen the midnight moon / Walking unclouded through the azure sky, / Live a Sultana with her handmaid stars / Well pleased to gather round her’ (238) Derozio has portrayed character of Rosina with Romantic and sensual imageries especially reminding Keats and Byron:

He held her to his heart; one hand was laid
Upon her neck, the other grasped her hand–
’Twas white, and delicate as a soft beam
Of the young moon upon a calm clear night,
’Twas made for touching flowers, and to be kissed. (240)

Derozio also presents an emotional outbursts in Byronic way in the lines:
‘Love, woman, stars and flowers! O! are not ye / The gifts which spirits in a pitying mood / Vouchsafed to man?’ (239) Chaudhuri writes about the poem in ‘Derozio, Poet of India’:

A meditation on the nature of youthful Romance and Love (both fittingly spelt by him with a capital letter), the poem is replete with Romantic imagery, mentioning, almost in the same breath, the skylark, the Aeolian Harp, and the nightingale and the rose.

(Derozio 66)

The poem ends with a sarcastic comment on a real life: ‘And then in mood of mind less wild, I turn / in calmer hour, to gaze upon this world / Of cold reality, and ah! I find / This is not Life!’ (241)
Derozio being inspired by the ideas of Tom Paine, Edmund Burke and William Godwin of the West, he penned the revolutionary ideas throughout in his writings. His rational ideas against the cruel custom of Sattee are more measured in his poems like ‘The Fakeer of Jungheera’ and ‘Song of the Indian Girl’ which narrate disgraceful condition of the Indian widow. To depict the unfortunate widows he uses Natural similes like “autumn leaf”, “setting sun” etc. Further, the use of words like “pagen” shows Derozio lisping the colonizer’s lingo in his ‘On the Abolition of Sattee’. In this poem ‘he constructs the image of decadent India heading towards a Bentinck-inspired renaissance using a series of Romantic imagery like ‘History bending o’er the page of time.’ (Nair 91) Also, the father and friend to whom the poem refers is Lord William Bentinck, Governor General of Bengal. Derozio does not acknowledge the prominent Bengali reformer Rammohun Roy’s campaign against sati. In ‘On the Abolition of Sattee’, ‘the tone is that of a liberal reformer and loyal colonial subject.’ (Bohls 175) That reflects the English influences on anglophile Derozio.

His ‘The Deserted Girl’ is again a sad commentary on the condition of women in the society. The poem begins with Wordsworthian minute description of Nature. The atmosphere described in the beginning of the poem is dark and gloomy, corresponding to the sombre Nature of the theme of the poem. Also, the fate of the deserted girl is reminiscent of that of Rosalie,
heroine of a poem by Romantic poetess L.E.L. bearing the same name for its title. Like Rosalie who trusted and ‘heard Love’s vows – confided – was deceived’, Derozio’s Deserted Girl is deceived and forsaken by her lover.

‘Evening in August’ depicts the bounties of Nature generated by the river Ganga. The poem is embellished with a prefaced ‘And muse on nature with a Poet’s eye’ which is taken from Campbell’s ‘Pleasure of hope’. Chakrabarti says about the preface

...is no more than an adornment. For in Campbell’s The Pleasures of Hope the line (I. 98, Part II) describes the love of the great Rhodian artist, who painted the picture of Venus, for calm Nature where he loves to roam about. In Evening in August Derozio is musing on tranquil Nature at evening sitting by the Ganges in a melancholy mood. (15)

The poem unfolds the scenes of an afternoon leading to night’s darkness on the river bank. The following lines create a scene of angelic beauty and glamour depicting the sunset as: ‘The sun sets on a bank, whose yellow sand / And brightly glows; as if an angel’s hand / Had scattered gold there, heedless of the worth / That gold hath gained among the sons of earth.’ (116) And with the arrival of the night, ‘shadows’ start descending, the dew drops start falling like ‘a blessing’, and the stars start twinkling. The poem concludes with the fascinating images of fairies, as if the Nature was an agent that
connects the two worlds, the material and the spiritual, the real with the imagined echoing the Wordsworthian and Coleridgian Nature:

Now spirits are abroad, and on the green
Dance the light fairies round their playful queen:
They dance, but leave no foot prints on the grass,
And when ’tis morn, like thoughts, away they pass;
And then each hies to her elfin bower,
A shrub’s green leaf, or petal of a flower. (117)

Coleridge in ‘The Rime of Ancient Mariner’ connected natural and supernatural worlds through the intervention of human activities which Rousseau termed moral nature of human. Derozio carrying the same effusion of Nature in the last few lines of the poem says that it is replete with activities which are human and with such activities only the human world of materiality gets connected to the ethereal world of non-materiality governed by fairies. Derozio, here, adopts the concepts of Nature from Coleridge and Wordsworth as ‘It is an hour of watchfulness and thought: / It is the chosen season when are wrought / The fairest pictures ever Fancy drew’ (117) have a Campbellian ring ‘So thy fair hand, enamoured Fancy! Gleans / The treasured pictures of a thousand scenes.’ (Campbell 57) Even the magnetic power of Nature’s idyllic beauty as described in Derozio’s: ‘And when ’tis morn, like thoughts, away they pass; / And then each hies her to her elfin bower, / A
shrub’s green leaf. Or petal of a flower.— / I’m loath to leave this spot—’ (117)

Reminds one of Campbell’s

   The moon is up-the watch-tower dimly burns-
   And down the vale his sober step returns;
   But pauses oft as winding rocks convey
   The still sweet fall of music far away:
   And of the lingers from his home awhile
   To watch the dying notes!–and start, and smile! (Campbell 59)

‘Morning After a Storm’ was written in two parts and both the parts portray Nature in two various effusions of Romantics. In the first part Derozio observes the havoc created by the storm and takes cognizance of Nature’s power. The havoc caused by Nature is minutely detailed:

To mark the havoc that the storm had made
   I wandered forth, and saw great Nature’s power.

The hamlet was in desolation laid
   By the strong spirits of the storm; there lay
Around me many a branch of giant trees,
   Scattered as leaves are by the southern breeze
   Upon a brook, on an autumnal day;
   Cloud piled on cloud was there… (149)

Derozio seems here to be following structurally destructive Nature of Byron.

However, like Wordsworth and Coleridge, he being a lover of Nature appreciates Nature’s beauty in the second part:

   Oh! Nature, how I love thy face! And now
That there was freshness on thy placid brow
White I looked on thee with extreme delight,
How leapt my young heart at the lovely sight!
Heaven breathed upon me sweetly, and its breath
Was like the fragrance of a rosy wreath. (150)

The poem ends with a Rousseauesque or Wordsworthian attitude of Derozio who after viewing the wreck-strewn river’s waves came to the conclusion: ‘but Oh! There / I learned a moral lesson, which I’ll store / Within my bosom’s deepest, in most core!’ (150)

‘A Walk by Moonlight’ is written exclusively on Nature. The poem is inspired by Byron’s ‘She Walks in Beauty’ although, both the poems are different in theme. In ‘A Walk by Moonlight’ the poet portrays a night which was the best of all nights. In the poem, the speaker talks about when he went out previous night to meet his friends. All three friends went for a walk wherein Derozio captures the grand connection of the moon’s governing of Nature: ‘The moon stood silent in the sky, / And looked upon our earth; / The clouds divided, passing by, / In homage to her worth.’ (374) His picturesque description of supreme influence of Moon, felt by the elements of Nature, creates mysteries when he writes: ‘There was a dance among the leaves / Rejoicing at her power, / Who robes for them of silver weaves / Within one mystic hour.’ (374) Derozio mystifies Nature in the last lines. Further he say ‘There was a song among the winds / Hymning her influence– / That low-
breathed minstrelsy which binds / The soul to thought intense.’ (375) Derozio uses the word ‘mystic’ twice and ‘mysteries’ once in the poem and highlights the mysterious activities of Nature’s elements. His observations like ‘a dance among the leaves’, ‘a song among the winds’, ‘And there was something in the night / That with its magic wound us’, ‘the mystic melody’ and ‘the silken language of the stars’ mystify Nature in general and Moon in particular. This is possibly because of his excessive readings of Romantics and their mystical approach to Nature. He also narrates ‘spiritualness’ in the lines: ‘When, like a thing that is not ours, / This earthliness goes by, / And we behold the spiritualness / Of all that cannot die.’ (375) Like Wordsworth, realisation of spirituality makes the poet aware of the connection between the human world and the world of Nature:

The silken language of the stars
    Becomes the tongue we speak,

... The inward eye is open then
    The glories, which in dreams
    Visit the sleeper’s couch, in robes
    Woven of the rainbow’s beams. (375)

The following lines remind Derozio’s reading of Rousseau who talked about Man’s moral nature: ‘I bless my nature that I am / Allied to all the bliss,’ (375) In the poem the speaker is happy that he could see the other worlds in the activities of Nature: ‘Which other worlds we’re told afford, / But which I find
The poem ends with the lines wherein Derozio personifies Nature and experiences it like the Romantics: ‘Oh! in such moments can I crush / The grass beneath my feet? / Ah no; the grass has then a voice, / Its heart – I hear it beat.’ (376) In this poem, he writes for the concept of mysterious wandering of moon as: ‘Lonely thou wander’st through wide heaven, like one’ / ‘That has some fearful deed of darkness done’ (265) in ‘To the Moon’ and ‘And there though wander’st sorrowful, and weak,’ / And heedless where thou’rt straying, sad, and pale’ (269) in ‘To the Rising Moon’ both echoing Shelley’s ‘To the Moon’. It is affirmed when Derozio takes the first line of Shelley’s poem as a source of his description of moon. The imagery of Moon reflects Shelley’s transcendentalist idealism along with his moods of ecstasy and languor. Derozio’s principal biographer, Thomas – Edwards, thinks that his sonnet trio, i.e., ‘Night’, ‘To the Moon’, and ‘To the Rising Moon’, are modelled on and indebted to Shelley’s ‘To the Moon’:

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth, -
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy? (Percy Bysshe Shelley Poems 58)

His ‘Night’ is more subjective poem which ‘may have reference also to his elder brother, Frank who is believed to have committed suicide when he
was about twenty.’ (Chakrabarti 41) The poem reminds us of S T Coleridge’s ‘Frost at Midnight’ which is also moulded on night in a subjective way and ‘Dejection: An Ode’. In this poem the imaginary of moon is ‘pallid, and weary, wandering slowly on’ (314) and about the constancy of moon Derozio writes ‘Her trusting love’s and hapless frailty’s tale’ in ‘To the Rising Moon’ which are imitations of Shelley. Chakrabarti noting one influence of Shelley says:

The hope-induced prophetic vision of Shelley expressed in the first lines of Ode to the West Wind:

“O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?”

is also Derozio’s [of course, in a different context, i.e., in the context of Bentinck’s banning of the practice of Sattee by law]:

“morning herald star
Comes trembling into day: O! can the Sun be far?
INDIA.” (35)

There are many love poems sparked by the second generation Romantics and more autobiographical in nature are also shorter in length than his earlier narratives. Such poems of his reminiscent of the second generation Romantic poets in mood and sometimes pensive and morose. In few of his poems, poet has narrated the beauty of an unknown and unnamed girl whom he loved and the intensity of his love, reminds one, here, the Romantic poets John Keats and Lord Byron who had the same passions in

Published in India Gazette on 19 May 1825, ‘Forget Me Not’ is a short poem written only in two quatrains following a refrain ‘Will I forget thee, never!’ In this poem, the poet expresses intensity of his love by using a set of natural and romantic imageries for an unknown person who perchance be his dead family member(s) or the unknown girl which is often mentioned as Derozio’s teenage love.

‘Love Me and Leave Me Not’, ‘Stanzas’ and ‘Lines Written at the Request of a Young Lady’ are also a record of Derozio’s deep love for the unnamed lady and his constant realization of the impossibility of their union being possible. ‘Love Me and Leave Me Not’ is again a small poem of two quatrains expressing the same spirit of love in which Derozio avers ‘Tho’ fate thy form from me should part, / Tho’ destiny our fortunes sever— / Still, Lady, this devoted heart / Will throb-and true to thee for ever.’ (25) Following the Romantics, Derozio has also followed the way the Romantics followed William Blake, John Milton and William Shakespeare. This poem also reflects the same. For instance, the title of the poem, ‘Love Me and Leave Me Not’,
reminds the famous lines of a romantic play in ‘The Merchant of Venice’ by Shakespeare wherein Gratiano, on receiving a gold ring as a token of love from Portia, said ‘About a hoop of gold, a paltry ring / That she did give me, whose posy was / For all the world like cutler’s poetry / Upon a knife, “Love me and leave me not.’ (The Complete Works of William Shakespeare 1335)

While ‘Love’s First Feelings’ is prefaced by an epigraph signed by Romantic poetess Letitia Elizabeth Landon with her initials ‘L. E. L.’ reflecting her influence in the composition of the poem. This is a poem of a good length compared to his previous short-love poems. The epigraph has been the first seven lines of the third stanza of ‘The Indian Bride’ centralizing the core theme of the poem:

O! there are a thousand fanciful things
Linked round the young heart’s imaginings.
In its first love-dream, a leaf or a flower
Is gifted then with a spell and a power;
A shade is an omen, a dream is a sign
From which the maiden can well divine
Passion’s whole history.—
- L. E. L. (102)

The poem, being influenced by Mrs MacLean’s ‘The Indian Bride’, portrays the mental state of a young woman who herself describes her feelings of love in a Romantic vein wherein she says ‘O! why was woman made to feel /
Emotions strong, and not reveal?’ (102) Derozio took this opportunity to refer to sensuality of Romantic love in the lines: ‘He met me, and my hand he prest,

/ A sudden chillness seized my breast; / I shivered, and my hand grew cold, /

As if my mortal hour were told—’ (102) The young woman’s individual character is fully settled in love feelings when she says: ‘A few wild words he spake—and then / A burning thought flashed through my brain;— / It passed—but like the lightning’s wind / All hopes seared with its fiery sting.’ (103) The Romantic love is better expressed in the lines ‘And then I felt he was the one, / The only one who was to be / The ruler of my destiny.’ (103) Apart this, Derozio was mainly influenced by L.E.L.’s ornamental style, air of ‘disenchantment’ and unfulfilment and theory of love.

‘My Dream’ published in the month of February 1827 with an epigraph, following the contemporary Romantic tradition, again centralizing the theme taken from ‘The Soldier’s Dream’ by Thomas Campbell: ‘But Sorrow returned with the dawning of morn, / And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away.’ (106) Influenced by Campbell, this poem like ‘The Neglected Minstrel’ tries to rekindle the happy memory of past but in a dream: ‘And there were smiles of other days, / When days were warm and bright;— / They passed like beams of hop away, / Or shadows of the night!’ (107) The poet further says how his memories love to cling to the memory of a lady: ‘O! how my memory loves to cling / To aught that breathes of thee!’
The poem has a vision presumably of the girl with whom he had love-affair at Bhaugulpore but whom he could not marry for some mysterious reason. Further, he appraises to the medium of the memory in which it occurs in ‘O! dreams of bliss are bliss indeed, / For bliss is but a dream.’ (107)

In ‘Here’s a Health to thee, Lassie!’ Derozio depicts Romantic love for the young woman and intensity of the love which did not last long, while in the West the same incidents were happened with Byron and Keats, but which left a deep stamp on the poet’s psyche. It begins with the poet referring to the ‘wild waves’ that roll between them now, but which was not the case in the past when he rekindles the memories how they have ‘smiled together’. Even, he dares not to hope for her below a joy:

Yet, ah! I dare not fondly hope
For thee a joy below, Lassie:
And till thou canst with sorrow cope,
Severe will be is blow, Lassie.
We smiled together—but ’tis past—
We’ve wept—those days are o’er, Lassie;
’Twas too much happiness to last,
Its loss we now deplore, Lassie. (109)

Nair notes that Pallab Sensgupta uses the first lines from this poem to give credence to the theory that it was at Bhaugulpore that the poet had experienced the first stirrings of love. He states:
The ‘waves’ that separated the poet from ‘Lassie’ suggested a multi-dimensional imagery: these were the waves of fate, time and river too. The third suggestion vindicated the existence of a real girl, separated from the young poet and the barriers between them were set up not only by fate, not time, but a river also. The girl living in Bhagalpore and the poet, living in Calcutta, were in fact separated by the river Ganges as well. Thus, frustrated lover that he was, the young poet plausibly picked up an image of rolling waves as the symbol of the painful separation. (41)

‘Good Night’ and ‘Canzonet’ express the pain of unrequited love. The themes in these poems have touches of Byron’s ‘When We Two Parted’ and Keats poems written for his beloved Fanny like ‘To Fanny, Lines to Fanny’. In ‘Good Night’, he categorically admits that the lady had a mesmerizing influence upon him: ‘…a magic there lurks in thy soft eye’s light / Whose spell I’ll remember for ever.’ (279) These lines also reflect the spirit of love expressed by Keats in his poem ‘To Fanny’ and Byron in his poem ‘When We Two Parted’. (279) However, Derozio also regrets that ‘…a word I received from thee never’. This suggests that the affair was probably a one-sided one, with very little encouragement from the lady’s side which was not the case with Keats. He longs for that ‘One smile from that lip ruby red’ which would have ‘…revived my heart’s blossoms long dead’. (280) However, he does not compel her to love him because he does not want to be ‘…a cloud on thy
pathway of light’. (280) Hence, he seems to suggest that any relationship with him would have had a limiting experience on his beloved and he desists from asking her to reciprocate his love for her and appreciates her from a distance, though this in itself is very painful for him. The same feelings were expressed by the Romantic poet Lord Byron in ‘When We Two Parted’ in these words: ‘Long, long I shall rue thee, / Too deeply to tell’. (Wu 849)

In ‘Canzonet’, published on 19 July 1830, Derozio uses a multitude of images to express his grief at his love being a one-sided one striking a conventional tone. To emphasize the transitory nature of their relationship, he compares his emotional involvement with his beloved to write his name upon sand on seashore, which the waves soon washed away, similarly their relationship too did not stand the test of time and soon withered away. The poet therefore poignantly asks: ‘There was a rainbow on the sky, / As beautiful as you! / It passed, as if it loved to fly— / Had you as fleet wings too?’ (282)

In ‘Stanzas’, Derozio requests his beloved not to forget ‘...thy vows that were made at the shrine’ (29) This poem too makes it clear that the twain have parted and Derozio wants his beloved to ‘Forget not, forget not the moment we parted’. (29) Thus, this relationship seems to have been a fairly serious one, considering the vows exchanged in some unknown shrine. ‘Lines Written at the Request of a Young Lady’ echoes a tone of regret at the lady’s
indifference to the poet’s proposal of love. Two poems titled ‘Addressed to Her, Who will Best Understand Them’ are romantic verses wherein he voices his love for his mystery lady. In both the poems, the poet addresses the lady as ‘C’, probably the name of the lady began with that alphabet. Derozio, though, being an ardent lover never named her in his verses prove that the relationship was a one-sided one and yet he was never discouraged in his spirit of Romantic love. Derozio narrates that it has been more than just a Romantic one, especially in the way he narrates how he treasures the lock of her hair which the lady had given him as a parting gift. This has been a borrowed theme from Shelley:

Then I turn to your lock of bonney brown hair,
And I kiss it, and fancy I press
The lips I love best,—and I turn me to rest,
And my dreams give me back your caress:
Oh! ‘tis only a dream!—for the cool morning air
Re-visit my pillow—But thou art not there. (M. Williams 94)

As his lady love had left him, in the next poem, he invites her back and requests her to at least give some indication of her willingness to come back to him, so that he could muster up some motivation to live: ‘Oh! Rose of beauty, since thy Lover / For thee a thousand lives would give, / One grateful thought at least discover, / One little sigh to bid him-live.’ (as in Nair 106) Which reminds of Keats in ‘Lines to Fanny’ wherein he says, ‘O, the sweetness of the
pain! / Give me those lips again! / Enough! Enough! it is enough for me / To dream of thee!’ (Garrod 399)

Above and beyond these autobiographical-love poems, there are some poems composed for the people who made a difference, the incidents that shaped his personality find mention in poems like ‘Good Night, To my Brother in Scotland’ and ‘Sister-in-Law’. In ‘Good Night’ Derozio grieves the dead ones who were close to his heart, which include his mother who died when he was six, his elder brother Frank and his sister Sophia. ‘To My Brother in Scotland’ expresses concern about the well-being of his brother, Claudius, who had gone to Scotland for higher education. While ‘Sister-in-Law’ is a humorous and racy poem addressed to his sister Amelia, who had been pestered him to get married soon. These poems are also not far from being influenced by Romantics in lighter way.

‘A Dramatic Sketch’ has also autobiographical elements. Derozio is greatly inspired by Burns’ idea of the Universal Brotherhood of Man. He quoted in his ‘East Indian’ newspaper these famous lines of Burns: ‘……Man to man the world o’er / Shall brothers be and a’that.’ (300) And further many lines of the poem like ‘O sir! Forgive my youth: but I do think, / that man must be man’s brother and his friend’ (304); and again ‘And then expanding all the gentle ties / of consanguinity, I fondly dream / of man, as one great family’ (300) are obvious echoes of Burns.
Under Wordsworthian influences on Derozio’s love of Nature and conception of a divine presence in Nature, Derozio echoes the same in the choric song of the poem. The ‘He’ of the passage below may be the Vedic God, and Wordsworthian Pantheism may be a far cry from Derozio’s concept of the presence of God in Nature, still in the following lines from ‘A Dramatic Sketch’ there is a Wordsworthian ring: ‘And ever is seen / In the vernal green / Which clothes the mountain trees, / And omnific hand, / And a mind that planned / Whatever the vision sees.’ (302) This passage, as Chakrabarti compares with Wordsworth’s ‘a sense sublime / of something far more deeply interfused, / whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, / and the round ocean and the living air, / and the blue sky, and in the mind of man.’ (35) Further, Derozian phrases like ‘on viewless wing have essayed to fly’ (301) in the poem and so on recall Keatsian phrases like ‘on the viewless wings of Poesy’ (Wu 1396) in ‘Ode to a Nightingale’.

Derozio’s contemporary Romantic poet Lord Byron, whose love for liberty and Greece is well known and well reflected in most of his poems; his style and theme mesmerised Derozio not only to sing of liberty and of human dignity but to write poems extolling and restoring the glories of Greece. Apart from his various love poems discussed earlier, Derozio, under the influence of Byron and his love for Greece, was inspired to write poems on Greece. On a closer reading, one would explore that the poems such as ‘Thermophylae’,
‘Greece’, ‘The Greek’s at Marathon’ refer to the colonization of Greece by the Turks. While poems as ‘Don Juanics’, ‘The Grecian Sire & Son’, ‘Address to the Greeks’, ‘Phyle’, ‘All is Lost Save Honour’, ‘Freedom to Slave’ and so on are set upon Greece to stir the patriotisms of the Grecian citizens. These poems are representing valour, virtues—the spirit of Romantic Medievalism and Hellenism. The introductory verses of utmost of Derozio’s poems too explicitly point such an influence except his few poems like ‘The Greek’s at Marathon’. His this poem ends with the hope of a Greek victory that is stirred by Byron. Chakrabarti reasons this influence:

Derozio’s poem was written after the announcement of an action between the Greeks and the Turks, but presumably the result was not known then, though the poet mentions it. The poem only refers to the ancient glory of Marathon where the Greeks under Leonidas defeated the Persians under Xerxes. So it is possible that the hope of a Greek victory envisioned at the end of the poem…was inspired by Byron. (20)

The introductory verse—an epigraph of ‘Phyle’ is taken from Byron’s ‘Sonnet on Chillon’: ‘And Freedom’s fame finds wings in every wind’ (160) which shows Byronic influences. Chakrabarti notes that the introductory verse from Byron ‘also reflects the idea contained in the poem that with the defeat of the tyrants, people were freed: ‘The tyrants conquered, and the people freed.’ (17) Derozio was so influenced by Byron that when he ignored the historical facts: the contribution of Pausanias towards the deliverance of
the Athenians, and considered the first assault on the Phyle fortress as the final one in his ‘Childe Harold’ so does Derozio in his ‘Phyle’. The poem also intermingles Romantic mysticism and supernaturalism in ‘There is a sacred halo round thy brow’ (160) and later in the poem addressing Phyle as an ‘Immortal Phyle’. The poet metaphorically refers to hope as a holy star to the brave men who advanced in the battlefield ‘...There was fire / In every bosom there; the holy star / That lighted them was hope; and their desire.’ (160)

In ‘Greece’ Derozio echoes Byron. Byron’s lines from ‘Childe Harold’ canto II: ‘Hereditary bondsmen: know ye not / Who would be free themselves must strike the blow? / By their right arms the conquest must be wrought?’ (Byron 111) echo in Derozio’s lines from ‘Greece’: ‘Thine own right arm, and battle-blade / Must win the victory.’ – ‘This love of Derozio for Greece was influenced by Byron which is reflected in this poem. Commenting on the same, Chakrabarti says:

Though Byron wrote his lines on Phyle in connection with the Turkish occupation of Greece, and Derozio represents Phyle as an agent for ending tyranny and bringing freedom, there is no doubt that Derozio’s source is Byron, and not Greek history. (24)

One of the reasons that Derozio wrote on Greek’s glorious past, lost valour and pride was that it was covertly addressed to his country and countrymen.
Commenting on the necessity of covertness through metaphoric description of Greece Nair says,

The glorious history of Greece and its present degeneration was used as metaphor by Derozio to talk of the woes that afflict his motherland. This was possible for him to do because the Greeks shared a lot in common with Indians as far as their history and the present condition were concerned. (59)

The second generation Romantic poets wrote poems on more social and political issues. Byron among this group of Romantic poets had fond feelings for Greece. Derozio, under the spell of Byron’s radiant love for Greece, the Greece-Turkish war of the 1820s interested him more. Prof Jain reasons:

His poems relating to the need and struggle for freedom take their inspiration from Greece- from the Greco-Turkish was of the 1820s and the Greek past. The reasons for this may be many: it was a contemporary event while the French Revolution and the American war of Independence were slightly remote to his experience; the situation in Greece had a stronger resemblance to the Indian situation than the French Revolution as it was against a foreign invasion and domination and not a social one related to economic disparities. (24)

‘All is Lost, Save Honour’ touches two major Romantic influences. One is when an epigraph, taken from Thurtle’s ‘History of France’ ends with the
words in single inverted comma, i.e., ‘Madam, all is lost, save Honour’, points to the title of Derozio’s poem possibly derived from Thurtle’s ‘History of France’. However, the tone and mood of Derozio’s poem semelences Tom Moore’s line: ‘When all but life and honour’s lost?’ (Thomas Moore Poems 02) from ‘After the Battle’, perhaps best fitting even with the theme. Second, the style of this poem, specially rhyming schemes and metrical patterns, and the words used in the poem such as ‘crost’, ‘lost’, ‘honour’, ‘hero’, ‘tyrant’ and so on reflect Moor’s diction as in ‘After the Battle’. On the closer reading of the poem one explores Derozio’s rational concept that all men are born free and they have every right to defend their freedom which was developed by readings of pertinent western philanthropists, thinkers and the Romantics such as Tom Paine’s ‘Age of Reason’ and ‘Rights of Man’, Thomas Campbell’s ‘The Pleasure of Hope’ and Thomas Moore respectively.

While Derozio’s ‘Freedom to Slave’ carries the idea of individual freedom that allows one to experience the greatness of one’s own being. In ‘The Pleasures of Hope’, part I, Campbell speaks: ‘Hark! The stern captive spurns his heavy load, / And asks the image back that Heaven bestowed. / Fierce in his eye the fire of valour burns, / And, as the slave departs, the man returns.’ (Campbell 27-28) These lines were the source of Derozio’s ‘Freedom to Slave’. It is this poem where one can observe that Derozio begins from where Campbell ends. Campbell had frequently inspired Derozio to pick up
the certain themes and Derozio did, under his influence, certainly, not disappoint him in many of poems.

Derozio lived in the era of colonialism where greater upheavals were happening in the name of educational, political and social developments. This was the era of reforms from the perspectives of both colonizer and colonised in the country. Raja Rammohan Ray initiated the social reforms while Derozio, although covertly, sparked nationalistic reforms. During his short life span, Derozio contributed in this herculean task and well expressed his patriotic spirit in his nationalistic sonnets. His readings of Moore and especially Moore’s ‘Irish Melodies’ had a great impact on Derozio in giving a concrete shape to his ideas on Patriotism and Liberty. Moore’s ‘Irish Melodies’ were full of emotions of nostalgia, regret both amorous and patriotic devotion. This encouraged, Derozio to write on themes referring to emotions for ancient India, regret for the present situation and patriotism. Apart from his poems on social concerns, there are poems which speak of his country and countrymen. Mostly, these poems were well influenced by Tom Moore. Also, his exclusively nationalistic sonnets like ‘The Harp of India’ and ‘To India-My Native Land’ have been introduced into Indian school textbooks since Independence because of their patriotic fervour.

The concluding lines from Moore’s ‘Harp of Erin’, being inspiration for ‘The Harp of India’ a sonnet of Derozio, appear as to perform two functions:
to inspire ‘The Harp of India’ that too on the title page of his first published anthology, *Poems* (1827) and to express his patriotic spirit as Moore expressed in the following lines: ‘If the pulse of the patriot, soldier, or lover / Have throbbed at our lay, ’twas thy glory alone; / I was but as the wind passing heedlessly over, / And all the wild sweetness I waked was thy own.’ (Thomas Moore Poems 23) In this sonnet Derozio symbolises ‘Harp’ with a mixture of modern and archaic language. He personifies the nation and addresses to its lost glorious past. These are also conceivably Romantic influences.

It is in sonnets, next to his long narrative, ‘Fakeer of Jungheera’, that Derozio’s art of poesy finds its full zenith. Though not all his sonnets claim to excellence but they do place him as a prominent voice in realm of literature. Nair writes about Derozio’s experimentation with sonnets, ‘Derozio had experimented with both the Shakespearian and Italian sonnet forms and most of his sonnets are well knit.’ (74) Srinivasa Iyengar believes that in his sonnets Derozio ‘achieves that fusion between thought and expression, feeling and form, which signifies all true poetry.’ (12) The Romantic poets, especially Byron and Shelley, influenced Derozio in selection of themes of nationalism and patriotism particularly for his sonnets, claiming to excellence and his poetry in general. His nationalistic sonnets like ‘The Broken Harp’, ‘The Harp of India’, ‘The Broken Harp’, ‘Your hand in on the Helm’, ‘The Harp’, ‘Sonnet to the Pupils of the Hindu College’, ‘To India –My Native Land’ refer to the
individual freedom, lamenting the lost glorious past, colonised states of the country, and reviving renaissance and nationalistic spirits.

His treasure chest of golden sonnets, is one of the rarely studied treasures of Indian writing in English, has two sides in terms of the way they were moulded: firstly, Romantic – as far as his subject-matter and mood are concerned which are sparked by the Romantic poets, especially when they include poetic elements like patriotism, fancy and memory etc.; secondly, Creative – as far as rhyme-schemes are concerned which are multiform in handling and shows Derozio’s ability to utilise variety of technique and style as a sonneteer. Therefore it is difficult to categorise his sonnets as far as style and rhyme-schemes are concerned. Chakrabarti comments on Derozio’s use of various sonnet forms and experimentations:

He uses Shakespearean, Italian, modified Shakespearean and different forms of irregular rhyme-structures. Some of his sonnets even have rhyming couplets all through, use of blank verse for sonnet writing. Perhaps Derozio simplified the form and took convenient licence with it. (53)

His ‘Sonnet to the Pupils of the Hindu College’ is marked by Byronic effusion as in the following lines: ‘Expanding like the petals of young flowers / I watch the gentle opening of your minds, / And sweet loosening of the spell that binds / Your intellectual energies and powers.’ (291)
'To the Dog Star’ is a romantic address to Nature to bless his mother with the joys that only Nature can give. Here the distance between hope and reality is categorically mentioned when he writes: ‘There dost thou shine, and shine like Hope afar’. Derozio sings of the beauty of the Dog Star and the effect of its heavenly beauty on his psyche in the lines which also reminds of Romantic poets: ‘…this to my heart such rapture brings, / As never may be told!’ (128)

‘Leaves’ like many of his poems, Derozio follows the Romantic tradition of an epigraph which is taken from Shelley: ‘One step to the white death-bed, / And one to the bier, / And one to the charnel; and one – oh where?’ (152) It is a philosophical poem narrating life of leave. The theme is transitoriness of life’s glory and inevitability of decay and death. It is representing the Romantic poet, John Keats’s transcendental spirit.

In a number of poems, he discusses poets and poetry like Wordsworth and Coleridge. The sonnet titled ‘Poetry’ is an exclamation on the nature of poetry. The poet speaks of poetic inspiration and calls it ‘sweet madness’ which is again a Romantic inspiration. Nair writes:

The fact that, in this poem, he refers to the “classic Greece” or “sweet Italia” as the models for excellent art, while missing out on the great Indian literary tradition, shows that the immediate
source of inspiration was from the English Romantic poets who wrote in a similar fashion. (76)

The poem ‘The Poet’s Grave’ once again, prefaced by a very apt epigraph taken from Thomas Campbell’s ‘Ode to the Memory of Burns’ as followings:

O deem not, midst this worldly strife,
An idle art the Poet brings
Let high Philosophy control,
And sages calm the stream of life,
’Tis he refines its fountain springs,
The nobler passions of the soul. (120)

Derozio in this poem highlights the relationship of the poet and Nature. Shunned by the society that he lived and died in, it is Nature that gives him companionship, in life and death. When he lived, Nature inspired him through its myriad beauties and when he died it was Nature that lamented his demise:

There, all in silence, let him sleep his sleep:
No dream shall flit into that slumber deep-
No wandering mortal thither once shall wend,
There, nothing o’er him but the heavens shall weep,
There, never pilgrim at his shrine shall bend,
But holy stars alone their nightly vigils keep! (121)
The lines quoted above strike a conventional tone, and the messages that are inspired by the Romantic poets.

‘Romeo and Juliet’ is a love poem which speaks of Romantic love and the material world which can never co-exist. And that may be the reason to take up an epigraph from ‘Don Juan’ which raises the related question: ‘Oh love! What is it in this world of our’s / ‘That makes it fatal to be loved?’ (145)

The poem reminds of Romantic sensual imageries in the following lines: ‘Within their breasts was a consuming fire; / ‘Twas passion’s essence; it was something higher / Than aught that life presents; it was above / All that we see—’twas all we dream of love.’ (145)

‘Dust’ like Shelley’s ‘Ozymandias’ but philosophically points out the transitory nature of all human possessions. It emphatically brings out the futility of man’s quest for name and fame, when the fact is that all human beings are born from dust and are to be reduced to dust. Set in a picturesque backdrop like the Romantic poems of Wordsworth, the poet narrates how Julian and he walked in the midst of nature made beautiful by the singing of the lark and the divinity of the morning sun.

Studying Derozio’s poems under the influence of Romantic poets reveals his favourite poets and his deep indebtedness to them in his creative process. ‘But it is not always blind copy, as has been so emphatically
suggested by critics.’ Chakrabarti further writes: ‘The nature of his borrowing suggests that they: (i) supplemented his poetic ideas and enlarged his poetic vision, (ii) helped him in expressing them, and (iii) influenced his style and diction.’ (20)

It is said that Derozio gave his soul to the writings of Moore and Byron, and L.E.L., suggesting thereby his lack of originality. It should be mentioned that he read Campbell well, specially his ‘The Pleasure of Hope’, including Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Scott and several other poets. Though some critics do not acknowledge any ‘mentor’ for Derozio, in a sense ‘Byron was his spiritual mentor’. Byron’s ideals of Freedom and Liberty, his love for the ancient glory of Greece, and his journey to take part in the Greek War of Independence against the Turks – all appealed to him greatly and even the celebrated Byronic pose had some effect on him. Thomas Moore’s ideas and ideals about Patriotism and Liberty also influenced him; so did Campbell’s love for Freedom and Liberty. Campbell’s eulogy of Hope appealed to him, as did L.E.L.’s concept about the inseparability of Love and Hope. Wordsworth sharpened his outlook on Nature and taught him to love Nature deeply. Stray passages and lines from a number of poets like Shelley, Keats, Scott etc. occur with little change in his poems. For a number of ideas also he was indebted to them. He is typical of nineteenth century Indo-Anglian writing in his romanticism, his derivativeness and his use of Indian themes.