

NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS AND DESIRE FOR FREEDOM IN THE POEMS OF H.L.V. DEROZIO INSPIRING PATRIOTISM

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ABSTRACT:

The poems of Henry Louis Vivian Derozio are passionate, with burning nationalistic zeal powerful enough to ignite patriotism in the mind of the reader. The poet's consciousness of the glorious past of India and lamenting the contemporary conditions depicts his patriotic feelings and incites the historical consciousness of India in the minds of Indians. In his poems, themes concentrating on Greek wars for freedom and independence, readiness to sacrifice everything and devotion to the freedom of the nation inspire the readers' unconscious minds with patriotism and desire for freedom. The poems on Greek wars for freedom and the image of India as 'chained' signal readers to strive for the freedom of the nation and to regain the glorious past.

KEYWORDS: Character detection, Character Segmentation, Image Processing, KNN Method, License Plate Recognition, Machine Learning, Toll collection.

I. INTRODUCTION

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio was born on the 10th of April 1809 in Calcutta. His father was Portuguese, and his mother was Indian. Derozio was educated in the Dhurrumtollah Academy of David Drummond, where he showed early signs of poetic talent.

To awaken patriotism and nationalism in young Indians, Derozio sang of the glory and grandeur of the golden past in his poems, which fired patriotic passions in young minds. 'To India-My Native Land', 'The Harp of India', and 'The Golden Vase' are patriotic in passion and powerful enough to ignite patriotism in young minds. About Derozio's poems, M. K. Naik (2015) said:

A noteworthy feature of Derozio's poetry is its burning nationalistic zeal. Poems like 'To India-My Native Land', 'The Harp of India' and 'To the Peoples of the Hindoo College' have an unmistakable authenticity of patriotic utterance which stamps Derozio as an Indian English poet who is truly a son of the soil (p. 22).

II. EXPRESSION OF NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS

In the poem 'The Harp of India', the harp symbolises India (Derozio, 1827, p. 1). Derozio's consciousness of his nation was reflected in the comparison with the harp, which he personified and addressed with a lamenting tone. In the poem, the strings of the harp are unstrung and it is hanging lonely, like a dried, dead branch of a tree. Further, the future seems gloomy; the past was glorious, but the present condition of the country is in a state of neglect and disappointment. The condition of India is neglected, mute, lonely and unhappy. The fatal chain of silence has bound the nation. In the Bible, the playing of a harp was a symbol of joy. According to J.F. Rutherford (1921), in Israel, the harp was played on occasions of joy and happiness. It was additionally used as a symbol of truth and to teach something great (p. 11). Furthermore, the Davidic harp is a symbol of the royal family of the British Isles, and it is featured on the coat of arms of Ireland, dating to the conversion to Christianity (Barbio, 2010, p. 375). According to Jennifer Emick (2009), the Celtic harp is the national symbol of Ireland, which is its most beloved emblem (p. 103). Given this, in this poem, the harp symbolises India, and Derozio used this symbol to express his patriotic feelings on the contemporary dismal condition of India. Here, the minstrel is a symbol of legends of India in the past. Derozio invoked the past legends of India to bring change, and in the last line of the poem, he wished to play the harp, symbolising his wish to do something to regain the lost glory of the country (1827, p. 1).

'The Maniac Widow' is a poem about a widow who lost her husband while he was fighting on the front. A soldier laying down his life while fighting on the front is a symbol of supreme sacrifice for national unity, and protection of the country suggests national consciousness. Poetry and songs of sacrifice for the nation evoke patriotic feelings in individuals, and thereby create national consciousness in the general public. According to George L. Mosse (1990):

Poetry and song were better fitted than prose to build national self-consciousness. Poetry could be memorised and repeated; it could be set to music and had no need for argument, reason or, logic. All such poems or songs, whether read in private or sung in public, spread the identical message that those who fought for the national cause were exemplary of the national spirit; their national consciousness dominated their emotions to the point of joyous self-sacrifice (p. 21).

'The Maniac Widow' is about the feelings of a grief-stricken widow for a warrior who sacrificed his life on the battlefield protecting his country. The individual consciousness of the lady in preparation for the welcome of her love, returning from war, represents a reverberation of national consciousness.

III. GREEK WARS AND LEGENDS AND INVOCATION OF PATRIOTISM

Derozio wrote poems on Greek wars and legends, which were intended as motivation for national consciousness. The intense emotions expressed in these poems create strong feelings of love and desire to sacrifice for the nation.

'Thermopylae' is a poem that stirs our emotions regarding the freedom of our nation. In this poem, the battle of Thermopylae at the 'Hot Gates' during the second Persian invasion of Greece is narrated between the Spartans and the Persian Emperor Xerxes I. The purpose of that battle for the Spartans and their supreme sacrifice is depicted in the opening lines of the poem. The Spartan value of preference for death over shame is reflected. A grave is a better option instead of choosing to be a slave. For freedom and fame, fighting until death is preferred to becoming a slave, which is a symbol of shame for a warrior. The number of Spartans was far less than the army of Xerxes I, but the national consciousness of great pride is reflected in the mention that the Spartan warriors lived a great life and died nobly. Everyone, whether friends or brothers, fought side by side at the 'Hot Gates', which was the leading pass to enter the mainland of Sparta.

The composition of the Persian army included barbarous hordes and many other allies brought by the Persians from distant coastal countries. The Persian army slew as though hunting deer and the poem narrates the fighting skills, bravery, instincts and patriotism of the Spartans. The bravery of Spartan king Leonidas is praised, and the great strength of the Persian army proves in vain. The incident of the betrayal by Ephialtes which took place on the second day of battle, is mentioned, and the poet curses the traitor. Ephialtes showed the enemy the mountain path. The size of the Spartan army was insufficient to fight at both 'Hot Gates' and 'mountain path'. This incident changed the situation and paved the way for the defeat of the Spartans.

The national consciousness of the Spartans leads them to fight until death for the freedom of their motherland. Their deaths, as free men, are heroic, as they lay down their lives for the freedom and glory of their nation and win it by sacrificing their lives with their swords in their hands. 'Circled by a sea of blood' reflects the scale of bloodshed (Derozio, 1827, p. 9). The Spartans' consciousness for their nation, as well as their respect and desire for freedom, serve as motivation to fight to the death against an enemy army of thousands. The warriors fall to death, but no despair touches them, and their will remains unconquered. The Spartans disdained to be slaves; instead, they preferred to fight until the death for respect as free men. The hour of sacrifice comes, as they all lose their lives while fighting; the Persians overcome them physically and win the battle, but not their enemies' will.

In the last lines of the poem, the martyrs are glorified and given respect for their sacrifice. They gave their lives for liberty, and they fought for the honour of their country; for the liberty and honour for the motherland. The Spartan warriors saved their race. The next generations respect the Spartan warriors' acts of bravery for the nation at the hour of need, which is shown by giving each a glorious grave. To this day, the fame for those who sacrificed for their nation and freedom is reflected in the hearts of the people of Thermopylae.

'Freedom to the Slave' is a poem on the feelings of a slave gaining freedom, where the emotional state is expressed vividly. National consciousness is subjugated when nations are conquered in war, and individual consciousness

and humanity are oppressed when wars make slaves. According to Miller (1914), 'National feeling is the revolt of a people conscious of its unity, against control by a power trying to annihilate this consciousness' (p. 593). The feelings of the slave are depicted when he is first told that he is no longer a slave. The slave feels the proud beat of his heart when he comes to know that he is free; at once, the noblest emotions of the soul are experienced by the slave. His thoughts are expressed at that moment, as there will be no more kneeling, and the sense of being his own man is felt. This expression shows the inhuman treatment towards slaves and implies that they are below human status, whereby kneeling down is depicted as a symbol of slavery. For the slave, the surrounding environment feels changed and simply breathing results in a feeling of heaven. Slavery is reflected as hell by the comparison of freedom with heaven. The expressions of the slave after obtaining freedom are conveyed through his smile, while the feelings of freedom are compared with flying wild birds and running streams. The comparison with winds, birds and floods is a symbol of freedom and a free soul. The excitement of being free is reflected in the cry: 'I'm free as they!' The name 'freedom' itself is shown as dear and compared with the everlasting flame on the altar of the soul (Derozio, 1827, p. 19). Up to the 20th line of the poem, it is not clear whether the slave is an individual slave or a social or economic slave of a master or a conquered warrior; the image portrayed appears to be that of an individual social slave. In the 21st line, the picture changes, and the image and identity of the slave transform from an individual social slave to a patriot who had been conquered by a tyrant.

The last lines of the poem surround the circumstances under which the slave lost his freedom. He was a patriot fighting for his nation when the life-altering change occurred. The line 'Success attend the patriot sword' indicates the victory of the slave's fellow countrymen and discloses the identity of the slave as a warrior (Derozio, 1827, p. 20). 'And glory to the breast that bleeds,/ Bleeds nobly to be free!' shows the fight for freedom and respect for the warriors (Derozio, 1827, p. 20). Victory over the tyrant and defeat of the enemy forces is depicted in 'Blest be the generous hand that breaks/ The chain a tyrant gave' (Derozio, 1827, p. 20). The victorious are praised for giving freedom to the slave.

In 'Greece', Derozio invoked the Greeks to fight for the freedom of their nation. Through this poem, he attempted to kindle the spark of patriotism for their motherland. Here, historical background is critical in understanding the poem in its true spirit and meaning. When Derozio wrote this poem, in March 1827, the Greek war of independence, also known as the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire, was ongoing. The Greek war of independence started in 1821 and continued till 1832, when Greece was finally recognised as an independent nation in the treaty of Constantinople.

The Greek national consciousness is provoked through questioning of their nationality and simultaneous glorifying of the hallowed land, with its nickname as mistress of the sea and reminders of the warriors who shed blood for their nation. Miltiades (BC 555-489), an Athenian nobleman, commander and politician; a symbol of bravery and victory in Greece; famous for his victory at Marathon in 490 BC, is mentioned here. Any legend from the history of a nation arouses the national consciousness of its people and brings them together.

The fighting instincts of the Greeks are incited by reminding them of the heroes of Marathon, who, despite all odds and being very few in number, fought bravely until death and are still remembered in Greece as heroes. Derozio used the factors that form the pillars of national consciousness: the history of Greece, the legends of war, and the collective consciousness of Greece and its glorious past. The battle of Marathon is mentioned and the bravery of the forefathers is refreshed to arouse their national consciousness.

The battle of Thermopylae and the Greek hero of the battle, the Spartan prince, are also named. The battle of Thermopylae was led by the Spartan king Leonidas, who, along with 300 Spartan warriors, fought to their last breath and the last man instead of accepting the subjugation of Persian king Xerxes I. Here, chains are a symbol of slavery and the thought of being a slave is compared with death; it is unacceptable to the high spirit of the Spartans. The spirit of freedom is compared with the fresh and unfettered mountain air. The naval battle of Salamis is mentioned, in which Athens, under Themistocles and allies, defeated the Persian fleet of King Xerxes I. The Athenians are thereby reminded that they have never been slaves.

The poet bemoans that Athens has forgotten its name; the patriotism of its people has dimmed, and they have forgotten the glorious past. The deeds confirming the bravery of their ancestors have faded in their memory. The present generation forgets the broken temples, which are a symbol of their glorious past, and the dust of war covers

their glory. The poet mourns the lack of national consciousness in the present generation as compared to that of their forefathers. 'bright fire' refers to the virtue of patriotism and love for one's country, which is described as unfortunately declined (Derozio, 1827, p. 45). These qualities, which were in the heart of Greeks and roused them for freedom of their nation, seem extinguished long ago.

The supreme sacrifice of the last of the semi-mythical kings of Athens, Codrus (1089-1068 BC), is recounted and the custom of the Delphic oracle is reflected here. Codrus is a symbol of paramount sacrifice, which reflects the intensity of consciousness that drove the king to this noble act. These lines prompt Greeks to remember their ancestors' patriotism, and by refreshing their memory about their glorious past and their virtue of nobility, the poem has attempted to link the national consciousness of past years with the present time, thereby inciting Greeks to fight for freedom of their nation.

Another poem that evokes Greeks to fight for the freedom of their nation is 'The Greeks at Marathon', which focused on the historic battle between the Greeks and Persians at Marathon in 490 BC. The battle of Marathon incites memory of glorious and patriotic ancestors; their zeal for the freedom of their nation, and their tradition to vow to die for fame is refreshed. The national consciousness of the Greeks is awakened through references to their historical past, beliefs about war and the bravery of their ancestors and kings. In addition, the tradition of sacrifice for the freedom of the nation and their past victory against the enemy who was outnumbered by their army are revived.

The Greeks are referred to as spirits of a martial race, associated with fighting and war, who took up their arms to save their nation and displayed such great courage that it was believed even the divine beings and deities would leave their adobes to help the cause. It is emphasised that this is the same plain of Marathon where their ancestors bought their rights at the cost of their blood and won the battle.

The Greeks are depicted as a fearless group. Derozio shows his support and sympathy towards the Greeks by addressing them as brothers. National consciousness is aroused by reminding them of the events of their national history in their collective memory. The battle of Thermopylae was fought in 480 BC between an alliance of Greek city-states and Persian Emperor Xerxes-I. The Spartan King Leonidas led the Greek forces. The Greeks are reminded of this battle of Thermopylae. In the Battle of Plataea, which took place in 479 BC, Greek forces defeated Xerxes-I and Persian forces at Plataea. This defeat ended Persia's imperial ambitions in Greece. An appeal is made to think about the historical battles in order to arouse self-confidence in the Greeks and to stimulate their national consciousness.

The tradition of the Spartans not submitting to the enemy despite all odds is mentioned in the next stanza of the poem. Their belief in fighting until death and not turning their backs under any circumstances is portrayed. Even in case of imminent defeat, it is mentioned that the Spartans had a deliberate focus on the impending danger while simultaneously continuing to fight. Their style of refusing or rejecting surrender with pride is mentioned by quoting the lines of the Spartan king Leonidas to Persian emperor Xerxes. Xerxes sent a written message, 'Hand over your arms', through an ambassador (Derozio, 1827, p. 52). The response of Leonidas to this was: 'Let them come, and take our arms', which induces emotions of national pride and impulse to fight (Derozio, 1827, p. 52).

The field of Marathon is described as 'Freedom's hallowed earth', which points towards the history of battles for freedom at Thermopylae and the price the Greeks paid for that freedom, which made this land holy for them (Derozio, 1827, p. 53). The quest for freedom is reiterated, and it is urged that the enemy be led to bow down at the field of Marathon, which is a symbol of Greek victory in their collective memory and history.

'Phyle' is a poem about the battle of Phyle, which was fought against an Oligarchic government by Athenian exiles commanded by Thrasybulus in 404 BC. The meaning of Phyle is a clan or tribe; there is also a place named Phyle on the borders of Attica and Boeotia. The tribe of Phyle is shown as a holy tribe with an aura around it, created through time and fame. The poem mentions that the battle of Phyle added one more glowing laurel to the glory of the Greeks, and that the Gods observed the act of benevolent patriots moving to fight with a smile and the bright holy light was then thrown upon them from heaven. Tyrants were defeated. The enthusiasm with which they fought is mentioned, as there was a fire for freedom in their heart and hope made them fight for it; their wish was fulfilled when Thrasybulus summoned and led them in the war for freedom.

'Address to the Greeks' is divided into 12 stanzas. In it, the national consciousness of the Greeks is stirred, to fight for their freedom. Greek legends of war; their beliefs about war; historical battles for the freedom of Greece; customs and traditions of Greeks regarding freedom; and the glorious past, bravery and sacrifices of their ancestors are herein refreshed in the memory of the Greeks. It is a call to mobilise Greeks to fight for their freedom with full force. In the first stanza, the Greeks are asked to come together in their cause for freedom and to obtain liberty. The Greeks are cautioned to shelter from the spear of the Muslim enemy, their swords and the stampede of horses. They are asked to unite and fight like their forefathers of the past to win their liberty.

In the second stanza, the inhabitants of Achaia in Greece, called Achaeans, are summoned to be active, as the warning alarm of danger has rung, summoning them to take up arms. It is cautioned that they must pick up arms, otherwise the future of their country and its citizens will be sealed, and could not be changed later. One more effort to destroy and defeat the enemy is desired. Victory is loved by them and is vital for them. A strike, with full force and confidence without tiring, is sought, which will remove the chains of slavery that restrict the Achaeans' freedom.

The Greeks are questioned for giving the enemy a comfortable victory without any resistance, which would be akin to a welcome for the enemy. Derozio asks whether the enemy be allowed to conquer their country, which will only make the enemy feel exuberant. The mountains of Greece are entreated to bring floods, by opening their floodgates, and throw the enemy to rest their bodies under the wild waves. The graves of the Greek enemies will become purple from the flow of blood from their heart.

The poet rebukes the Greeks and asks if the days of their fame, glory and honour, when the watchword, their core aim and belief, was freedom and their reply to the enemy who eyed their freedom was death, have become a thing of the past.

O Greece ! is the day of thy glory gone by?

When "Freedom" the watchword was – "Death"

The reply –

When said the high matron, "Yon field must be

Won;

"Return with thy shield, or upon it, my son!"(Derozio, 1827, p. 97).

The Spartan custom of a mother giving instructions to her son before he goes to battle is mentioned. Before they went out to battle, to remind them of their bravery and duty to Sparta and Greece, Spartan mothers used to tell their sons that either they would win the battle or they would die and be carried back home on their shield (Plutarch & Coli, 1931, p. 241).

In this poem, the emotions, self-respect and memory of the Greeks' glorious past are stirred. The Spartans are questioned about the memory of their ancestors and are reminded of the heroic deeds of their past. They are asked whether there were no children from the bloodline of their great ancestor; were their great ancestors remembered only as a name? It is emphasised that their ancestors were beacons of light to guide them to fame.

The consecrated banner waving on the tower of Greeks' castle is also questioned. A feeling of sadness, embarrassment and guilt is expressed on the flag's crescent, which is a symbol of Islam and the subjugation of Greeks under them. The Greeks are strongly urged to bring down the flag and replace it with their own, in order to obtain freedom. The lines depict the limited power of the Greeks under the Islamic conqueror. The wail of the poet reflects his intense desire for freedom and national consciousness.

Derozio has criticised the practice of keeping women in the harem as slaves and the purchasing of a woman as a wife in Islam. The result of this practice is shown as a loveless marriage in which the wife remains subjugated without giving her heart to her husband. These women of the harem will bless the Greeks for taking them from their decorated hall of slavery and their lonely, sad life. 'Osmanlies's daughter' refers to the women of the Ottoman Empire (Derozio, 1827, p. 98). The poem states that the death of their father will result in grief for a short time, and it will be limited to shedding a single tear on the frame of the coffin carrying the dead body. Soon after,

their dark eyes, like the eyes of a small antelope, will fill with joy because, with the death of their father, they will be free from being kept as a prisoner in a confined space. This indicates restrictions on the freedom of women in the Ottoman Empire in the 18th century.

Careful attention to the freedom of Greece is advised, which has remained neglected. There is an urgent requirement for battle and victory, which the Greeks face with bravery; their ability to undertake dangerous tasks involving risk-taking is also reinforced. The dark shadow of subjugation in Greece is compared with the ship of a pirate on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, on Coron's bright sea. This dark shadow will continue to eclipse the beauty of Greece until they win a war and gain back their freedom.

But heed her not yet – be your daring deed done –

The fight must be fought, and the field must be

Won;

Till then your frown dark on her beauty shall be,

Like the prow of the Corsair on Coron's bright sea (Derozio, 1827, p. 99).

The Greeks have been asked to wake up and come forth, without any delay to 'quench your watchfires', meaning to stop waiting and give a signal for war (Derozio, 1827, p. 99). The Greeks are sought to cast away the sheaths of their swords, and are asked to move forward to the ground where their forefathers fought. Their forefathers' bloodshed for the freedom of their nation has made this ground holy. A signal is conveyed, seeking help from all over the islands of Greece. It is imperative for freedom, to bring the smiles back as they were during their proud past, for their souls to be free and glorious like the brightness of the sky and purity of the sea.

IV. CONCLUSION

H.L.V. Derozio was a true patriot. This is reflected in 'The Harp of India', which is the first poem of the collection *Poems* published in 1827. Love and compassion for the motherland are depicted, which stirs the emotions of the present-day reader also. 'The Maniac Widow' shows sympathy towards the grief-stricken widow of a soldier who sacrificed his life for the motherland. The poems based on the Greek wars and legends additionally generate national consciousness and motivate citizens to stand up for the protection and freedom of the nation. Love for the nation and memories of the glorious past are revived. The wail of the poet regarding the contemporary condition of a nation advocates doing something to improve it. The Greek wars and legends encourage fighting for the nation, and sacrificing life and comfort for the motherland. The customs and traditions of the Greeks are also mentioned, to generate feelings of national consciousness. Further, the mention of historic battles revives the memory of the brave acts of the ancestors. Sometimes, war results in defeat and soldiers are taken as slaves and captives. The feelings of a patriot kept as a captive are depicted vividly, which creates a state of catharsis. The elements of national consciousness are used by describing historic battles, as well as reminding of racial memories, great ancestors, customs, traditions and the sacrifices of legends. National consciousness is contagious and H.L.V. Derozio attempted to generate this feeling by referencing the Greek wars and legends. These diverse aspects inspire people to freedom and protection of the nation.

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