Freedom To The Slave by H.L.V Derozio- Summary and Analysis

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Freedom To The Slave Summary

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The poem “Freedom To The Slave” is about a freed slave as he is physically freed. The speaker expresses the feelings of the newly freed slave.

Social Background of the poem

Anti-slavery movement in England or abolitionism in the United Kingdom (late 18th and early 19th centuries) was the movement to end the practice of slavery in England. It was written when the Anti-slavery movement was prevalent in England. The poem “Freedom to the Slave” recounts the experience of a recently freed slave.

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Derozio seems to have influenced by the humanitarian ideal of the west. For instance, the influence of Thomas Campbell is seen in the lines “And as the slave departs, the man returns”. The line is extracted from Campbell’s poem “The Pleasures of Hope”. It is a long poem about the downfall of Poland in the hands of oppressors and hopes for improvement in society.

The speaker was curious about the freed slave’s state of mind. The speaker was thinking about what could be the slave’s feeling when he was first told that he was no more a slave. The slave became excited and the speaker was curious to know how his heart would beat when he was first told that he was free from the shackles of bondage.

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The slave was no more kneeling down; he stood up on his feet. His thoughts were elevated as he stood up. He started to feel himself a free man. Kneeling implies to have lowered one’s self in front of others.

In the state of slavery a slave bows down to the master or the superior ones. The physical posture of bowing down also suggests withdrawing one ‘self’ to the others. Here in the poem, as the slave got freedom, he rose on his feet which suggested the mental elevation of the slave. The slave was free from the status of a slave.

The slave looked above and felt the fresh wind. He smiled jubilantly to see the wild birds flying freely, the running stream that is flowing beneath him. Then the slave thinks of them that he was also free like the winds, wild birds, and the stream.

The poet uses the imagery of the winds, wild birds, and stream. Through the vivid imagery of natural elements which include the wind, wild birds, and stream the poet conveyed the slave’s emotional state of mind.

Like the fresh winds, the slave also felt fresh as he was declared free. The slave was elated to see the wild birds because like the wild birds the slave could also roam freely without any restriction. Besides these winds and wild birds, there was another element of nature that complemented his sense of freedom in the poem and that is the stream. The relentlessly flowing stream implies free life.

The statement, imagery is used to convey the idea of freedom of the slave, was indicated as the slave thought of the winds and birds, and floods and he shed tears with a sense of pleased, “I’m free as they!”

In the next part of the poem, the speaker addresses freedom, and freedom is personified. The speaker eulogizes freedom, “Oh freedom!” saying there is very special in its name that kindles the altar of the soul with endless flame.

Glory to the braveheart that bleeds for freedom and lets nobody be bleed. And blessed to the generous hand who shatters the chain of bondage that is given by a tyrant and empathizes with the degraded man and gives him freedom.

The speaker says that the patriot achieves success when the patriot’s sword is uncovered for freedom which means the patriot is ready to fight for freedom. The speaker hails glory to the one whose chest is injured and the gush of blood flows in the name of freedom.

The speaker also praises the generous hand that breaks the chain that is bound by an autocrat and empathizes with the degraded condition of a slave. Seeing the downgrading condition of the slave, the benignant man gives freedom to the slave.

In most of Derozio’s poems, the reflection of patriotism is discernible in his poetic expression. Here Derozio in “Freedom to the Slave” praises the patriot for sacrificing life for the nation and bringing freedom to the land. Infusion of patriotism resonates in the poem just like his patriotic poems such as “To India-My Native Land”, “The Harp of India” etc.

The theme of both poems is freedom. In “To India-My Native Land” Derozio uses the image of a golden bird to refer to the past glory of India and how the country has been enslaved by the British. The poet will dig into the heritage of distant past and will bring some fragmented sublime out of it which men have hardly seen.

“The Harp of India” also celebrates the glorious past of India and at the same time mourns over the loss of its glory because of the invasion of the British empire. The poet hopes that India will regain its glory.

In this connection, it can be justified that burning nationalistic zeal is a notable feature of Derozio’s poetry. The poet also praises the man by referring to as “generous hand” that breaks the shackles of slavery from a tyrant and empathizes with the feeling of a slave and gives freedom to this slave.

Structure – Freedom To The Slave

The poet uses the rhyme scheme of ABCB, DEFE, the 2nd line rhymes with and 4th line, but after every four lines, it changes.

Conclusion

The essence of the poem is freedom, freedom is an integral part of our existence. It is the freedom that gives meaning to our existence. It was the freedom that added meaning to the life of recently freed slave.

1. Write a critical analysis of "Freedom to the Slave" by Derozio.

In "Freedom to the Slave," Henry Derozio explores the feelings that a man experiences upon learning he is no longer enslaved, and then praises Freedom itself. The poet uses a regular rhyme scheme of ABCB, DEFE, continuing with the 2nd and 4th lines rhyming, but changing every four lines. The joyful sensations the speaker describes associate the man with the natural world, thus conveying that freedom is the natural state of humans. These “noblest feelings of the soul” include pride and exultation. Key aspects of the natural world are the “winds,” “wild birds,” and the “running stream” that “floods.” The spiritual aspect of freedom is conveyed through the “breath of heaven” (wind) that blows on this man. 73 Knowing that he is free, the man smiles, looks up to heaven and down toward the stream, and realizes his kinship with all the environment. This realization makes him cry out, “I’m free as they!”

In the second part, the poet marks a switch by using apostrophe, addressing Freedom directly. The speaker returns to the spiritual significance, referring to the “flame” that “lights the altar of the soul.” The speaker also praises the sacrifices made by patriots who fight for freedom, with their “sword unsheathed” and their bleeding breasts. Finally, praise is extended to the “generous hand” that breaks the chains of slavery that were attached by a “tyrant.” The last lines connect back to the first four lines, link the one who gave the freedom with the freed slave by using the same words or close variants, along with alliteration using F: “slave,” (repeated), “felt” and “feeling,” “free” and “freedom.”

Derozio once described his native and beloved India as "an eagle with its wings tied." One way to critically analyze "Freedom to the Slave" is to see it as untying the wings of the eagle. Derozio's poem is predicated on the idea that freedom is its own intrinsic good, an experience that cannot be replicated. No matter how one might be compensated, the reality is that freedom is its own reward. To be in a condition where one "knelt no more" and to look "above – The breath of heaven /Around him freshly blew" are experiences where the true notion of self are experienced. Derozio presents freedom as its own good, something with its own intrinsic value. To experience the same freedom as "winds and birds,and floods," is a reality that no one can duplicate or replicate in any other setting.

The patriotism that Derozio emphasizes throughout his work for India and the human predicament is seen in this poem. Enslavement and limitation, what Derozio refers to as "the chain a tyrant gave," is not any way to live. While freedom might be complex and intricate with all that must be navigated, it is shown to be an essential part of the human experience. Humanity is shown to gain more dignity when there is freedom in one's life. It is in this light where freedom and autonomy are essential to the poem and its overall message of how it is essential to defining one's happiness. Through such a rendering, the wings of the eagle are no longer tied as individuals possess more in their being due to freedom.

**Explanation of "Freedom to the Slave" by Derozio.**

In "Freedom to the Slave," Henry Derozio explores the feelings that a man experiences upon learning he is no longer enslaved, and then praises Freedom itself. The joyful sensations the speaker describes associate the man with the natural world, thus conveying that freedom is the natural state of humans. These “noblest feelings of the soul” include pride and exultation. Key aspects of the natural world are the “winds,” “wild birds,” and the “running stream” that “floods.” The spiritual aspect of freedom is conveyed through the “breath of heaven” (wind) that blows on this man. 73 Knowing that he is free, the man smiles, looks up to heaven and down toward the stream, and realizes his kinship with all the environment. This realization makes him cry out, “I’m free as they!”

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**The Orphan Girl by Henry Derozio- summary and analysis-an easy explanation**

**The Orphan Girl’s** appearance

 Henry Louis Vivian Derozio is considered as the first Indian poet in English. Henry Derozio is a Eurasian poet whose humanitarian call in his poetry gave Indian poetry a new direction. His humane treatment of the distressed is vividly portrayed in the poem “The Orphan Girl”.

Bird’s-eye view- The Orphan Girl

 The poem “The Orphan Girl” by Henry Derozio recounts the plight of an infant girl in a callous society whose parents had died and worries about the uncertain fate of the orphan girl. In the first stanza, the poet describes the charm of the girl and what has happened to her parents, and in the latter stanza, the poet worries about the uncertain future of the orphan girl in an insensitive world.

**The Orphan Girl**

 The poem “The Orphan Girl” begins with a description of the appealing qualities of the girl. Her hair was as black as a raven’s wings. Raven is a large black bird of the crow family. Her cheeks were as bright as colorful tulip flower. Her voice was also soft as if it sounded like the sing of tranquil night winds. Her forehead was as fair as beams of the moon.

 Derozio uses similes in describing her physical attributes. For example, while describing the girl’s hair Derozio says her hair “was black as a raven’s wings”. A simile is a figure of speech that draws a comparison between two different things by showing similarities between the things. Here Derozio draws a comparison between the blackness of her hair and the black raven.

The Onset of miserable life

 After the pleasant description of the girl, the poet suddenly changes the track of the poem. He now moves his description to a state of gloominess. He says that her father joined the war, experienced the horror of the battleground. He fought bravely in the war and became a martyr. The poet laments ‘death’ is the reward of such a brave heart. Her mother also died as she could not endure the pain caused by her husband’s tragic demise and she left her child alone in the world.

**The Plight of the orphan girl**

 In the second stanza of “The Orphan Girl” we see the unpredictable future of this orphan girl concerns the poet. She had no friend to lend her a hand. She had no one to provide her shelter, security, and to treat her with compassion. Since she had no company in such a bleak world, she had to walk alone on the thorny path of life that destiny had set for her. The poet laments that the wretched like her had never friend in the journey of life, nobody had any interest in them.

 The poet is indicating people’s general attitude to orphan children like her. There are many things that society could do on its part to help such children. Instead, people remain busy with ourselves and aloof from such societal issues.

 Derozio’s humanitarianism is more suggested by his concern about the miserable condition of Hindu women. Derozio opposed the custom of sattee which was practiced in the past. In “On The Abolition Of Sattee” Derozio severely criticizes the custom of sattee in India and celebrates the abolition custom of Sattee.

 The condition of the orphan girl is similar to another poem “An Orphan Girl” by Thomas Vaughan Jones. “An Orphan Girl” also expresses the tragic condition of an orphan girl. The orphan girl in “An Orphan Girl” stands barefoot in a street of town with her ragged doll. She shivers in the winter’s biting cold. But nobody is there to offer a helping hand to that lone girl. Both orphan girls are helpless in the hand of time and society seems uncaring of their miseries.

Troubles in the life of orphan girl: The poet asks whether she should move aimlessly from virtuous actions, under any circumstance the ruthless world would look at her with contempt and their mockery would bring her morale down.

 The shame would be enough to daunt her spirit with the thoughts of sorrows and guilt and she would be oppressed by the cruel world. It is inhuman to hurt the bosom from where blood is flowing out violently. The tears that a sorrowful woman sheds would be heartbreaking than any other tear. Therefore whoever rescues such an orphan from sorrow and shame, his name should be glorified and honored.

Poem structure–The Orphan Girl

 The poem has two stanzas, consisting of twelve and fourteenth lines respectively. The rhyme scheme of the poem is it starts with an ABAB rhyme scheme but changes to BBCC rhyme scheme and continuing in this way up to MM.

Conclusion

 The poem “An Orphan Girl” throws light into the condition of orphan children especially girls who become a subject of society’s oppression and criticism.

**INTRODUCTION TO THE ORPHAN GIRL:**

The poem, The Orphan Girl is written by very famous Indian Poet Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (H.L.V. Derozio). This poem is about a young orphan girl and the poet is concerned about her future. The young girl father died in war and her mother is died in the grief of his husband death and she is left orphan. The poem consists of two stanzas having 12 lines each.

ABOUTH THE AUTHOR OF THE ORPHAN GIRL:

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio (H.L.V. Derozio) was born on 18 April, 1809 in Kolkata, India. He was a poet and Assistant Headmaster at Hindu College, Calcutta, a radical thinker and one of the First Indian educators to disseminate western learning and science among the young men of Bengal.

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio was son of Portuguese Father and Indian Mother, Derozio was influenced by the English Romantic Poets. He began publishing patriotic verses when he was 17. His writings brought him to the attention of the intellectual elite of Calcutta. In 1826 he was appointed instrument at Hindu College, where his reportedly brilliant teaching influence his students and won him their loyalty. In 1828 his students organised the Academic Association, a debating society that drew both Britishers and Indians to discussion of religion and Philosophy.

In the spirit of English Rationalism Derozio criticized the social practises and religious belief of orthodox Hinduism. Accused of irreverence by his student’s orthodox Hindu parents, he was forced to resign by the directors of Hindu college in 1831.Derozio died 1831 due to cholera. Long after Derozio’s death his influence lived on among his former students, who came to be known as Young Bengal and many of whom became prominent in social reform, law, and journalism.

**CRITICAL APPRECIATION OF THE ORPHAN GIRL:**

 The poem “The Orphan Girl” of H.L.V. Derozio depicts a story of a young beautiful vulnerable orphan girl who has recently became parentless. Her condition appears absolutely pathetic because of the circumstances she is in. The poet depicts miserable condition of the orphan girl. Previously she was too blessed with a beautiful family. But the time took a drastic change and the life of girl totally turned upside down. Her father died in the war and the shock was too unbearable for her mother to bear. Thus, she too left the world leaving her little girl alone in this selfish world full of hardship with on one to look after her. In the sudden wave of time the girl became orphan and homeless with no protection.

The vivid but lunar world makes the situation more pathetic. She has no home nor hearth where she can feel protection and can grow-up. The orphan girl will unsurprisingly stary from the path of virtue, become a wrong woman, wretched, humiliated and filled with sorrow, guilt and shame as the world is not sympathetic to such individual. The poet seems very kind towards her and shows her hopefulness. The poem ends with poet appeal to the people to provide her food protection and a shelter. The poem have social message of humanism.

**1. Give the substance of the Poem the Orphan girl "?**

Ans :- The poem shows the pitiness earth cannot appreciate any bereft women. Turough the symbol of an orphan girl the poet describes it. The girl was still young and beautiful but it seemed that fate had ordained for her much woe in a pitiless world. She is a poor friendless wanderer in this world. The father of the girl was a soldier. At the wake of the war he went to war and faught bravely and experienced the battle - shock, shout and scar 'of the war and then he gained a glorious grave'. This gave and nothing else was the reward of his bravery.The wife of the soldier, the mother of the girl could not bear the shock and could not endure a window's life. She died of broken heart and left her infant girl parentless. In this unsympathetic, bleak earth, the girl did not have any friend who would give her shelter, warmth and a home. So she was destined to go through the dreary desert of this earth all alone. In her lonely journey she was not allowed to deviate from the path of virtue for the world would then scorn her and their scorn might slay her. But she was left and it was a coldly cruel act to wound the bosom of a woman whose blood poll would gush unbound. The man who shelters such an orphan girl from sorrow and shame, his honored name wll be blessed forever.

**2. What does the poet Henry Louis Vivian Derozio try to say in his poem The Orphan Girl?**

**Ans**:- The poem, The Orphan Girl begins with the description of the orphan girl. According to the poet, her (orphan girl’s) hair was black as a raven’s wings. Raven means crow. Her cheeks were as bright as the tulip flower. Her voice was as soft as the wind or air in the night which is quite calm and gentle. Her forehead was as bright as the rays of the moon. The beginning is thus quite pleasing but after the fourth line, the poet turns to the dark reality. The sire (father) of that girl went to war and fought bravely but ultimately lost his life and he knew that before dying. The poet sighs, this is the reward for a brave in this world. The phrase depicts the cruelty of the world and how it rewards the good and bold people. The death of her father was not born by her mother. Rather than living as a widow she also died of a heart attack and the young girl was left without parents.The first part begins with an appreciation of a young girl’s beauty and ends with a tragedy. The second part describes the poet’s uncertainty of her future in the world. She has no friends on this cold (without human warmth) and bleak (without hope) earth. There is no one to give her a shelter, a home, and a hearth (warmth). She will now have to live in this dull and depressing world (desert here refers to the world) alone.The poet again repeats the phrase that she has no friend and she should now stay away from being good and kind as the cruel world will scorn, mock and abuse her. And this cruel nature of the world will ultimately kill her.The poet laments the fact that the shame which she will suffer will be enough to squeeze blood from her breasts with the weight of sorrows and guilt and she will be oppressed by the world.The poet then says that it’s very cruel to wound the bosom (here symbolises that girl) whose blood is coming out of the breasts in an uncontrolled way because of sorrows and shame. No tear can be as painful as the tears that flow from the eyes of a sorrowful and oppressed woman in the world.And the most blessed and honourable, according to the poet is the one who would shelter an orphan from sorrow and shame! Thus the poem ends in hope and uncertainty about the future of the orphan girl.The poem gives an insight into the condition of woman and the suppression which she faced during the time of the poet. A girl whose parents would die had to live a shameful life and was physically, mentally and sexually tortured by the people. So the poet discloses the social abuses which are the curses on society.

3. What message Derozio gives in the end?

Ans :- Derozio says in her lonely journey the orphan girl would scorn her. Her shame might have enough to wretch ha breathe with sorrow and oppressed guilt. She was a coldly cruel act to wound the bossom of a woman whose blood would gush unbound. When a fear comes out from the erring woman's unpitied woes then it is the brightest. In canclusion the poet, Derozio, makes an appeal to a man with sympathy and compassion. He says that the man who shelters such an orphan girl from sorrow and shame, his honored name will be blest for ever.

**Summary**

“The Orphan Girl” is a heart-touching poem written by Derozio. The poem is about a young girl who has lost her parents. While drawing sympathy for the orphan girl, the poet makes readers think of a society that often gives a deaf ear to the problems faced by the distressed. The poet’s concern is that the girl is too immature to understand the harshness and cruelty that prevails in the world. The poet is in all sympathy for the girl, not only because she is an orphan, but also because of her lack of friends and relatives who can afford to give her food and shelter. In such a situation, it will have to be the subject of harsh treatment for society. The poet’s main concern is social security, which is very much needed to secure the lives of the orphans and the destitute.

Criticizing society, he says that while it deprives her of giving any respite from the pitiable condition that the orphan girl has been subjected to, it will scorn her in the slightest deviation from the path of virtue.

The poet intends to demonstrate, through this poem, how people should think of those people who are helpless, penniless and socially insecure. So, he praises people ‘who shelters an orphan from sorrow and shame!’ (line 26).

This poem by Derozio can also be seen as a reflection of the other side of Indian society in the first half of the 19th century. His message is clear enough to understand that he is seeking reformation in society so that he can learn how to sympathise with the poor and the helpless.

**1. What does the poet Henry Louis Vivian Derozio try to say in his poem The Orphan Girl?**

The poem, The Orphan Girl, starts with a description of the orphan girl. According to the poet, her (orphan girl) hair was as black as a raven’s wings. Raven means the crown. Her cheeks were as bright as the flower of tulips. Her voice was as soft as the wind or the air in the night, which was quite calm and gentle. Her forehead was as bright as the beams of the moon. Thus the beginning is quite pleasing, but after the fourth line, the poet turns to the dark reality. The girl’s sire (father) went to war and fought bravely, but at the end of the day he lost his life, and he knew that before he died. The poet sighs, this is the reward of a brave man in this world. The phrase depicts the cruelty of the world and how it rewards good and brave people. The death of her father was not born to her mother. Instead of living as a widow, she also died of a heart attack, leaving the young girl without her parents.

The first part begins with an appreciation of the beauty of a young girl and ends with a tragedy. The second part describes the uncertainty of the poet about his future in the world. She has no friends on this cold (without human warmth) and dark (without hope) earth. There’s no one to give her a shelter, a home, and a hearth (warmth). She’s going to have to live alone in this dull and depressed world (the desert here refers to the world). The poet repeats the phrase that she has no friend, and now she should stay away from being good and kind, as the cruel world will scorn, mock, and abuse her. And ultimately, this cruel nature of the world will kill her.

The poet laments that the shame she will suffer will be enough to squeeze blood out of her breasts with the weight of sorrows and guilt, and that the world will be oppressed. The poet then says that it is very cruel to wound the bosom (here symbolises the girl) whose blood comes out of the breasts in an uncontrolled manner because of sorrow and shame. No tear can be as painful as the tears that flow from the eyes of a sad and oppressed woman in the world. And the most blessed and honourable, according to the poet, is the one who would protect an orphan from sorrow and shame! So the poem ends in hope and uncertainty about the future of the orphan girl.

The poem gives an insight into the condition of the woman and the suppression she faced during the poet’s time. A girl whose parents were to die had to live a shameful life and had been physically, mentally and sexually tortured by the people. So the poet reveals the social abuses that are the curses of society.

**2.What message Derozio gives in the end?**

Ans:- Derozio says the orphan girl would scorn her on her lonely journey. Her shame could have been enough to breathe wretch ha with sorrow and oppressed guilt. It was a cold cruel act to wound the boss of a woman whose blood would flow unbound. When fear comes out of the undesired woes of the erring woman, it’s the brightest. In conclusion, the poet, Derozio, appeals to a man of compassion and compassion. He says that the man who shelters such an orphan girl from sorrow and shame, his honoured name will be blessed forever.