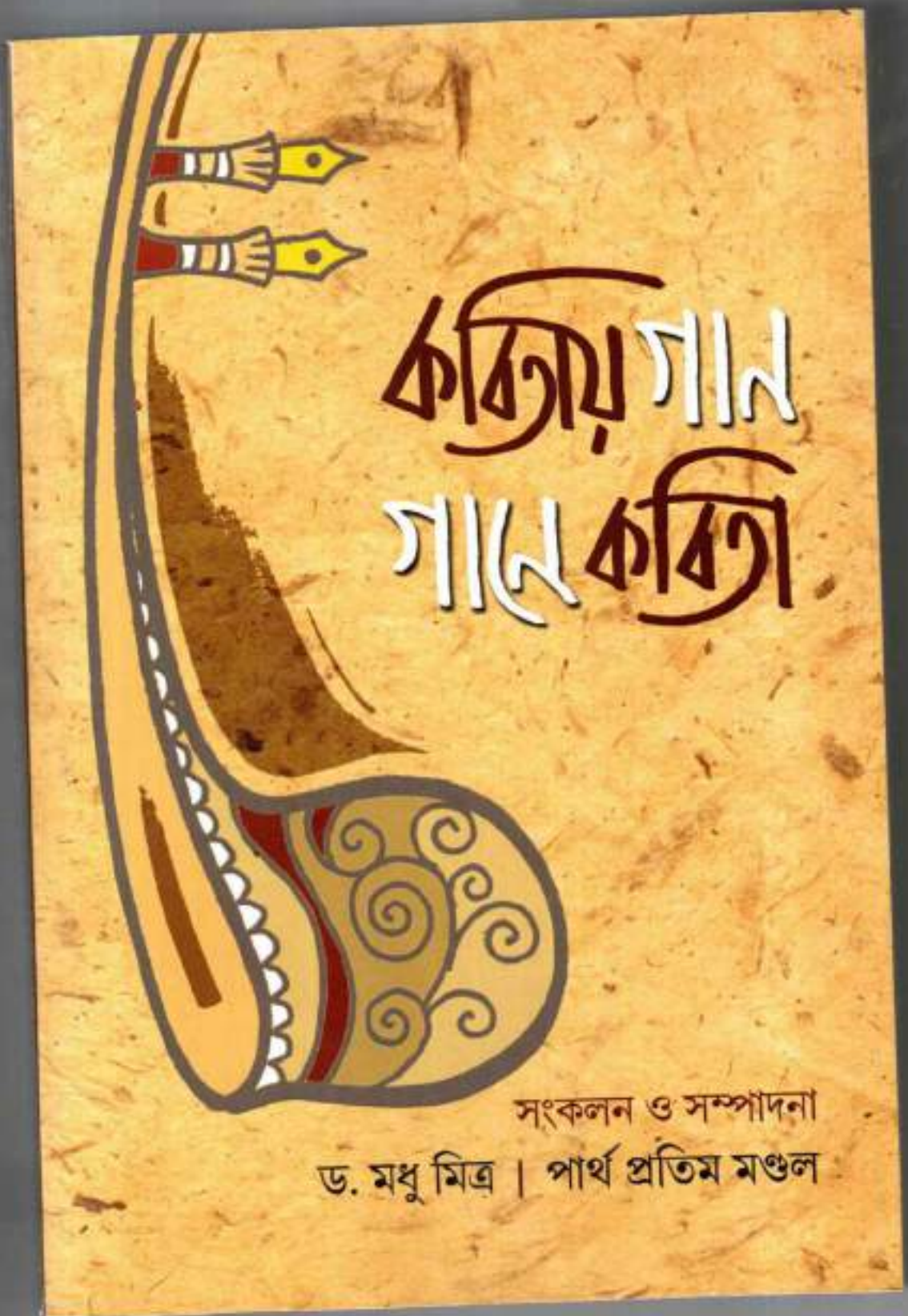
কবিতায় গান
গানে কবিতা
সংকলন ও সম্পাদনা
ড. মধু মিত্র | পার্থ প্রতিম মণ্ডল

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রামেশ্বর ফতেপুরিয়া
াদ জানাই। বিভিন্ন
শমিনারে গবেষণাপত্র
গবেষকদের নির্বাচিত
এবং গ্রন্থ প্রকাশে মুখ্য
সিন্হা। সমস্ত প্রয়াসের
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সমস্ত শিক্ষাকর্মী এবং
ংগঠনে সক্রিয় ভূমিকা
একটি প্রচ্ছদ উপহার
'উদ্ধাবুস্টি' প্রকাশনা
ম সময়ের মধ্যে বইটি
তরুণ অধ্যাপক বিদ্যুৎ
বিশেষভাবে কৃতজ্ঞ।
স্ত প্রতিষ্ঠান এবং গুণী
ভাবে ঋণী। আর, মান্য

বিনীত
ড. মধু মিত্র
র্থ প্রতিম মণ্ডল

সূচিপত্র

ভাবসাধকদের চর্যাপদের

সাইমন

বাংলা সাহিত্যের প্রাচীনতম গীতি-পদাবলীকে
বহু গবেষণা, আলোচনা, সমালোচনা, অনুবাদ,
সূত্রপাত ঘটেছিল ১৯০৭ খ্রিস্টাব্দে নেপা
বঙ্গীয়-সাহিত্য-পরিষৎ হতে প্রকাশিত মহামহো
পুরাণ বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় বৌদ্ধগান ও দোহা'-
সরোজবজ্রের দোহাকোষ, কাহ্নপাদের দোহাকো
শাস্ত্রী সংকলনভুক্ত দোহাকোষ ভিন্ন চর্যাচর্যবিনি
পরিচয় প্রদান করেছিলেন। তিনি মুখবন্ধে লিখে
কয়েকখানি পুথি দেখিতে পাইলাম। একখানির নাম
গান আছে ও তাহার সংস্কৃত টীকা আছে। গানগুলি
(শাস্ত্রী, ১৩২৩ : ৪) প্রাথমিক পর্যবেক্ষণেই ম
'কীর্তনের গান' বা বৈষ্ণবদের কীর্তনের মত' গা
মুখবন্ধে বিস্তৃত আলোচনা করেন। শুধু তাই নয়,
ও নাথ সাধনার সংযোগ সম্পর্কে তথ্য প্রদান করেন
চর্যাপদের ভেতর বাউল-সাধনার প্রাচীন সূত্র আ
রচিত ১৭ সংখ্যক পদে উল্লিখিত 'বাজিল' এবং ভা
দুটিকে বিবেচনায় নিয়েছেন। আসলে, বীণাপা
'নাচন্তি বাজিল গান্তি দেবী / বুদ্ধ নাটক বিসমা
আছে, 'বাজুলে দিল মো লক্ষ ভণিআ/মই অহারি
গ্রন্থে স্বীকার করেছেন, এই 'বাজিল' >'বাজুল' থে
১৯৭৩ : ৪৬) এক্ষেত্রে বাউল সাধনা, বাউল সংস্কৃতি
যে প্রাচীন বাংলার চর্যাপদে গ্রন্থিত রয়েছে সে
ধরনের পর্যবেক্ষণ বাংলাদেশের ভাবসাধকদের চ
ধরনের প্রেরণা সঞ্চার করে।

উল্লেখ্য, চর্যাপদের হস্তলিখিত পাণ্ডুলিপির আবি
বছরের পুরাণ বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় বৌদ্ধগান ও দোহা
বিভিন্ন রাগ-রাগিনীর উল্লেখ রয়েছে। এতে অনে
হরপ্রসাদ শাস্ত্রী উল্লিখিত রাগেই গাওয়া বিধেয়।
নেপালের বিভিন্ন গায়ক-সাধক আদি পাণ্ডুলিপি
নেপালের ব্যবহৃত বিভিন্ন চর্যাপদের হস্তলিখিত পা
পরিবেশনের নির্দেশনা রয়েছে। যেমন, নেপালের

Meaning with Music: William Collins's "The Passions"

Dr. Yousuf Ali

Abstract

Poetry is perforce metrical, for it is composed of versified lines. Unlike the modern or postmodern poetry, poetry in general speaks with a musical voice, using metre, rhythm, rhyme, etc. The poets, for the most part, also endeavour to articulate their thought and feeling in their poems in a *poetic* manner contrary to a prosaic pouring forth. Classical poets cultivate a sheer adherence to rigorous forms and style of writing poetry. However, The Pre-Romantic poets who are thought of as the harbingers of Romanticism show a shift from the pedantic classicism, and a technical elasticity in their poetical works. This seems to have encouraged the Romantics a bit to showcase a more experimental and enlivened poetry of great beauty in terms of its theme and configurative qualities. Although the romantics, following the trodden path of their precursors, regale the reader with their poetical pomp, the precursors of romantic period nonetheless afford to entertain us with no ordinary poems. Notably, one thing, among other aspects, is common to the poems of both the romantics and the precursors of romantics, and that is the musical cadence. It is true that the romantic poetry is more telling and impressive about its regular rhythmic composition. But William Collins's poem namely "The Passions" also has the potentiality to lull our ears with its melody. In fact, the poem is a commendable collage of words and sounds that jointly mean in the brain through music in the ear. In this paper, I shall, therefore, argue for the brilliant expression of meaning seasoned with musical or lyrical lilt in the poem cited above.

Key Words: meaning, music, lyrical, poetry.

The space of poetry can be harnessed as a vehicle to transport a message from the poet to the reader. Poets often do this. However, the poets, who worship poetry as an art having no purpose other than the "end in

itself" (Cuddon 11), may oppose this usage owing to their inclination to the classical conventions and cultivations of the poetic art. They may be identified with the followers of "Art's for art's sake", and accordingly tend to clothe their poems with sensory beauty without any recourse to moral, didactic or philosophical meaning. Again, modern or postmodern poetry seems to have hammered its mould to be bare of aesthetic beauty with the primary aim being to mean and not to soothe the sensuousness. As a result, such poetry can scarcely sound music to the ears. But Romantic poetry with all its rhythmic beat and rhapsodic rhyme create an exuberance, a poetic frenzy about it. Moreover, it has a philosophical tone as well for which one likes to read Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, etc. Several decades have passed, people still love to read them to experience a romantic taste, to get rid of the monotony of life. It is also true that the romantics got a favourable backdrop that not only inspired their poems but also shaped them to a great extent. So it is quite obvious that these romantic poets would sing of a relatively easy climate both poetical and societal. On the other hand, the pre-romantic poets or the precursors of the romantic period faced a difficulty in their practice of poetry because the poetic tradition of their time did not evoke any romantic setting as such. The classicism was still there to exercise influence on the poets. Therefore, being at such a juncture which would not spell a satisfying spur for the poets of the time to go against the tide, if some poets could manage to portray a bright landscape with a new kind of brushwork tinged with hues so colourful, and venture to speak with a voice tuned with a beautiful melody charged with a philosophic note, then it is something ingenious, rare and remarkable. Indeed, poets like William Blake, Thomas Gray, Robert Burns, James Thompson, William Collins deserve acclamation. However, William Collins is generally considered as a minor poet since his poems lack the richness of Blake or the natural spontaneity of Gray. "We feel sometimes that he [Collins] was between two worlds and sometimes that he worked too hard at being a poet." (Daiches, 674). But one of his poems "The Passions" or otherwise entitled "The Passions: An Ode for Music" is noteworthy for its brilliant use of style which is not altogether classical for being free from the rigid rules of form. To quote Albert, "Collins's ode *The Passions* (1747) are among the best of the type." (275). Indeed, the poem is

famous for its quality of expression both musical and meaningful with an ingenious form.

"The Passions" primarily deals with the theme of music and of human passions, emotions such as love, fear, hope and despair, etc. and depicts how these emotional aspects influence our life and experience. Although the poem was written at a time when classicism dominated the poetic arena, but it shows some considerable degree of departure from the classical convention of Collin's time. Truly, the poem registers some noteworthy ingeniousness in terms of its thematic treatment and poetic style. The way it portrays music as its subject of discussion, it comes out to be a great piece of poem with all its lyrical lilt made out of the rhythmic beat and the rhyming cadence together with the melody of a good deal of liquid consonant sounds.

The poem opens with an alliterative line—"When Music, heavenly maid, was young,"— wherein the repetition of "m" or /m/ instantly sets the lyrical strain of the poem, meeting the reader's expectation as the often-used second half of the title of the poem—"An Ode for Music"—evokes in the reader. So the sense of music evoked in the second half of the title is properly regaled at the very start of the poem with the use of alliteration and that too with a sonorant consonant that is very high in creating cadence. Again, the word "Music" here serves a special purpose of striking an imaginary ringing of sounds in the reader's mind, which is further augmented by the rhyming word of the line that follows. Furthermore, the use of successively two unaccented syllables in the third foot of the first line provides the line with galloping speed in order to accentuate a heavy anapaestic beat on the next monosyllabic stressed word "maid" which is the personification of music. Another point to be noted here is that almost all the sonorants—/w/, /m/, /n/, /l/, /j (y)/, /ŋ (ng)/—are present in the very beginning line of the poem. This generates a pleasing resonance. And this, at the very outset, adds to the lyrical lilt to be heard across the stanzas. More importantly, here the voice of the speaker metaphorically expressing his thoughts about music and passions does not die down amidst the sonority of sounds. A close reading of the first few lines may be felt like striking the strings of the lyrical chord of the poem. The lyricism is simply unavoidable; unescapable is also its lexical meaning:

When Music, heavenly maid, was young,
While yet in early Greece she sung,
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
Throng'd around her magic cell
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possest beyond the Muse's painting; (1-6)

—as is evident in the employment of the forced rhyme in the words "young" and "sung" which the poet cannot but surrender to the mould of music with an end in view to imparting sonority to the lines, and thereby securing the marching movement of the poem. The use of tetrametre in all the lines above speaks of its brisk movement that goes well with the dominant iambic beat, although the variations of anapaest and trochee (the fourth line; first foot of the sixth line) are well designed to bring forth variety to the rhythm. The rhyming words "shell" and "cell" ring the resonance of a rhyme riche since both the initial "s/c" and the end "l/l" rhyming consonant sounds are same. Besides, while all the five lines are end-stopped or caesura since there is punctuation mark, mostly comma and a semicolon at the end, but the fourth line does not stop even after the line ends with the word "cell". It continues with the following line. This is called enjambment or run-on line. The poet here purposefully incorporates such pattern in order to continue the musical lilt which seems to be multiplied with the repeated use of "-ing" form of all the words in the line that follows the previous line ending with "cell". Again, the last rhyming words "painting" and "fainting" beat more musical like drum due to their double rhyme: fainting—painting, which is also called a feminine rhyme perhaps because of their aesthetic perception. Therefore, it enhances the musical aestheticism of the poem. The last two lines have feminine endings, for the last rhyming syllable of each of the two lines "ing" receives no stress or accent. Actually, it is well schemed by the poet so that he can quicken the brisk movement of the poem and also have a desired emphasis on the next strong syllable "Poss-" of the word "Possest". On the other side, words like heavenly, maid, young, she, sung, magic, exulting, Muse—unfailingly capture the meaning that the poet wants to convey through a metaphorical analogy between music and the heavenly maid; between passions and a person going to enjoy the magical voice of music, fainting yet interested and enthusiastic.

Therefore, the poem delineates music and passions in such a manner which is at once lyrical and lexical; in other words, musical and meaningful.

At times Collins seems to be dialogic. Although it goes against the concept of lyric proper because it ought to be subjective and spontaneous, but the way he has uttered his thoughts and feelings, it appears that he has negotiated with the implied reader while writing the poem; he has undertaken efforts to make the reader comprehend those thoughts and feelings the way he thinks and feels. In other words, Collins wants the reader to grasp the thoughts and feelings which are exactly within him. He also tries to cater to the musical bent of the reader. Accordingly, the same vein of music is carried forward in the next two lines as well: "By turns they felt the glowing mind/Disturb'd, delighted, rais'd, refin'd:" (7-8). Apart from the strain of alliteration in the second line here sprung from the consonants "d/d" and "r/r", the timely use of liquid consonants or consonant sounds —"l", "r" or /l/, /r/—in both the lines is remarkable in that they create cadence in both ways. Again, in the lines quoted below he does not only portray the frenzy of music through personification, but captures its true exulting spirit by referring to a concrete object in order that the reader can fancy the rapture by visualizing the concrete:

Till once, 'tis said, when all were fir'd,
Fill'd with fury, rapt, inspir'd,
From the supporting myrtles round
They snatch'd her instruments of sound, (9-12).

Here too, the alliteration—"fill'd with fury"—helps the rhythm reverberate along with the ongoing musical exuberance evoked in the explanation of music itself. The phrase "supporting myrtles" operates here as an objective correlative. The dance of the myrtles makes the reader understand the musical madness which is rightly expressed with the word "fury". Besides, the rhyming words: "round" and "sound", both are monosyllabic and stressed, and they rhyme each other very well. This called perfect rhyme or masculine rhyme, and the ending being the masculine one. Collins here introduces this "full rhyme" or "true rhyme" or masculine rhyme so as to lend a more manly sonority into the musical effect.

As the poem grows and develops, it shows the variety of mood of the poem. It starts with an enthusiastic spirit of the personified music; it

goes on for some lines, almost for the entire first stanza. But a sudden change is initiated. It shifts from the jocund mood to somewhat fearful, and the change is also marked by the dramatic turn of metre. It now changes to spondee at the beginning of the next stanza: "First Fear…"— both of the monosyllabic words are equally stressed: "Fi
rst Fea

r/". "**F**irst **F**ear **h**is **h**and"— the alliteration is also noticeable. Collins deliberately does so, for he wants to maximize music in almost every stanza. But as soon as he thinks he has already initiated or hinted at the change of the mood, he immediately returns to the iambic which he uses throughout the remaining of the stanza:

…his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewilder'd laid,
And back recoil'd, he knew not why,
E'en at the sound himself had made. (16-20)

The heavy beat of iambic tetrameter cannot be missed here. Collins quickly takes recourse to iambic perhaps because he wants to utter his feeling of fear more genuinely, more naturally, for iambic metre is the natural rhythm of English speech (Abrams and Harpham, 33). Furthermore, the first and the third lines end with the words "try" and "why", respectively, having a vowel glide at the end because of the diphthong /ai/ in both the words: /trai/, and /wai/, which is also a departure from the earlier finish of the lines discussed so far. The poet intentionally uses the vowel glide in order to add a variety to the music.

The poetic persona together with personified music seems to be speaking with a heavy heart. The heaviness hinted at the previous stanza by the use of heavily stressed spondaic foot still hangs heavy on him as is evident from the lines:

Next Anger rush'd, his eyes on fire,
In lightnings own'd his secret stings;
In one rude clash he struck the lyre
And swept with hurried hand the strings. (21-24)

The first foot of the first line is again a spondee which is expressive of the heaviness that gradually forces towards anger. He wants to get rid of this mood desperately. He wants to play the lyre to drive away his pensive, melancholic and angry state of mind. The action—"…he struck

the lyre", its strings—results in the obvious music which is also rung in the form—the alliteration: "swept…strings", "hurried hand." The sonority is also sustained by the use of rhyme riche—"stings-strings—the initial and the end consonants rhyme well and resound. The music becomes lengthened and more sonorous by the use of consonant sequence or cluster "/st-str-ks/. Again, the third line is an enjambment or run-on line which is also employed for the continuity of music, filling the void of real music felt until the hand rings the strings of the lyre. The words "fire" and "lightnings" manifest the raging image of anger which finds its representation in the frenzy of music produced in the sweeping of strings by the quick movement of the hand—"swept with hurried hand the strings." Therefore, this stanza too showcases a well-crafted composition of meaning and music.

Perhaps, it would not be wrong to say that it is difficult or is not desirable to break away with the tradition of the age in which a poet lives, completely. A kind of "tradition and the individual talent" comes into playing at the practice of art. It is somewhat applicable to Collins as well. His poetry, although displays ingeniousness, has certain amount of conventions of his time from which he wanted to come out of, but could not or did not do it. The use of Rhythm and disyllabic foot pattern, for example, corresponds to the conventions of his time. However, variations in the use of metre, use of tetrameter instead of pentameter, mostly non-heroic rhymes, alternating rhymes, occasional rhyme schemes such as ABBCDCDEEA bear testimony to Collins's novelty and a considerable departure from the convention of his time. George Saintsbury also acknowledges his "expressive novelty" (3:83). Again, when a great deal of poets tried to delineate some pleasant aspects of life and the landscape, he tended to portray the pensive. The poem under discussion is melancholic in its tone and temperament that reflect Collins's thoughtful and despondent bent of mind. This phenomenon is discernable in the lines that follow:

With woeful measures van Despair,
Low sullen sounds, his grief beguiled,
A solemn, strange, and mingled air,
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild. (25-28)

The despair and hopelessness also gain wait at his psyche as he attempts to focus on another emotional constituent. Once more, the heavy beat of

spondee followed by iambic metre in the beginning of the second line of the stanza—"Lo
w su
l/-len sou
nds/..." carries forward that feeling expressed at the start of the previous stanza. But even in describing the mood of despair he has used alternating rhymes and the dominant iambic tetrameter to maintain the rhythm and cadence. The alliterations "with-woeful", "sullen-sounds", "solemn-strange" are well brought out in order that the poet can make it ring musical to the reader's ear. But here Collins is conscious enough. He gingerly fetches forth the theme of despair at the surface again by the end of the stanza by reiterating "'Twas sad", "'twas wild" so that hopelessness does not get overlooked, so that the melancholic voice is not engulfed by the lyrical lilt altogether. The repetition "'Twas" is used to accentuate the sense of despondency in a balanced way in order that meaning and music, sound and sense go well together.

As Collins has a purpose to dwell upon a variety of moods, passions, emotions so he does not want to linger much on a particular emotion in the poem. Again he does not want to be more pessimistic than that his scheme of the poem bargains for. Otherwise, his despair will pale into depression which will fail him as an enjoyable and universal poet. Consequently, he leaves aside the bleak brush, and takes up a different and colourful brush to paint a livelier landscape that feasts our eyes. This variety is again musical and manifold. From despair, it turns to hope; from speaking of "sullen sounds", it moves to muttering of "promised pleasure". The stanza is perhaps the most significant and the brightest passage in the poem. In fact, the entire poem is a masterpiece that speaks of Collins's poetical genius as David Daiches rightly states, although in a critical way,

> "The perfection of this finely carved piece makes one wonder whether the kind of thing Collins did in such a poem as "The Passions: an Ode for Music" was not the result of applying in doctrinaire theories of poetry that were not really congenial to his own creative genius." (Vol. 3; 672).

Truly, the poem merits a number of qualities. However, the most beautiful part of the poem perhaps lies here—

> But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
> What was thy delightful measure?
> Still it whisper'd promised pleasure
> And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
> Still would her touch the strain prolong;
> And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
> She call'd on Echo still through all the song;
> And, where her sweetest theme she chose,
> A responsive voice was heard at every close,
> And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden hair. (29-38)

The passage is replete with romantic images. Words and phrases like "fair", "lovely scenes", "strain prolong", "the rocks, the woods, the vale," "golden"—all contribute to the beautification of this juncture. As the poet starts here speaking of hope which is a positive thing so he tries to maximize the colouring to paint a hopeful, an optimistic picture, which gives the reader a sense of pleasure—the pleasure that is promised in the third line. Another point to take cognizance of is the repetition of "And" at the beginning of fourth, sixth, eighth and ten lines also generates music that pleases our ear, for repetition provides the reader with pleasure. To quote Terry Eagleton, "There is pleasure to be reaped from repetition:" (131). Indeed, pleasure is there to be harvested from such composition, and the poet is also conscious of this. Simply because here he explains that hope is something that drives away the darkness of despair. It brings peace in the mind, and when the mind is peaceful, one can enjoy the landscape with eyes tear-free, and feel the music in the mind. A sense of music is hinted at by the words "strain", "echo", "song", etc. The musical cadence is also brought about by the rhythm and rhymes of the lines. Iambic tetrameter, pentameter and hexameter are used to consolidate the metrical beat. Previously, nowhere Collins has employed pentameter or hexameter in versifying the poetic lines until this stanza. Perhaps he has used this technique to wish for the longevity of "Hope" that is so telling here after the descriptions of anger and despair. The poet also uses eye rhyme "chose-close" in the penultimate and anti-penultimate lines to season the variations, indicating the shift in the mood of the poem and the speaker. Again, the inclusion of trochaic tetrameter in the third line also adds to the variety of the poem. The use of figures of speech also grace the stanza appropriately. In the fifth line, he employs

hyperbaton or inversion; he does it to emphasize the line that talks about music: "the strain prolong". The sixth line consists of asyndeton that omits the use of conjunctions. And this omission is deliberately done by the poet in order to highlight the objects of the line that form the romantic landscape, and also to enhance the lyrical melody.

Collins goes on step by step delineating revenge, jealousy, melancholy and lastly joy in the following stanzas, separately. However, his dealing with melancholy has an onomatopoeic effect. The expressions such as "Pour'd through the mellow horn her pensive soul:", "Bubbling runnels join'd the sound", "In hollow murmurs died away" echo the sense with music. Besides, one thing is noticeable that when he finishes singing of joy at the penultimate stanza, he immediately draws the personified image of "Music" into the forefront: "O Music! Sphere-descended maid,/Friend of pleasure, Wisdom's aid!" (96-96). The first line is iambic tetrameter and the second one is trochaic catalectic in which it is assumed that an unaccented syllable is dropped from the end. Collins deliberately drops it to avoid the weak syllable that would disrupt the end rhyme: "maid-aid". In other words, he does so to orchestrate the desired musical effect that tunes well with the subject of music itself.

It may, therefore, be concluded that Collins composes the poem of the brilliant lines that, on one hand, operate like the strings of a lyre producing the lyrical exuberance or "extravagance" (Daiches, ibid); on the other, the diction, the lucidity of language and relatively more evolved style of writing weave the lexical tapestry exhibiting the meaning conspicuously. In short, the poem is at once musical with lyrical lilt and vocal with meaning. The themes of music and of human passions and emotions such as despair, anger, hope, jealousy, melancholy and joy are seamlessly dealt with throughout the poem. Collin's use of imagery also aids the reader's comprehension of the meaning unfailingly. But perhaps the musical aspects are more engaging, corresponding the lyricism of the poem. So undoubtedly, Collins is also a remarkable poet whose "lyrical intensity" was recognized by the later poets (Birch 237). The use of alliteration almost in every stanza create a resonant effect in the poem. The various rhymes: perfect rhyme or masculine rhyme, double rhyme or feminine rhyme, eye rhyme, rhyme riche, also produce melody that does not only interest the reader but suits the variety of moods of the poetic persona as well. Collins also showcases his dexterity in tuning the

rhythm of the poem. The uses of iambic tetrametre instead of pentametre of the classicist and occasional anapaest coupled with some rhythmic variations of trochee—all account for the poet's craftsmanship with which he graces the poem. Moreover, rhythmic variations are also meant to bridge a connection with the poetic persona speaking in various moods. "William Collins's "The Passions: an Ode for Music" (1750) here proves a revealing document, in offering an early instance of the supple relation between rhythmic variations and voiced character" (Glaser and Culler, 289). Besides, his scheme of catalectic line, well-timed spondaic feet, and elision of vowel to adjust the metrical regularity when required contribute to the music of the poem. The subject being partly about music with which the poem opens and closes finds expression in such a musical manner that strongly advocates for the lyrical texture of the poem.

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