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The Poetic Landscape of William Collins: Deconstructing his Odes

Wamankumar Kishanrao Wani

Assistant Professor & Head, Department of English,
B. Raghunath Arts, Commerce and Science College Parbhani

ABSTRACT

One of the key aspects of Collins' poetry is its challenging nature. Critics believe that his complex and highly creative use of language can be hard for readers to fully understand. The numerous allusions and cryptic references, which come from ancient myths and literature, might make his work seem off-putting to those who are not familiar with these areas. This complexity could make his poetry less accessible, reducing its appeal to a wider audience. Some critics argue that Collins had difficulty in maintaining a consistent theme in his odes. The poems often jump between complex and varied images and feelings without a clear storyline. This absence of a straightforward structure might be viewed as a flaw by those who prefer clear and logical poetry. Another criticism is the sober tone that is a constant in Collins' poetry. While a sober tone is not necessarily negative in poetry, some believe that Collins' frequent use of this mood in his odes could lead to a sense of repetition or predictability in his themes. Despite these critiques, it is important to acknowledge that Collins' poetry has also received praise for its musicality, sensitivity, and the profound emotional impact it has. His odes, like "Ode to Evening" and "Ode to Fear," are celebrated for their detailed portrayals of nature and their exploration of the human mind.

Keywords: *discernible narrative, emotional resonance, melancholic beauty.*

FULL PAPER

William Collins (1721-1759) was a distinguished English poet renowned for his lyrical and reflective odes. His oeuvre has been lauded for its poignant beauty and rich imagery, yet it has also been subject to critique, primarily centered on his perceived lack of coherence and the complexity of his language. The ode, as defined by M. H. Abrams, is described as "a rhymed (rarely unrhymed) lyric, often in the form of an address, generally of a dignified or exalted subject, feeling, and style." Goss further elaborates, stating that the ode is "a long lyric poem in subject, elevated in style, and elaborate in its stanzaic structure." Thus, the ode, as delineated, does not possess any distinctive characteristics that set it apart from other forms of lyric poetry. Originating from the Greeks, from whom it was derived, the term "ode" was employed to describe any form of lyric poetry, ranging from drinking-songs and love-songs to the grand 'occasional' poems of Pindar (522-442 B.C.), the eminent Greek lyric poet. It is also noted that some odes were originally composed as verses to be sung to music, with the chorus performing a dance around the altar during various religious festivals.

In English, the Greek ode has been imitated in various forms. The odes of Pindar were particularly imitated by poets such as Cowley and Gray. Gray himself wrote two Pindaric odes: "The Progress of Poesy" and "The Bard," which are structured into strophe, antistrophe, and epode. This triple movement is attributed to the original practice of dancers on stage, executing the strophe, then returning to their original positions in the antistrophe, and concluding with a closing movement to complete that section of the poem known as the epode.

Another type of personal odes, known as Sappho's odes, were written by the Greek poetess Sappho in the 6th century B.C. These odes typically consist of a series of regular stanzas with an elaborate metrical scheme. This style was imitated by Horace (65-0 B.C.) and Andrew Marvell in their English translations, such as Marvell's "Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" (1650). This form of ode is more commonly found in shorter works, including Keats' Odes and Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind."

Following Gray, the Pindaric ode in its full triadic form fell out of favour, leading to the emergence of more irregular types of odes without a fixed stanza, form, or rhyme scheme. The term "Pindaric" was also dropped by the late 18th century. The length of lines, as well as other aspects of form, became more flexible, allowing authors to adapt the structure to suit their needs. Some of the most famous English odes include Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode," Collins's "Ode to the Passions," and Tennyson's "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington." The justification for the irregular stanza or rhyme scheme often lies in the musical beauty of the internal structure found in many of the English odes of the modern era.

Collins is primarily known as a poet of odes. His limited output consists mostly of odes that have become his most enduring works, securing his place among

the finest lyricists of the 18th century. Before Collins published his odes in 1747, Gray had already composed two odes: "Ode on the Spring" and "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College." Collins experimented with various forms of the ode and, in his own unique way, developed a new type known as descriptive and allegorical. In four of his odes, including "To Fear," "To Mercy," "On the Poetical Character," and "To Liberty," he adhered to the Pindaric form. However, his most notable ode, "Passions, an Ode for Music," deviated from the strict verse form of classical odes. Despite this, Collins's odes are richer in poetry than those of his model.

"It's miles something of a stunt poem in which the melody and movement are delivered into an artificial conformity with the emotion which they describe. it is miles a first-rate poem for recitation, full of velocity and lines of sensuous splendour." another group of Odes - To Simplicity, To Pity, To Peace and at the death of Colonel Ross, is written in brief traces and in numerous six-line stanza form. of these odes the Ode to Simplicity is possibly the maximum every day and thoroughly built ode of Collins, in which he follows the conventional simplicity of define and purity of colour of historic Greek poetry.

The great-regarded odes of Collins are Ode to night, Ode to Simplicity, The Ode Written in the starting of 1746, and Ode at the Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland. The Ode to night is exquisitely romantic in individual. it is miles an excellent example of the poet's incredible gift of landscape - portray of natural scenes. in line with Cazamian, the Ode to night is "the maximum delicately super of eighteenth-century poems, where a pensive colouring, rich in subdued confined vibrations, unfold over the panorama as over the meditative thoughts that contemplates it, fuses in so harmonious a way the attraction of twilight, the paling lights, the on-coming silence and gloom, all that the hour holds of glad and foreboding reason into one idea of a mysterious eloquence".

Within the same manner, Edmund Blunden appreciates this terrific ode: "Underlying the complete fabric, the entire intricacy of decoration, there may be the foundation of the English alliance with the non-secular perfection in Nature. Even in hours of untamed climate there is the consolation, there the prototype of relaxation, the secret immortality in whose tide we are all swayed and through whose tide we are purified and stored, the watcher and the arts and solitudes which he contemplated are all subjects of the quiet rule. that is the fruits of Collins's Ode to night."

The Ode to Simplicity is the maximum perfect and every day of Collins's Odes. here the poet is visible as an ardent admirer of simplicity. He desires to study by means of Nature to respire true mind. Collins turned into endowed with the preferred gift of simplicity, blended with a type of austere dignity which are characteristic features of Greek poetry. it is this hunger for simplicity that gave his poetry a grace, splendour, and freshness of its very own. The Ode to Simplicity characterises the poet's hankering after the elemental simplicities of existence. although he could not fulfil all that he promised in his ode, it did mark an improve to what can be referred to as an apparent characteristic of romantic poetry, which had its end result in the Lyrical Ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge.

The Ode Written within the beginning of 1746 exhibits a present of rhythmic tune, which marks a welcome departure from the stuffy, synthetic ecosystem of the courtroom and the ballroom. It was a time of wars and sacrifice of which Collins had first-hand experience and which he interpreted in his hymns and clergies. This ode turned into occasioned by the war of Fontenay. in the words of S. A. Brooke, "It appeals to the eternal verities of depression. It appeals to the everlasting verities of human nature and is usual in feeling. on this poem Collins reaches natural, natural simplicity, a candy and smooth passion, and with a worthy and human challenge, together with, touches the everyday coronary heart of guy... Coleridge could not have accomplished it better."

The Ode at the Superstition of the Highlands of Scotland is essential as it is miles the forerunner of the so-referred to as 'Celtic revival in English literature. The ode is essentially a marvellous intuition of the destiny of poetry. The flavour for ruins, for a romantic longing for the past, for the instinctive cults of wonder and of Nature's greater lousy solemnities for the mysterious — these types of are in evidence here. right here Collins simply shall we his imagination and lyrical fervour play over the myths and legends and over all of the creatures of the fairy international, which become so actual to his medieval mind - a great deal greater actual than the actualities of lifestyles. on this ode Collins puts in an admirable defence of what was appeared according to Augustan idea of situation-rely of poetry as 'false topics' and cites the example of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Tasso. by means of poetic reality, he approach constancy to our emotional apprehension of statistics. So, the widest margin can be allowed to every poet for the free play of his imagination so long as his motive is to satisfaction us through the advent of splendour and by appealing to our innate experience of thriller and to assist us to discern the godlike mysteries of God's universe.

His Ode to Liberty moves the national word, born out of a burning passion for liberty. His love of Nature made him an admirer of Thomson and the end result became his Ode on the death of Thomson. The word of sadness and despair ordinary of the poets of the churchyard college is struck within the Dirge in Cymbeline, and Ode to Pity.

The Odes of Collins evidence, the poet's departure from classicism. even though a minor poet, Collins had an experimental thought. After the book of Persian Eclogues in 1742, he commenced experimenting on antique verse paperwork to unfastened himself from the trammels of classicism. by the middle of the century the instructional rise up in opposition to classical school had begun to take form. Collins too took up the challenge, especially in his Ode to night. although he could not completely loose himself from current classical trend, yet his odes monitor that his poetic eye turned into fixed on something afar. It goes substantially to his credit score that, whilst remaining in the barriers of his classical modes of ancient Greece and Rome, his poetry could show his innovative electricity - his lyricism and the observe of pure track. The dominant effect of his odes is absolutely the romantic mood in subject and remedy and also in style. in the words of Saintsbury, "The Collins of the

Odes, at his high-quality, is the poet of all time in preferred and no time especially, the Collins of the Eclogues is anywhere the poetaster of the 18th century."

The odes additionally display the poet's specific present for emotional idealisation of scenes of Nature which strike a new notice in the 18th century reflective poetry. It is miles the image of the poet playing on "his airy harp" in the twilight-it is miles the experience of thriller, disappointment, and marvel at the beauty of Nature that is provided and conveyed to us in the few unrhymed stanzas of the maximum tremendous lyric of the century, viz., Ode to evening. the whole thing is conceived in a pensive mood. it is miles widespread also that of all the instances of the day, the poet is in love with the nighttime whilst all Nature is hushed into silence. The Ode to night is also a high-quality instance of the poet's high-quality present of landscape-portray of natural scenes.

Depression inclusive of that we note in Collins — is nourished upon a yearning remorse for the vanished glories of the beyond - a go back to the ideals of different days-an interest in antique legends, and in superstitions of the beyond, in fairy, arms', "harp', 'fairy valleys' and many others. Johnson wrote: "He cherished fairies, genii, giants, and monsters- the grandeur of wildness and the novelty of extravagance, had been continually preferred via him, but not constantly attained." these types of new notes in Augustan reflective poetry are discerned in Collins's Ode to the Passions, Ode to night, Ode at the Superstitions of the Highlands. The elegiac note in nearly all Collins's poems has already been noticed. This note of despair is not an affectation or the fashion of the school poets who located pride in nocturnal churchyard meditation however engendered partially through his very own sad and disturbed life his physical and mental ill-fitness as well as an extremely melancholic attitude to life which became a function of Romantic poetry.

Verbal simplicity is some other characteristic of Collins's Odes. It imparts! grace and freshness, hues his temper and sentiment and touches his coronary heart. It brings us towards the commonplace feelings which form the stuff of the lifestyles of the person of the USA. It takes his poetry out of the stuffy surroundings of the espresso-residence into the open-air life of the not unusual man where the primary problems of life, dying and the brevity of human glory ought to be faced squarely. The vocabulary of his Ode to Simplicity is not any doubt laboured inside the fashion of Augustans, 'it is sufficiently spiritualised by using an inner youthfulness of spirit to rejoin Romanticism in its moments of soberness.' His fashion in his odes is steeped in literary memories however those is a spontaneous grace except natural creative and sincere self-expression inside the utterance. it is often made up of a charming handful of pics culled from his favourite poets — especially from Milton.

Thus, Collins is seen at his exceptional in his odes. What Phelps stated approximately his Ode on the Superstitions of the Highland can be carried out to Collins's odes in well-known. Phelps says, "The ode has continually ranked amongst Collins's maximum vital paintings. The poem is in situation, treatment, and style notably Romantic; and it struck a brand new be aware in English verse. that is proper of all the odes of Collins in one manner or the alternative. Patterson has rightly

determined: "however at his fine he (Collins) is excellent, the beautiful unrhymed nocturne Ode to nighttime, the Dirge in Cymbeline, How Sleep the brave and components of the odes To Liberty and The Passions, are in the very front rank of English poetry."

In end, while William Collins' odes were lauded for their poetic splendour and exploration of complex feelings, they have no longer been without criticism. The tough language, perceived lack of thematic solidarity, and a main melancholic tone had been factors of competition amongst critics and readers alike. nevertheless, Collins stays a vital determine in 18th-century English poetry, contributing to the improvement of the Romantic literary way of life.

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