

INNOVATIVE POETRY BY E.E. CUMMINGS: STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

Mohammed Hammed Rashid, S.M. Kolova

The present article attempts to reveal key issues and innovations of poetic forms and language created by the poetry of Edward Estlin Cummings in the English literature by means of stylistic analysis. The peculiarities of his avant-garde, experimental poems which made them so attractive to the general and the special reader are being analyzed.

Keywords: avant-garde, eccentricity, innovative features, analysis.

This article deals with a stylistic analysis of poem of famous poet of the English literature, called E.E. Cummings. As one of the most innovative poets of his time, Edward Estlin (E.E.) Cummings experimented with poetic form and language to create a distinct personal style. A typical Cummings poem is spare and precise, employing a few key words eccentrically placed on the page. He made avant-garde, experimental poems so attractive to the general and the special reader. Some of the words were invented by Cummings, often by combining two common words into a new synthesis. He also revised grammatical and linguistic rules to suit his own purposes, using such words as “if,” “am,” and “because” as nouns, for example, or assigning his own private meanings to words. Despite their nontraditional form, Cummings’ poems came to be popular with many readers. The aim of the research is to identify the innovative features of Cummings’s poetry: in particular the poem “Maggie and Milly and Molly and May”. The article gives consideration to the poem, which used the tools of linguistics with an opinion to make their meaning obvious. It is essential to remark that stylistics is only advantageous to students of linguistics and literary. Native and non –native learners can learn more about the English language through stylistic research, and therefore obtain linguistic along literary competence. It looks for progressing a complete scientific understanding of the style as proven in the text or discourse in general [1].

E.E. Cummings was a famous poet for his innovations in style and structure. E. E. Cummings was born on October 14, 1894, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Cummings went on to get both his B.A. and his M.A. He usually signed his name as an American poet, painter, essayist, author, and playwright. He had written almost 2900 poems, two autobiographical novels, four plays, and several essays. During an early age, Cummings' parents had supported his innovative gifts. Cummings had written poems and drew as a child, and he had played outdoors with the many other children who lived in his neighborhood. E.E. Cummings was the Representative of American modern experimental poets. He had

his own technique of writing poetry and had particular traits in handling language in his own approach [2].

Let us consider a story about four little girls who went to the beach one day. Maggie and Milly and Molly and May had decided to take a trip to the beach one day. They all went off in separate directions and faced various types of adventures. Maggie found a seashell that take all of her troubles away and Milly found a starfish with five long fingers, Molly found a horrible thing and May found a smooth round stone. She found a smooth round stone that's "as small as a world and as large as alone". By the end, the speaker told us no matter what you lost in life, "it's always ourselves we found in the sea". It is a meaningful poem, which is full of deep meaning. It talked about the days of youth, when their father took them to the beach and everything seemed nice, simple and interesting. Then they learned the nature of life in exploring day by day when discovering something new. This thing made them to discover new other things. It also talks about the natural world in which people get excited by. He used the four young girls to reach at a universe statement concerning life. He described the four young girl's mentality in the process of their life. Each of them became a symbol for him to discover something new in his life. The main meaning is about searching for the self or identity. Each one of them has different characteristic.

This is a soft poem. He used many allusions to make the poem itself appeared delicate, but the meaning is very deep. Therefore, we can say this poem has two tones: internal tone is bitter and external tone is emotion.

Let us consider stylistic analysis at the phonological level. In this poem, there are many alliteration devices used which assists us to understand well the importance of poem:

- a) so sweetly;
- b) stranded star;
- c) blowing bubbles.

As far as analysis at the morphological level is concerned, the main use of morphological level (morpheme) specifically in this poem refers to an emphasis through repetition because morpheme carries the main weight of the structure, and another effective reason of using morpheme is to the creation of additional information. We notice that the repletion of (ed) inflectional morpheme is much used such as (befriended, raced, discovered, chased) and some irregular verbs and models as well as (went, couldn't, came, sang) words used in this poem are those which figure in children's language or domain [3].

There are a number of interesting words that related to kids in general. So they can be employable for children used in this poem such as: ("Beach – sea – stranded – star – shell – sing – horrible thing – round stone – bubbles – blowing"). Analyzing the poem on the syntactical level, we see many strange items, used by the author such as:

- a) the use of (alone) as an object of comparison as in below:
"As small as a world and as long as alone".

b) Parenthesis put in bracket as in – “to play one day”; and like a you or a me.
c) The use of article (a) promoting pronouns ‘you’ and ‘me’ as in like (a you or a me).

d) A number of parallel structures are used in this poem:

- 1) Maggie discovered a shell (S.V.O);
- 2) She could not remember the troubles (S.V.O);
- 3) Milly befriended a stranded star (S.V.O);
- 4) We lose (S.V.);
- 5) We find (S.V.);

At the lexical level some parts of speech are used to concentrate on the value of these words.

Nouns: shell, beach, star, stone, sea and home.

Pronouns: she, whose, you, me, we and it.

Verbs: went, came, discovered, remember, etc

Adjective: smooth, horrible, small, large etc.

At a grammatical Level the poet uses full stop one time in the poem. He describes them as they are small physically but they are big when alone.

Comma: The poet uses it to give an ongoing life for them on earth. Even if they face problem ,they continue doing it.

The analysis at the graphological level comprises the following:

- The use of capitalization as a significant component in Cummings’ poems.
- The use of proper names in a small letter in his poem in the first line and seventh too.

However, all proper names are in written in capitalization like in line 1&7 (molly) in small letter

The following stylistic devices are widely used by E.E. Cummings too:

1. Simile is seen in this line (“as small as a world and as large as alone”). The use of the word “as” as comparison to the word of the size of the world. A simile is a figure of speech, which deals with the likening of objects belonging to two different classes and the author often uses it in the poem analyzed.

2. Metaphors are seen in two lines below, which give an implied comparison between two things of different nature:

“Its ourselves we find in the sea (of life)” and “whose rays five languid fingers were”.

Alliteration is seen in some words like (so sweetly, blowing bubbles and a stranded star).

3. Morpheme Repetition is observed in some words (discovered, befriended, raced and chased).

4. Hyperbole is seen in his poem in the line 4:

“So sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles”.

5. Epithet is also seen in his poem and he describes things in a way that helps focus on it more. In such examples as:

Stranded star, horrible thing, smooth round stone,

6. *Anaphora* is used in his poem as in repletion of his four young girls at the beginning of the sentence such as in 1–5–7 lines.

Parenthesis is seen in his poem to insert extra information between bracket [4].

It was an attempt to describe the nature of the poem to show a style to their understanding, which allows to realize the significance of this poem. Stylistics inform us how to know the basic parts of a literary text.

This poem has some disciplines which include linguistics, sociolinguistics.

Pragmatic purpose of communication is also a great matter of the poem. The poet tries to tell us how he shows the internal and external love to his young girls then help them to identify themselves.

References

1. Cummings, E.E. A study Guide for “Maggie and Milly and Molly and May”/ E.E. Cumming. – Cambridge, 2001.
2. Cummings, E.E. Complete Poems 1913–62 / E.E. Cumming. – New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1972.
3. Cummings, E.E. The language of Literature: A stylistic Introduction to the Study of Literature / E.E. Cumming. – London: Pergamon Delhi, 1983.
4. Kumar, S. Stylistics and Text Analysis / S. Kumar. – Delhi: Bahri, 1987.