Social criticisms in e.e. cummings' poems
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CHAPTER I

A. Research Background

Poetry is one the oldest form of literature. Poetry has also been an inseparable part of life that follows the development of civilization through time. The earliest work of literature ever known was in the form of poetry. The world's biggest creations, such as Oedipus, Antigone, Hamlet, Macbeth, et cetera were even written using the form of poetry (Waluyo, 1995: 1).

In the early era of poetry development, poetry was identical with the value of beauty as its main attraction. People considered that poetry has always been touching a romantic side of every reader. However, this view has changed during the course of time. Literature is no more seen as a work to arouse sentimental side of human life. Literature is also seen as a social criticism. When the genre of poetry moved from romanticism, naturalism and then to realism, the view toward poetry changed from the sense of beauty as the main parameter of literariness to the sense of messages inside poetry.

This, then, also influenced the era of experimentalism. Though in the sense of message, experimentalism era was still influenced by realism, this era has created a new stress. Poets in the era of experimentalism tended to express the messages not in the term

of vulgar and explicit languages, but more to create implicit messages by creating unordinary ways.

The poet that is identical with this style is E.E Cummings. He rejected the conventional understanding upon poetry. He tried to explore the part of the poetry that had never been explored by the poets of the previous era, such as typography, word structure, and ungrammaticalities.

Another interesting part of Cummings' view is how he sees that the poems are basically in the form of direct relationship between himself as a writer and the reader. It can be seen on how Cummings' view towards poetry in the following quotation:

"the poems are for you and me and are not for most people.

- It's no use trying to pretend the most people and ourselves are alike. Most people have less incommon with ourselves that the squareroot of minusone. You and I are human beings; most people are snobs."

(Cummings in Scully, 1965: 1).

The view shows how Cummings' creations are mainly based on how he views that a work of art as a subjective creation that must be based on the satisfaction between the writer's freedom of creation and the response of the readers as individuals. This, in anyway, has attracted the writer to make a deeper exploration.

In the writer's mind, the reason that makes Cummings experiment in making poems that are contradictive with conventional poems is more than a creative idea, but a way of saying criticisms. He never considers public's opinion upon his creations. From his statement that "You and I are human beings; most people are snobs", we can see that Cummings does not stress his attention on how his poems can be accepted by most

people. However, Cummings' stress is how on making an individual relationship with the readers without considering what most people say. In short, the writer sees this phenomenon as an implicit way of criticizing the behaviors of the society.

Cummings, however, is not the only poet that did experiment with the new form of poetry. There are many poets that in the same way, had raged against the conventional platforms of poetry. T.S Elliot, Ezra Pound and Robert Frost are the examples. However, those poets did not explore much with explicit, such as deviations on the grammatical structure and physical form, as Cumming did.

There are six poems explored in this thesis. The poems are, *mortals), if you can't eat you got to, anyone lived in a pretty how town*, *love is more thicker than forget*, *as freedom is a breakfast food*, and *(will you teach a*. The poems are taken from *50 Poems*, an anthology of E.E Cummings.

Some of the poems use unordinary typography, while some others use strange word figure that does not exist in common poems written by other writers. Many of Cummings' poems use ungrammatical words that merely have been created by Cummings himself.

In exploring the poems, the writer applies semiotic approach. However, as the main approach, the writer uses Riffaterre's semiotics of poetry.. The writer applies the theory because the writer thinks that Riffaterre has been recognized as a specialist in poetry analysis.

There are some points that the writer expects by composing this thesis. Common people think that Cummings' poems are difficult to understand. However, the writer

thinks that this is even the most interesting part to explore. Thus, the writer would like to give a reference on exploring Cummings' poems.

B. Research Questions

As mentioned in the background, the most interesting part of Cummings' poems is that how he packs the realism inside his poems. Therefore, to explore Cummings poems, the writer has formulated questions as a main framework. The questions are:

1. What social criticisms appear in Cummings's poems?

2. How does Cummings deliver the social criticisms in his poems?

C. Research limitation

The research is a study of literature. Therefore, to overcome bias on this study, the researcher focuses on analyzing things that are still related to literature. The writer only works in the frame of literature study. Though Cummings poems have visual aspect that may also have deeper meanings, the writer does not focus on analyzing the visual arts deeply, for it can be analyzed only by using the theory of visual arts.

D. Research Objectives

Based on the answers expected from the research questions as the focus of the study, the objectives of the research are:

1.   to describe what social criticisms appear in Cummings's poems,

2.   to describe how Cummings delivers social criticisms in his poems

E. Research Benefits

The writer hopes that the research will give benefits as follows:

1. giving an input to the readers one of the alternatives in understanding modern poetry, especially Cummings' poems,

2. giving input to the next researchers studying related subjects.

F. Research Methodology

1. Type of Research

The research is a descriptive, qualitative, library research. Marshall and Rossman wrote that the main criterion of descriptive research is its purpose to investigate little understood phenomenon, to document the phenomenon of interest (Marshall and Rossman, 1995: 104).

This study is also a qualitative research. Qualitative research should be judged on two criteria(Zelditch in Marshall and Rossman, 1995: 105). The first is its information adequacy, which maximizes on the possibilities to respond the questions thoroughly and thoughtfully, and the elicitation on the sought-after information. The second is efficiency. It concerns with the data collection that is adequate at the least cost in terms of time, access, and cost to participants.

2. Research Method

a. Data and Source of Data

The data consists of primary and secondary data. The primary data is in the form of word, phrase, sentence, stanza, or even a complete poem, for the writer should not neglect any part of the poems. It is because every single word or the whole form of the

poetry can be the "sign" of social criticisms. The source of primary data is the six poems already mentioned in Introduction.

However, in order to fulfill information adequacy in conducting the research, collecting the right interconnected data is necessary. This is, then, to make the data into a thick description (Holliday, 2002: 75). The data is in the form of documents that contain notes of supporting methods that may be helpful in analyzing the primary data, background of both the writer and social conditions, as the social illustration of the era when the poems were written. This is, then, what is called as the secondary data. The secondary data is taken from any literal resources that support the analysis of the data, both from books and online resources.

b. Data Collecting Method

In the term of collecting data, the research can be classified as a library research. It is because the method that is used by the writer is done by doing some steps that are dealing with written documents.

The primary data were collected by reading the source of the primary data, and then listing both semantic elements and the complete form of the poems. The reason that the writer also included the complete form of the poems is because the complete form of the poems are also essential as the object of analysis.

The collection of the secondary data, however, is different from the collection of the primary data. Since the secondary data were done in order to gain the information adequacy of the data, the writer collected any documents that deal with the poems and the

method of analysis, and then selected parts of the documents that may support the analysis.

c. Data Analyzing Method

The analysis of the data is done in there major steps.

1. Classifying the data,

The first step done by the writer after finishing the data collecting method is classifying the data. The data that had been collected are still in the form of raw data. As the data consist of semantic units, the writer must classify them into classes. For instance, many of Cummings poems contains ungrammatical words. In analyzing these, the writer must classify which can be understood at the first stage of reading, and which need a higher interpretation.

2. The analysis of the poem,

The analysis is the stage where the writer did the core of the research. In this step, the writer conducted the research by putting the classified data into the semiotics theory to answer the problem formulation. The essence of this step is to find signs inside the poems indicates the existence of social criticisms inside Cummings' poems.

3. Drawing conclusions,

The last step in this thesis is drawing conclusion. This last step was done by summarizing the result of the second step. The results of the second step were arranged into a systematic description so that the result is acceptable.

G. Thesis Organization

The thesis is composed in the combination of four chapters. The chapters contribute each other, and compose a chronologic description in order to make the thesis easier to understand. In another side, the organization reflects the flow of the idea.

The chapters are as follows:

Chapter one is the introduction. It contains the background of the study, problem formulation, research objectives, research methodology and thesis organization.

Chapter two, literary review, contains approaches applied in analyzing the poems and other substances that helps the process of analysis.

Chapter three contains the analysis of the poem.

Chapter four is conclusion and recommendation. The writer concludes the research in this chapter and also makes the recommendation to the readers.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW AND FRAME OF THOUGHT

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

This sub chapter is explaining aspects that contribute the analysis of the poems. There are three main aspects contained in this sub chapter, they are review of previous research, theory, and the supporting background of the poem, such as poet and text explanation.

1. Review of Previous Research

There is a thesis using semiotics of poetry in English Department, Faculty of Letters and Fine Arts. The thesis entitled "Love in Emily Dickinson's Poems of Time and Eternity". the thesis is written by Suryo Sambodo. The thesis tries to reveal of love inside the Dickinson's poems, and how she expresses love through her poems.

There are six poems studied in the thesis. The six poems are selected based on the theme. The theme is about time and eternity.

The thesis results that most of Dickinson's poems are mostly about love seen from the relation between human and God. In other words, most of Dickinson's Poems talk about love in a religious sense. Some others talk about her failure in making relationship with men. The religious sense is influenced by Emerson.

The second result of the thesis is that Dickinson expresses love in many ways. Sometimes, she uses metaphor to flatter someone she loves. The other way is by turning

her poems' theme into sadness, that is also shown by the use of "o" and "r" as dominating sounds. The other clue is the unperfected arrangement of rhymes shows the atmosphere of sadness and confusion.

The thesis is a valuable literature for the writer. It is because the writer can use the model of analysis as a reference in doing this thesis.

2. Semiotics of Poetry

Semiotics theory is development of structuralism theory that had been developed by Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Pierce:

> Semiotics, which defines itself as the science of signs, posits a zoological pursuit: the semiotician wants to discover what are the species of signs, how they differ from another, how they function in their native habitat, how they interact with other species. Confronted with a plethora of text that communicate various meanings to their readers, the analyst does not pursue a meaning; he seeks to identify signs and describe their functioning. (Culler, 1981:vii-viii).

Though literature, including poetry, is in anyway a work that is mainly based on the writers' subjectivity on their own view, structuralist (including semiotician) believes that the subjectivity is still bound with a general convention. It is because the point of structuralism is mainly based on the philosophy that the nature consists of several elements that support each other in creating a whole structure. Thus, in semiotics, any discourse that may not be understood in the first stage of comprehension is represented by signs. Sign, then, refers to general consensus of human natural decoding capacity that may, or even always refer to the same concept.

Poetry, in this case, always deals with indirectness. It can be said that poetry is a literary product that needs more contemplation compared to other literary products, such as prose or drama. Riffaterre said that "poetry expresses concepts and thing by

indirection. To put it simply, a poem says one thing and means another" (Riffatrre, 1978: 1). This indirection often employs concepts or rules that are not familiar with public convention. It can be seen from the fact that poetry often employs its own writing concept that may not even be understood by common readers.

Riffaterre's semiotics of poetry substantially consists of four chapters that explain both the productions of poetics as special arts and the flow of thinking that shows how his theory decodes signs. The four chapters are poem's significance, sign production, text production, and interpretants.

a.   The Poem's Significance

The language of poetry is always different from the common usage of daily language. Poetry has the shortest physical form that the other kinds of literature. Poetry tends to have a deeper contemplation in each of the words it contains. This is why the language of poetry is usually connotative, since the words of poetry contain deeper imagination than the language of drama or prose. This is, then concerning with esthetic value that comes along with the process of imagination creating.

The evolutionary process of taste making and the continuous esthetic concepts changing have made poetry swinging back and forth. However, whichever of the trends prevails, there is one factor remains constant. The constant concept is that poetry expresses concepts by indirection. A poem says one thing and means another(Riffaterre, 1978: 2). Then, under these twofold restrictions, there are three ways of semantic indirection occurs. Indirection is produced by displacing, distorting and creating meaning.

1) Displacing meaning

It happens when the signs shift from one meaning to another, when one word 'stands for" another, as happens in metaphor and metonymy (Riffaterre, 1978:2). In broader sense, metaphor and metonymy are representatives of the other figures of speech. The point is that in poetry, a term that is explicitly mentioned may have defiant term in the level of meaning.

2) Distorting meaning

This case happens when there is ambiguity, contradiction or nonsense (Riffaterre, 1978:2). Ambiguity happens as the effect of one of the characteristic of literary language that may cause various interpretations on the readers' mind. These interpretations may refer to words, phrase or even sentence. The essence is that meaningful unit may have two or more meanings in the process of interpretation.

Contradiction is caused by the use of paradox or irony. Contradiction is the case of intact between units of meaning, when a unit meaning have another meaning that is contradictive with how its normative meaning should be.

The term "nonsense" refers to the use of words that have no meaning in the term of formal linguistics, since they are in the forms of sound sequence that cannot be found lexically.

3) Creating meaning

"When textual space serves as a principle of organization from making signs out of linguistic items that may not be meaningful otherwise (for instance, symmetry, rhyme or semantic equivalences between positional homologues in a stanza)" (Riffaterre, 1978: 2).

However, though poetry cannot be treated in the way a prosaic text, there is a corridor that makes poetry bound to a certain structure. This structure is what is called by Riffaterre (1978:1) as the structure of meaning. It is because poetry, in anyway, cannot be separated from the concept of "text", and a literary phenomenon is a dialectic between text and reader.

It is important to be noticed that a work of art was not born from a cultural emptiness (Teeuw, 1981: 11). A work of art is a response to the previous works, therefore a text can never be separated from the other text (Teeuw, 1981: 65-66). The term that refers to this understanding is known as intertext. This is again, directed to the function of signs as the media of meaning exploration in the reader's mind.

In semiotic of poetry, sign production is one of the fundamental concepts that is very important as a basic in shifting from mimesis to semiosis. However, the most fundamental feature in Riffaterre's theory is his conception of semiotic unity. It refers to his statement that in hermeneutic stage, there is a phenomenon occurs. It is a process that results 'variants of the same structural matrix:

> The poem results from transformation of the matrix, a minimal and literal sentence, into a longer, complex, and non-literal periphrasis. The matrix is hypothetical, being only the grammatical and actualization of a structure.the matrix may be epitomized in one word, in which case the word will not appear in the text. It is always actualized in successive variants; the form of this variants is governed by the first or primary actualization, the model. Matrix, model and text are variants of the same structure. (Riffaterre, 1978: 19)

b. Sign Production

In the shifting process from signs to interpretations or even the "textual derivation", text complexity does no more than modulating the matrix, but the matrix is thus the motor, the generator of the textual derivation, while the model determines the manner of that derivation. (Riffaterre, 1978:21). Some of the expansion or conversion of the matrix into text produces a series of apparently 'poetic signs'. A word or phrase is poeticized and comes to the function as poetic sign when it refers to (and if a phrase patterns itself upon) a preexistence word group. Riffaterre calls this process as 'hypogramatic derivation' (Riffaterre, 1978:23). As a result, Riffaterre describes the physical form of this process as 'hypogram'. He says that hypogram is already a system of signs comprising at least a predication, or it maybe a large as a text, that maybe observable in a previous text.

There are three types of hypogram. They are semes and presupposition, clichés (or quotation) and descriptive systems.

1) Semes and Presuppositions

The hypogram is formed out of a word's semes and/ or its presuppositions. "Semes are the very core of a word's meaning" (Riffaterre, 1978: 31). The *sememe* of kernel word functions as an encyclopedia of representations related to the meaning of the word (Riffaterre, 1978: 26).

In searching the meaning of a word, the reader has the needs of decoding connotation, as well as denotation. It also concerns with the process of making visualization in the reader's mind.

2) Clichés

The difference between this hypogram with the semes and presupposition is that this type of hypogram is already actualized in a set forms within the readers' mind. Riffaterre says that "They are part of his linguistic competence, and literary connotations are often attached to them". Clichés are everywhere, ready made examples well-tested images, that the basic mechanism is, in anyway, also one of the seme actualization (Riffaterre 1978: 39).

An especially productive cliché is the hypogram that makes the process of defining poetic signs from the process of collocation of words that has nothing to do with each other to be poetic sign. Riffaterre gives example how the collocation of the word *fleur* (flower) and *abime* (abyss) can be productive since the words indeed have no lexical correlation, but in the term of poetic it is a familiar hypogram, the stereotype of the flower on the edge of the abyss. The defining feature of hypogram often results polarization. This polarization is resulted from the contrast literal concepts that the reader found in the text. In different text, the case is relative. What reader found from one into another text may vary each other. However, Riffaterre discovers that there is one thing in common: nothing is left of the hypogram's fundamental opposition because in each case the polar opposite have become equivalent (Riffaterre, 1978: 41).

3) Descriptive Systems

The descriptive system is almost the same as presupposition network. However, it is more complex and in their simple form, they are very close to the dictionary definition of the kernel words. It is a network of words associated with one another around a kernel word in accordance with the sememe of that nucleus (Riffaterre, 1978: 39).

In poetic words, the reader can get "poetic vitality" because poetic words can give the readers surface actualization. Such hypogram (the word's descriptive system), according to Riffaterre, happens to have a grammar and lexical distribution characterized by polar opposition. Riffaterre believes that the polarization is always present in the hypograms of permanently poetic nouns, and that *polarization is responsible for the noun exemplariness and consequently for its poetic nature* (Riffaterre, 1978: 43).

c. Text Production

The text as locus of significance is generated by conversion and expansion. Both expansion and conversion establish equivalences between a word and a sequence of words (Riffaterre, 1978: 47).

1) Expansion

Expansion establishes the equivalence by transforming one sign into several, which is to say by deriving from one word a verbal sequence with that word defining features. The rule of expansion is that expansion transforms the constituents of the matrix sentence into more complex forms. In the simplest way expansion may be made up of entirely repetitive sequences. The repetition is in itself a sign that may symbolize

emotional shifts, icon of motions, etc. In more complex forms, expansion involves grammatical changes, such as shifting on part of speeches, or even sentence structures.

The further complex effect given by expansion is the transformation of abstract to figurative signs. "Expansion has another far-reaching effect upon poetic discourse: it transforms the more abstract language forms, especially the grammatical connectives, into images" (Riffaterre, 1948: 53). Generally, sign is said to refer directly to structures and context-free, or even more conspicuously arbitrary, and according to Riffaterre (1948: 54) expansion is the principal, or perhaps the only agent operating (apparently) to remove arbitrariness in the extreme and exemplary case of abstract signs, since it substitutes for these symbol icons or "ideograms" that seem to explain the relationship by rewriting the code of the words linked by the relationships.

2) Conversion

Conversion lays down the equivalence established in expansion by transforming several signs into one "collective" sign, that is, by endowing the components of a sequence with the same characteristic features (Riffaterre, 1978: 47). It particularly affects sequences generated by expansion.

The rule of conversion is that it transforms the constituents of the matrix sentence by modifying them all with the same factor.

d. Interpretants

The shift of meaning to significance necessitates the concept of interpretant, that is, a sign that translates the text's surface signs and explains what else the text suggests. Interpretant can be defined as any equivalence established by the poem and perceived by retroactive reading may be regarded as an interpretant (Riffaterre, 1978: 81). The role of interpretants in reading process is played by the poetic words, the role the reader rationalizes as a symbol of the writer's intention.

Riffaterre distinguishes interpretants into two categories, lexematic and textual interpretants

1) Lexematic interpretant

Lexematic interpretant are mediating words, that Riffaterre (1978: 81) calls dual signs, since either they generate two texts simultaneously within the poem (or one text that must be understood in two different ways), or else they presuppose two hypograms simultaneously. There are two reading stages in analyzing poems. The first is **Heuristic**, and the second is retroactive or **Hermeneutic**. In heuristic reading stage, the readers comprehend the linguistic signs in a primarily referential fashion; they assume that the poem is a representation of an action or a statement about object and situation (the stage of mimesis). It is the phase where the reader goes on from the beginning to the end of the text, from top to the bottom of the page, and follows the syntagmatic unfolding (Riffaterre, 1978: 3). It is also "the stage where the interpretation place, since it is during this reading the meaning is apprehended" (Riffaterre, 1978: 3).

While the second step, hermeneutic is a step to move on the higher system, a guideline from mimesis to semiosis. In this step, the reader will be more focused on

transfers and metamorphosis of signs that appears to reach a unified semiotic system. It is the time for the second interpretation.

> As he progresses through the text, the reader remembers what he just read and modifies his understanding of it in the light of what he is now decoding. As he works from the forward to the finish, he is reviewing, revising comparing backward. He is in effect performing a structural decoding, as he moves through the text he comes to recognize, by dint of comparison or simply because he is now able to put them together, that successive and different statements, first noticed as mere ungrammaticalities, are in fact equivalent, for they now appear as variants of the same structural matrix (Riffaterre, 1978: 5-6)

In the first stage of reading, the reader must understand that the process of revealing the real meaning of the poem has to be started at the mimetic level where the words is apprehended in the level of normative structure. This interpretant deals with interpretation in the level of first formal interpretation where the reader experience dual sign. The dual sign is an equivocal word situated at the point where two sequences of semantic or formal association intersect

> ……the dual sign works like a pun. We sill see that the pun, in poetic discourse grows out textual "roots". The first it is apprehended as a mere ungrammaticality, until the discovery is made that there is another text in which the word is grammatical; the moment the other text is identified, the dual sign becomes significant purely because of its shape, which alone alludes to the other code (Riffaterre, 1974: 82).

It may be also presumed that this interpretant leads the reader comprehending the core meaning of the poetry. This process is started from the level of decoding signs in the heuristic to the level hermeneutic. The reader must start the interpretation from the level that words may carry more than one meaning (as dual signs), and also that the poeticity arises from the concept of ungrammaticality. The logic of this process is actually beacuse diction is a very significant factor that influences reader's interpretation.

The process of decoding the dual sign is done by applying retroactive method.

Retroactive reading thus appears to be the method for decoding dual signs: first because the sign refers to a paradigm, and a paradigm can be recognized only after it has been sufficiently developed in space so that certain constants can be perceived; second, because any stumbling block sends the readers scurrying back for a clue, back being te only place to go; third because the correction made backwards via the proximate homologue creates the ghost or parallel text wherein the dual sign's second (or syntactically unacceptable) semantic allegiance can be vindicated (Riffaterre, 1978: 91).

2) Textual Interpretants

The interpretant, besides the mediating words, as explained in lexematic interpretant, may also be a textual sign. Instead of being symbolized by a word referring to the text in which the reader is to find his hermeneutic clues, the interpreatant is *a fragment of that text actually quoted in the poem it serves to interpret* (Riffatere, 1978: 109).

Lexematic interpretant, though includes retroactive reading stage, cannot fulfill the total interpretation of the reader to comprehend the core meaning in the poem. Textual interpretant leads the reader into the further stage where reading involves external factors (besidesthe poem itself), such as supporting text.

Textual interpretant guides the reader in two ways. The first, textual interpretant guide the reader to focus on intertextuality, especially on how the poem exemplifies the type of intertextual conflict where two conflicting codes are present within its boundaries, and the second is by functioning as the model for the hypogramatic derivation (Riffatere, 1978: 109- 110).

3. Social Criticism

The subject that is being discussed in this research is about social criticism. It is, however, cannot be let go from the writer's assumption that works of art seem always represents the function as an expression media to the artist. The writer assumes that Cummings poem is expressing criticism toward the social life, as form of expression media.

The term "social criticism" applied in this research refers to the Cummings expresses his criticism toward the social life surround him. According to the Oxford Advanced Learner dictionary, the word criticism means someone judgment or evaluation on work of art or literature. In this thesis, the term "criticism" is viewed based on Cummings' expression toward what he sees from the society.

The definition of "social" refers to all aspects of human life. The term "social" here concerns with any aspect that the poet deals with, in his life. Poet is in anyway the part of the society. If the poems are directed to people (reader), there should be a convention of communication between poet and the reader. It means that, logically, the poet ought also to know people's behavior.

The tendency of a human being to evaluate and judge from his view toward an object is a part of expression. Yeats in Abrams (1953: 21-22) states that poetry is the overflow, utterance, or projection of the thought and feelings of the poet; or else (in the chief variant formulation) poetry is defined in terms of the imaginative process which modifies and synthesizes the images, thought, feelings of the poet. If poetry is a reflection of the poet's feeling, and that poet's expression cannot be separated from his position as a social being, than the assumption of poem is a reflection of expression to criticize the society is in anyway logic. In this sense, the natural flow of judgment and evaluation of

the poet toward the society can be also considered as one of the natural expression that is possible to rise from a poet when he sees the society.

Hariyanti (2002: 23) states that social criticism is a form of consideration on values of social systems in a certain society, and in a course of time. The characteristic is evaluative. However, the main criteria of social criticism can be defined as a flow of the poet's feeling of anxiety of social imbalance condition. When a poet feels that the condition of the society is not on his standard of idealism, he will feel that he needs to do something on the society.

4. Biography of E.E Cummings

Cummings was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 14 October 1894 to liberal, indulgent parents who from early on encouraged him to develop his creative gifts. While at Harvard, where his father had taught before becoming a Unitarian minister, he delivered a daring commencement address on modernist artistic innovations, thus announcing the direction his own work would take. In 1917, after working briefly for a mail-order publishing company, the only regular employment in his career, Cummings volunteered to serve in the Norton-Harjes Ambulance group in France. Here he and a friend were imprisoned (on false grounds) for three months in a French detention camp. The Enormous Room (1922), his witty and absorbing account of the experience, was the first of his literary attacks on authoritarianism. Eimi (1933), a later travel journal, focused with much less successful results on the collectivized Soviet Union.

At the end of the First World War, Cummings went to Paris to study art. On his return to New York in 1924 he found himself a celebrity, both for The Enormous Room

and for Tulips and Chimneys (1923), his first collection of poetry (for which his old classmate John Dos Passos had finally found a publisher). Clearly influenced by Gertrude Stein's syntactical and Amy Lowell's imagistic experiments, Cummings's early poems had nevertheless discovered an original way of describing the chaotic immediacy of sensuous experience. The games they play with language (adverbs functioning as nouns, for instance) and lyric form combine with their deliberately simplistic view of the world (the individual and spontaneity versus collectivism and rational thought) to give them the gleeful and precocious tone which became a hallmark of his work. Love poems, satirical squibs, and descriptive nature poems would always be his favored forms.

A roving assignment from Vanity Fair in 1926 allowed Cummings to travel again and to establish his lifelong routine: painting in the afternoons and writing at night. In 1931 he published a collection of drawings and paintings, CIOPW (its title an acronym for the materials used: charcoal, ink, oil, pencil, watercolor), and over the next three decades had many individual shows in New York. He enjoyed a long and happy third marriage to the photographer Marion Morehouse, with whom he collaborated on Adventures in Value (1962), and in later life, divided his time between their apartment in New York and his family's farm in New Hampshire. His many later books of poetry, from VV (1931) and No Thanks (1935) to Xaipe (1950) and 95 Poems (1958), took his formal experiments and his war on the scientific attitude to new extremes, but showed little substantial development.

Cummings's critical reputation has never matched his popularity. The left-wing critics of the 1930s were only the first to dismiss his work as sentimental and politically

naïve. His supporters, however, find value not only in its verbal and visual inventiveness but also in its mystical and anarchistic beliefs.

B. FRAME OF THOUGHT

This research is mainly directed to answer the problems formulations mentioned in the previous chapter. The problems, at first, came from the writer's interest of Cumming's poems. As the writer explores the poems, there is a significant assumption rises. This assumption is what the writer translated into problems formulation, and "social criticism" concept. Then, to answer the problems, the writer picks Riffaterre's Semiotic of poetry.

The writer assumes that Cumming's poem cannot be separated with Cumming's background as a social being. This is, then, formulated by the writer into two problems mentioned in the previous chapter. The problem formulation, however, cannot be let go from the social frame, so the writer picks the term "social criticism".

The term "social criticism" arises basically from ancient Aritotle's concept on literature that states literature as a reflection of reality. However, a more instant definition has been delivered by Yeats. Thus, the writer uses Yeats' opinion as a fundamental definition of the social criticism.
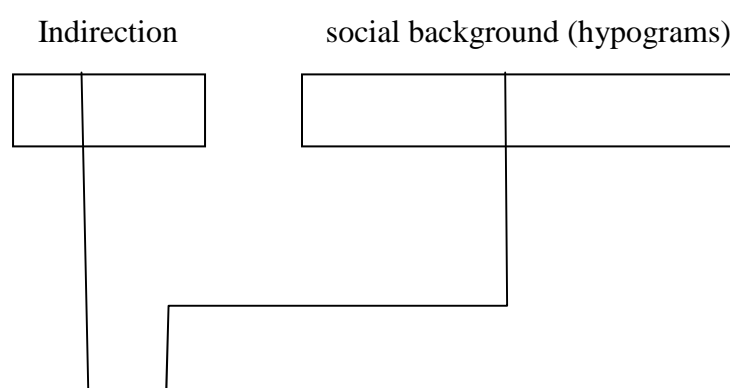
The choosing of Riffaterre's semiotics of poetry is mainly based on three arguments. The first is because this theory is focused on poetry analysis, so that the writer can efficiently apply the whole theory to analyze the poems. The second is because the writer thinks this theory is the most representative tool to uncover symbolic signs (both in the frame of linguistics and stylistics) that dominates the poems. The third argument is
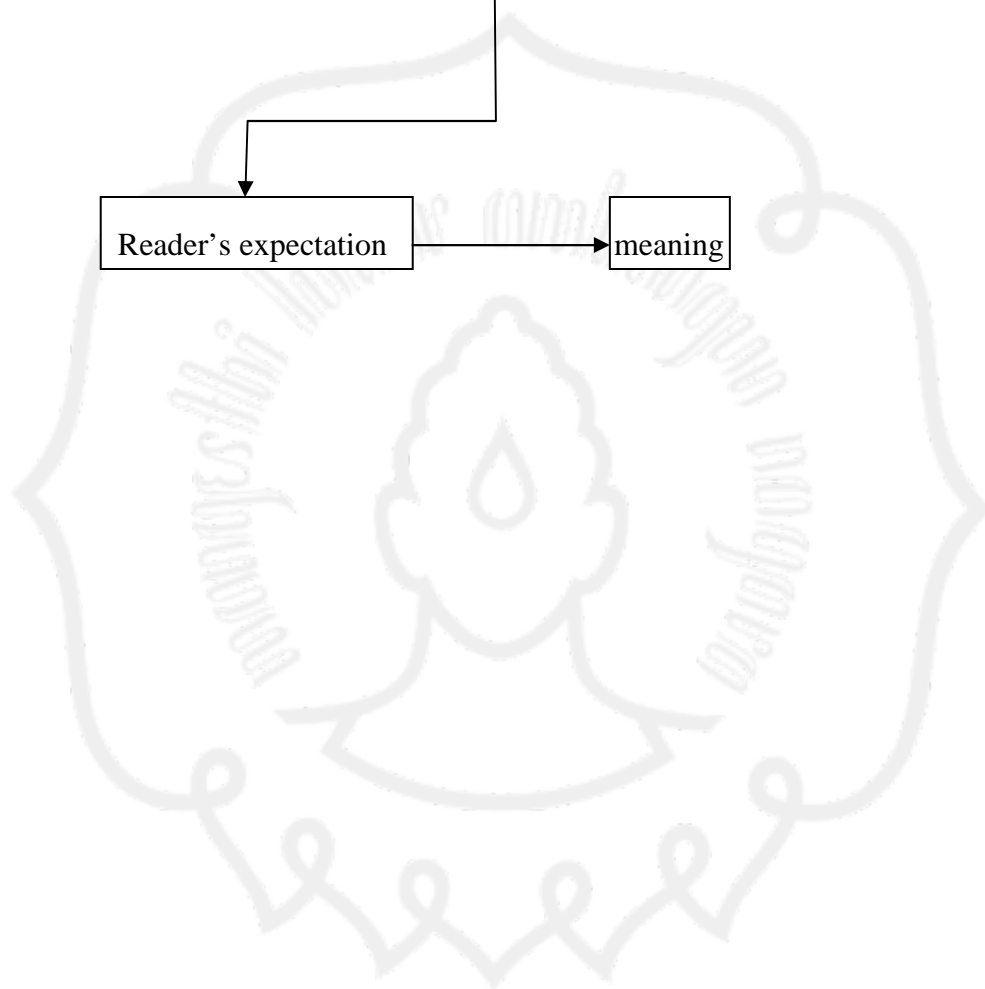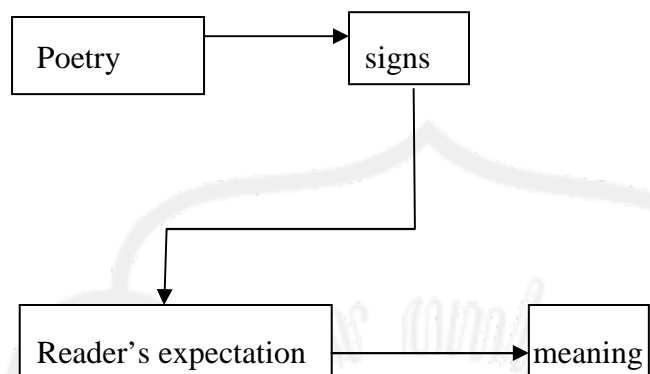
because this theory includes social backgrounds that become the background of the poetry as one of the important matter as its fundament on the process of analysis.

Riffaterre's theory is based on assumption that poetry is in the frame of indirection. It means that the meaning of the poem is not delivered explicitly by the poet. The second assumption is poetry has a significant character. the character is its unity.

The other main point that the writer gets is that it is a reader oriented theory. In this way, Riffaterre seems to include a part of receptions concept as a philosophical fundament into his theory. It is reflected in the first level reading (heuristic) that depends on the readers' perception as a brainstorming process before moving to the next level of reading. The truly semiotics concept arises in the second level which is mainly based on the intertextual fragment decoding. This intertextual decoding process includes the process of sociological and historical tracing. Here, the "social criticism" theme taken in this research takes role. In analyzing works of art, one of the most important element in Riffaterre's theory is hypogram. In a broader sense, hypogram may be defined as anything that supports the analyzing process. In other words, social background can be considered as hypogram.

Though in simple words it can be said that this theory does not make a boundary for readers in a specific value, it does not mean that the readers can freely discover the poetry without a framework. The concept of hypogrammatic derivation concept is actually made to make a broad sense that leads the readers make an interpretation based on the view that a poetry o a work of art is a product of various related elements.

Indirection   social background (hypograms)

Poetry	→	signs

Reader's expectation	→	meaning

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS

This chapter contains the analysis of Cummings poems. The poems are analyzed by using Riffaterre's semiotics of poetry. There are six poems of E.E. Cummings analyzed in this chapter. The poems are:

1. **mortals)**

2. **if you can't eat you got to**

3. **(will you teach a**

4. **love is more thicker than forget**

5. **as freedom is a breakfast food**

6. **anyone lived in a pretty how town**

All Cummings' poem in the Cummings anthology (50 poems) have no title, therefore the writer takes the first lines to be written as a substitute for the title.

This chapter is divided in two sub chapters. First, Cummings opinion and criticisms on the society, and the second, the way Cummings expresses his opinion on the society. This is based on the research questions in the first chapter of this thesis.

The flow of the analysis is based on the two stages of reading composed by Riffaterre. They are heuristic and hermeneutic reading.

A. Cummings' Social Criticisms

1. mortals)

   mortals)

   climbi
            ng i
            nto eachness begi
            n
    dizzily
             swingthings
   of speeds of
   trapeze gush somersaults
   open ing
             hes shes
    &meet&
            swoop
                  fully is are ex
                           quisite theys of re
   turn
        a
        n
        d
   fall which now drop who all dreamlike
   (im

The first thing to do in analyzing this poem is by making this poem easier to read. Thus,

it is done by making the poem readable by re-arranging the syntactical order of the poem.

Simply, the poem can be as follows.

(immortals) climbing into eachness *begin dizzily swing things of speeds of trapeze gush*
somersaults opening hes she*s & meet & swoop*
 fully is are exquisite theys *of return*
 and
fall which now drop who all dreamlike

This poem uses visual arrangement as one of the important elements in aesthetic value. In passing the stage of heuristic reading, the readers must pass the stage of decoding through visual signs in order to make it readable in the term of syntactical convention. Most of the Cummings' poems are dominated by ungrammaticalities. The ungrammaticalities are not in the form of mere creation of new words as an individual expression which can be understood only by Cummings, but in the form of the usage of experimentation on new order of syntax to create a new meaning. For example, the word "immortal" is separated into two parts, the first, mortal, and the last (in the last line), "im". In this term, the readers have not moved to the stage of interpretation yet.

Other unusual application of this distinctive style appears in the words *eachness,hes shes,*and *theys*. This compound words don not appear in formal linguistics system. However, the exact meaning can be predicted by seeing the function of suffix –*ness*, and morpheme –*s*. In *eachness*, the suffix functions as a shifter between parts of speech. Cummings is changing *each* which is an indefinite pronoun into noun. While in *hes* and *shes*, morpheme –*s* is functioned as a shifter from singular into plural. As a mere heuristic interpretation, readers may assume that this case happens because Cummings wants to make a specialization on gender marker, since probably, Cummings thinks that he cannot find this on the formal vocabulary. While in *theys*, Cummings tends to explain that this word functions as a possessive pronoun.

There is a significant sign in this poem that should be noticed. There are several words that refer to the same reference. The lines:"swingthings/of speeds of/trapeze gush somersaults/open ing/"

lead to the same referent. Readers' imagination is brought into an imagination of a repeated, rapid swinging movement. It can be seen from how Cummings picks the words such as "trapeze", and "somersaults". Thus, these lines would be the model.

Model explains the main topic being discussed in the poem. The main topic being discussed in the poem is "immortals". Thus, the matrix of this poem is "immortals". It can also be understood that "immortals" refer to the term, immortality. It is because these two words refer to the same idea.

The model leads readers' imagination into an imagination on how the character, or manner of the matrix. Here, the model leads the readers' to interpret how immortal is figured as something swings. What Cummings means here is that immortality, from time to time, is a static concept that has been understood or even wanted by society. What is meant by a "static concept' here is that there is no changing understanding of the definition of immortality. Cummings considers it as something that people always talk about. It may also be assumed that Cummings is bored of seeing people talking about immortality. For him it seems like something that never ends.

The term "immortals" used by Cummings in the poem is a cliché. It is something that everybody wants. However, Cummings wants to say something that is always neglected. People in general always put the term of immortality as something they dream, though deep inside their minds, people know that it is actually something impossible. In other words, Cummings shows how the frame of "immortality" concept is nothing more than a dream. It can be seen from the following lines: "hes shes/&meet&/swoop/fully is are ex/quisite theys of re/turn/a/n/d/fall which now drop who all dreamlike/.

The lines show how Cummings describes "immortals" as something that every male and female want. It is seen from how Cummings describes plural form of "he" and "she". He is trying to say that it is wanted by all men and women. They see immortality as something beautiful (exquisite). The word "swoop" figures how people are gaining immortality as their main goal in their life. However, Cummings describes in the last line that it is then nothing more than a "dreamlike".

Typography is another important part to discuss. Many of Cummings' poems use strange typographical arrangement. Indeed, he is a pioneer of experimental style in America in his time. This is influenced by his background as a painter. Cummings is a cubist painter. His paintings are mostly dominated by color and form distortion. This is what Cummings applies in his poem.

In the frame of meaning indirection, there is a significant difference between the typography of Cummings' poems and poems before Cummings' era. Poems before Cummings' era, such as sonnet, uses convention in making typography arrangement with no tendency of using indirection as the component to lead the readers into the core meaning of the poem. In other words, there are nothing behind the making of typography arrangement. On the other hand, Cummings uses typography arrangement to make the readers understand about his view upon freedom and individuality in arts expression, and his disagreement upon the convention of typography arrangement such as in sonnets.

Cummings' style in experimentalism is mainly based on freedom and individuality. He thinks that poetry is not about any tendencies but a self-appreciation and individuality.

> "So far as I am concerned, poetry and every other art was and is and forever be strictly and distinctly a question of individuality….*I*f poetry is your goal, you've got to forget all about punishments and all about rewards and all about self-style obligation and duties and etcetera ad infinitum and remember one thing only: that it's you –nobody else –who determine your destiny and decide your fate."(Cummings, 1940: preface)

There are two kinds of style that influence Cummings' poetic styles, Gertrude Stein's and Cubism. Stein influences Cummings style on his idealism. Stein is famous with her rebellious character upon the settled condition of the society. Gertrude Stein has her on war against the civilization, and her enemy was the tired old civilization of the nineteenth century (High, 1986: 130). While Cubism influenced Cummings on the way he treats typography as a media of form exploration. Cubists broke their paintings up into many different angles called "facets", and Cummings in the similar way loves to break traditional poems into unusual bits and pieces (High, 1986: 155).

In this poem, the most distinctive application of Cummings experimentation can be seen in the way he cuts each word in the end of the lines. It should be noticed that poetry is a product of written language. Though Cummings' background may lead us to the understanding that he may arrange typography as an artistic expression, it should also be noticed that his poems cannot be let go from reader-poet communication. In short, it can be said that Cummings' poems are not mere visual product, but also a product of language, and how Cummings use typographical arrangement should be seen on how it contributes the transfer of meaning from the poet to the readers.

Cummings' typographical arrangement in this poem is merely a combination of visual and tone effect. The typography of the poem affect the way the tone produced by reading. Such typography mainly affects the speed of the reading. Every cutting on the words causes a dull and low speed on the word reading. It contributes the process of the understanding to the model of the poem. The tone makes contribution on the imagination of the constancy of "Immortals". On the point of view of the writer, it can be assumed that Cummings tries to express his boredom. He may be bored about the society that sees immortality as a dream, not as reality. It can be clearly seen when the poem is read in the first level reading. When a reader reads the poem for the first time, there will be a distinctive sound appearing. There will be a difference of speeds between the process of reading uncut words, and the cut. Uncut words need slower speed than the uncut. On the contrary, there is another word written in an opposite way. The word "swingthings" is written with compounding two words. The words "swing" and "thing" have the same sound ending. For Cummings, it is a way of exploring beauty by making deviation upon the formal grammatical convention. However, in the term of imagination, it has the same purpose with word-cutting. It makes the image of the back and forth movement in the concept of "immortals" clearer.

In sum there is a main aspect being criticized by Cummings in this poem. Based on the description, it can be seen that Cummings is criticizing people's point of view. He is criticizing the way people see "immortals", which are nothing more than a dream, in an unrealistic way.

2. if you can't eat you got to

If you can't eat you got to

smoke and we aint got
nothing to smoke:come on kid

let's go to sleep
if you can't smoke you got to

Sing and we got
nothing to sing;come on kid
let's go to sleep

if you can't sing you got to
die and we aint got

Nothing to die,come on kid

let's go to sleep
if you can't die you got to

dream and we aint got
nothing to dream(come one kid

Let's go to sleep)

The poem is like a sequence of symbolisms. The sequence is moving from an act of consuming to the other acts as symbols of the social condition in the era the poem was written. There are verbs that become the symbols of economic condition dealt by Americans in the depression era. They are eat", "smoke", "sleep", "sing", "die", and "dream". Cummings packs these verbs as symbolism of consuming act that can be done as choices. Thus, "choices of consumption act" is the matrix of the poem.

The activity of sleeping entails understanding. This is the last thing you can do because it is the cheapest thing you do. A normal wealthy people can eat as an consumption act. If they cannot eat, they can smoke. If they cannot afford to buy smoke, then they ought to sing, then die, then dream, and sleep. The word sleep symbolizes an activity that everybody can do.

The character of this matrix is then modulated by a repetition of the same reference. Therefore, the model of the matrix is the sentence, "If you cannot do something, then choose the other most sensible action that can be done" .

The explicit form seen from the first stage level in this poem is how Cummings uses repetition. The sentence "come on kid, let's go to sleep" is repeated over and over again. Riffaterre (1978: 49) says that repetition is one way of making the simplest form of expansion process in the poetry. Expansion is a process of text production. Repetition is a sign. The description of sign here is that how repetition is usually used to make the shifting of emotion can be caused in reading the poem. It depends on the meaning of the words involved, it may symbolize heightened emotional movement, or it may work as the icon of motion, progress, etc (Riffaterre, 1978: 49).

In this poem, the repetition gives symbols of marker in a falling action of suspense. When the words shift from a type of consumption (from eating, smoking, to dream, etc.), Cummings puts the sentence as a final turning point. The other function of the repetition is to give a stress on the words, because it is the point that Cummings wants in the poetry. In other words, Cummings creates this repetition as a marker of the matrix he has developed.

The turning point that Cummings delivers in this repetition brings a certain emotional effect on the reader. It is an expression of despair. In this poem the most explicit social problem being discussed by Cummings is economical problem. The most important thing to remember is that in 1940s America was joining the world war. At that time, American people were in a bad economical condition. Cummings shows how the degree of consumption is declining from the most sensible consumption matter (food/eat)

and then to the last choice of a man can do when he hungry (sleep). The global social effect of the world war affected the economical condition in general. People were trapped in many problems in the term of consumption. This era, which was still related to the era that was known as depression years, is one of the worst conditions America ever faced. In this era, unemployment number gained a significant number. Grass-root people became the victim.

If you can't <u>eat</u> you got to

<u>smoke</u> and we aint got
nothing to smoke:come on kid

let's go to sleep
if you can't <u>smoke</u> you got to

<u>Sing</u> and we got

nothing to sing;come on kid
let's go to sleep

if you can't sing you got to
<u>die</u> and we aint got

Nothing to die,come on kid

let's go to sleep
if you can't die you got to

<u>dream</u> and we aint got
nothing to dream(come one kid

Let's go to sleep)

While the word "sleep" brings an effect on turning point, the words underlined starts a special entailment of imaginary sequence which Riffaterre calls as expansion. On one hand, the words become the bridge for reader's imagination to climax. On the other hand, the words become a representation of the readers' imagination from the matrix

given. The word "eat" brings the imagination of a normal consuming activity which becomes the normal parameter of social wealth. Next, the word "smoke" is still in the level of normal social condition, but the standard of wealth is declining. When it moves to the word "sing", the expansion comes to the rising part. The word "sing" is no more a type of consuming activity. It means that the social-economic condition is getting worse. It figures, indirectly, the condition where people have no more goods to consume. As a climax of this condition, Cummings uses the word "die". It means that no more hope lasts. However, it is not the final stage, since it reflects how a man can do physical activity. The expansion is then moved to the word "dream". This is, of course, the final stage. When people are in the worst condition, and they cannot do anything but to dream, no more physical activity is possible to do.

The word "kid" is another sign. The choosing of a "kid" as a subject has a deep meaning. A figure of "kid" entails several imaginations. First, it is a representation of an innocent image. Children should not be involved in the complexity of social condition. Second, Cummings wants to bring a peaceful atmosphere effect upon the readers' mind, through this representation. It is just like a figure of a father when he calls his child to go to sleep.

This poem is a transparent social picture. The historical background behind the making of this poem can lead the readers straight into an imagination of national economic depression. It is a real picture of the condition of people at that time. It is the most explicit phenomenon Cummings sees on people's condition. However, Cummings' reason to choose the word "kid" is not a mere atmosphere building element. It functions also an interpretant in this poem. It plays an important part to lead the readers on the truly

"meaning" in this poem. the matrix can be understood by the reader when the readers' understand what the meaning of "kid" figure is.

In short, the first thing being expressed by Cummings is his own despair dealing with the economic condition. However, this is not a mere direct criticism. This is an indirect criticism. What makes it indirect is that there are no certain people being frontally criticized. By making this poem, Cummings tries to make his despair heard. There are no certain people Cummings is complaining, but he just wants to say that he and people at that time is dealing with a bad condition, and that this condition needs to be changed.

There is another implicit effect that can be seen from this poem. If it is seen from the point of view of the people in the era when this poem was written, this poem can also be an encouragement. Cummings tells people to make their own effort to survive. Implicitly, Cummings asks a satirical question to the government about what will be done to solve this problem.

3. love is more thicker than forget

love is more thicker than forget
more thinner than recall
more seldom than a wave is wet
more frequent than to fail

it is most mad and moonly
and less it shall unbe
than all the sea which only
is deeper than the sea

love is less always than to win
less never than alive
less bigger than the last begin
less littler than forgive

it is most sane and sunly
and more it cannot die
than all the sky which only
is higher than the sky

The first stanza shows the description of love, in the term of analogy. In the first line Cummings shows how Cummings describes love as something that cannot be separated from human life. People understand that "to forget" is one character that becomes one of the natural characters that every human has. The point is that Cummings tries to show how love cannot be separated from human life. However, it comes not in a regular way (more seldom than a wave is wet), and more often comes than how a human faces failure.

In the next stanza, the indication of criticism can be more clearly seen. Cummings said how love is the maddest thing. However, the interesting part is in the next expression. Cummings figures love as something "moonly". This word cannot be found in dictionary. However, the meaning can be derived from the word "moonless". Cummings chooses the word "moonly" as the antonym of "moonless". Therefore, it can be assumed that the meaning of "moonly" in this poem refers to "transparent". The lines *and less it shall unbe/ than all the sea which only/ is deeper than the sea/* show a more frontal criticism. The clause *all the sea which only/ is deeper than the sea/* contains a frontal satire on people's tradition in defining "love". Usually, it figures how the depth of love is something unmeasured. Cummings, in reverse, rejects this statement by using the clause "*and less it shall unbe*" (and less it shall not be). This clause shows a negation. This negation, then, is supported by the "transparent" image given in the previous stanza.

The next two stanzas are like repetitive explanation to the first two stanzas. Here, the difference is that the last two stanzas give the image of reversal description to the first two stanzas. The important thing to be noticed is how the words in bold in the poem.

love is **more** thicker than forget
more thinner than recall
more seldom than a wave is wet
more frequent than to fail

it is most **mad** and **moonly**
and less it shall unbe
than all the sea which only
is deeper than the sea

love is **less** always than to win
l**ess** never than alive
less bigger than the last begin
l**ess** littler than forgive

it is most **sane** and **sunly**
and more it cannot die
than all the sky which only
is higher than the sky

The bold words show how Cummings uses repetition like a "pun". There are two kinds of "punning" appear in the poem. First, the first two stanzas are dominated by the word "more", and the last two stanzas are dominated by the word "last". Second, the phrases "**than all the sky which only/is higher than the sky"** and "/**than all the sea which only/is deeper than the sea/"** are two hyperbolic phrases which refer to the same idea. The idea is that "love is something unmeasured". It is an expression of Cummings' sentimental feeling. In this poem, Cummings describes his own definition of "love". Love is always an interesting subject to talk about. Cummings describes love in a long, and detail explanation. Therefore, the matrix of this poem is love. The models are the definitions, and characteristics of love.

Love can be defined in several kinds. However, there is no specific sign that refers to the certain definition of love in this poem. Cummings prefers to talk about love in a broader sense. He talks about love in the sense of natural flow of human sentimental expression. I resume, Cummings talks about love I two basic imagination, sentimentality and hopes.

However, there is a significant characteristic of "love" that should be paid attention. It is how Cummings talks about love in his realistic and naughty expression. He does not only talk about "love" in a mere sentimental atmosphere, but also in the sense that "love" is a word that entails "plausibility". There are two signs refer to this statement, first, the way the immeasurability of love that is reflected from the use of "more" and "less", and, two, the lines, */ more frequent than to fail/ love is less always than to win/ less never than alive.*

The usage of "more" and "less" entails an image of uncertainty. The uncertainty is in anyway under the concept of reality. In romantic era, love is always brought into the image of hyperbolic beauty. In this poem, the way Cummings speaks that love sometimes can be more "frequent than to fail", "less never than alive", and "less always than to win" is an expression of disagreement on the way common people speak about "love".

The following poem shows how "love" is perceived in another way by the poem.

> I think have loved you presently,
> And given in earnest words I flung in jest;
> And lifted honest eyes for you to see,
> And caught your hand against my cheek and breast;
> And all my pretty follies flung aside
> That won you to me, and beneath your gaze,
> Naked of reticence and shorn of pride,
> Spread like a chart my little wicked ways.
> I, that had been to you, had you remained,
> But one more waking from a recurrent dream,

> Cherish no less the certain stakes I gained,
> And walk your memory's halls, austere, supreme,
> A ghost in marble of a girl you knew
> Who would have loved you in a day or two.
>
> <div align="right">(Edna St. Vincent Millay)</div>

The poem is made before the era of experimentalism. There is a significant difference in the way to perceive "love" between Cummings and Millay. Millay talks about love that she cannot reach. She does not define in love in explicit way. She tends to play with sequence of images by using "high" language. Poems and other literature products from romanticism to realism era usually use such indirect expression. Poets at that time do not talk about love by giving explicit explanation, but by leading readers' imagination into the general concept of "beauty".

In this poem, Millay reflects her sentimental feeling towards the object she loves by using hyperbolic sense so that the readers are brought into a sentimental atmosphere. The lines: I think have loved you presently,/And given in earnest words I flung in jest;/And lifted honest eyes for you to see,/And caught your hand against my cheek and breast;/And all my pretty follies flung aside/That won you to me, and beneath your gaze,// shows how Millay still uses conventional encomium on seeing "love". On the contrary, Cummings leads the readers into such atmosphere by using hyperboles as a comparative element to the concept of reality. The lines: *//love is less always than to win/less never than alive/less bigger than the last begin/less littler than forgive//* reflect a pessimism. In the lines, Cummings expresses his doubt that love is something that everybody should praise. On the contrary, the lines: */and more it cannot die/than all the sky which only/is higher than the sky//* shows the opposite expression. These two opposite expression shows how Cummings admit those two opposite concept. He does not agree

that love is a beautiful thing that anybody can get (less always than to win). Failure is also a consequence a person should realize. On the other hand, Cummings does not deny that "love" is eternal. The combination of opposite concepts used by Cummings in those line refer to a central argument, the message from Cummings that people should still see love in a logical way.

The other significant thing should be noticed is how Cummings makes indirection by using creating meaning as a significant characteristic in his poems. On the contrary, Millay's poem is dominated by clichés. From this difference it can be seen that there is a big contradiction between the two poets in the way they poeticity. Cummings tends make new terms of language (often, he uses ungrammatical words and syntax) to gain poeticity, while Millay tends to use words that has appeared in the society to make poetic effect.

In sum, the general assumption Cummings wants to deliver in this poem is not his rejection upon love, but the way people sees "love". He stresses on delivering message to the people that love should not be praised in such encomium, as what romanticists and the previous people do.

4. (will you teach a

```
 (will you teach a
wretch to live
straighter than a needle)

ask
     her
         ask
             when
                   (ask and
                   ask
                   and ask
again and) ask a
brittle little
```

person fiddling
in
the
rain

(did you kiss
a girl with nipples
like pink thimbles)

ask
    him
        ask
           who
               (ask and
               ask
               and ask
ago and)ask a
simple
crazy
thing
singing
in the snow

At a glance, the poem is in the form of monologue. The poet asks a long question. The briefer form of the poetry can be seen in the following term.

Dialogue 1: " did you teach a wretch to live straighter than a needle?"...."ask her!… ask! When did you ask the question…..and ask her again,……….ask the brittle little person fiddling in the rain."

Dialogue 2: "Did you kiss a girl with nipples like pink thimbles?"… "ask her!.......ask, who kissed girls with nipples with nipples like pink thimbles to the brittle little person fiddling in the snow.

This poem is the most explicit example of Cummings' experimental style and radicalism. In a broad sense, the poem is mainly built of rhetoric question. Cummings asks questions which are impossible to answer. It is reflected on how Cummings repeats the word "ask" in the poem frequently. This, then, becomes the matrix of the poem.

The model of the matrix in this poem can be discovered from the repetition. The way Cummings repeats the question shows how "ask" refers to unanswered question. It explains the characteristic of the matrix. The next sign that explains the model is the usage of the words "again" and "ago". These words explicitly explain how "ask" has an unlimited frequency to do.

There are several signs that make this poem distinctive. This poem is begun with an explicit sign of rhetoric question. What makes this stanza refer to rhetoric question is the application of polar opposition between the figure of "wretch" and "straight needle". The figure of wretch entails a perception of the lowest class in the society. "Wretch" is a profession which needs no intellectuality. In the preceding era, Shakespeare uses this word in his play as a cursing expression:

Tybalt :"Thou <u>wretch</u> boy! that didst consort him here, shalt with him, hence!"

(Romeo and Juliet)

In a similar way, Edmond Rostand, a famous French writer shows the indication of the same usage of this word:

Cyrano : <u>Wretch</u>!.... Have I not forbid you this three weeks..?

(Cyrano de Bergerac)

It means that "wretch" is picked because Cummings wants to make a simply understood figuration as the readers read this poem even in the basic level of interpretation. The second reason is that this word may have a deeper poetic effect if it is compared to the other words that refer to the same meaning, such as "whore" or "prostitute".

As a comparison, Cummings puts "needle" as the opposite point that should be noticed as polar opposition. Needle does not have a poetic effect if it is used on its own. Therefore Cummings put an explaining description. Thus, the interpretant that works in the readers' mind can be more effective. The description of "needle" (which is described as something straight) also explains the image of "wretch". Riffaterre defines such hypogram as "descriptive system".

This hypogram is responsible for the starting point of idea in this poem. it is also the starting point of the building of interpretant in the poem. In the next stanzas, the description of rhetoric question is continued.

again and) ask a
brittle little
person fiddling
in
the
rain

In this stanza, the explanation of rhetoric question is clearer. The main point of this stanza is Cummings' explanation about something that should not be noticed. "brittle little person fiddling in the rain" represents the image of something that is not important. This imaginary effect is then continued in the other stanza.

ago and)ask a
simple
crazy
thing
singing
in the snow

In those two stanzas, Cummings explains a simple point that becomes the kernel image. It is the image of something unimportant. The unimportance brings another

special emotional effect. It is a reflection of Cummings' despair on the moral condition in the society.

The polar opposition (such as the opposition between wretch and the interpretant of image derived from "straight needle") in the poem shows how Cummings is pessimistic upon moral revision in the society.

Typography is another important part in this poem. The way Cummings visualizes the shifting of emotion in the following lines shows how typography is an important sign that leads the reader into the message inside the poem.

```
(will you teach a
wretch to live
straighter than a needle)

ask
     her
         ask
             when
                 (ask and
                 ask
                 and ask
again and) ask a
brittle little
person fiddling
in
the
rain

(did you kiss
a girl with nipples
like pink thimbles)

ask
    him
        ask
            who
                (ask and
                ask
                and ask
ago and)ask a
```

simple
crazy
thing
singing
in the snow

The words in the bracket, such as "will you teach a wretch to live straighter than a needle" represent the suspense in the poem. It contains the reflection of society's view. Therefore Cummings separates them into the bracket in order to show that it is something that does not come from him, and he wants to change it.

The word "ask" is repeated, and arranged in the strange typography because Cummings wants to gain certain emotional feeling when the readers pay attention on the form. It is put in the simple form of diagonal line from left to right because Cummings wants to stress the message that the society should be critical.

Cummings shows how the pessimism actually comes from the moral value standard of the society. The society thinks that something seem strict (such as the stereotype of wretch as the lowest moral value parameter) cannot be changed. But people never ask the society, or even to themselves how the phenomena could happen. This is the social criticism in this poem.

5. as freedom is a breakfast food

 as freedom is a breakfastfood
or truth can live with right or wrong
or molehills are from mountains made
—long enough and just so long
will being pay the rent of seem
and genius please the talentgang
and water most encourage flame

as hattracks into peachtrees grow

or hopes dance best on bald men's hair
and every finger is a toe
and any courage is a fear
—long enough and just so long
will the impure think all things pure
and hornets will be children stung

or as the seeing is the blind
and robins never welcome spring
nor flatfolk prove their world is round
nor dingsters die at break of dong
and common's rare and millstones float
—long enough and just so long
tomorrow will not be too late

worms are the words but joy's the voice
down shall go which and up come who
breast will be breast thighs will be thighs
deeds cannot dream what dreams can do
—time is a tree(this life one leaf)
but love is the sky and I am for you
just so long and long enough

The most significant sign that appears in this poem is how Cummings uses repetition to expand the main idea in this poem. The first, second, and third stanza is dominated by the same model of expansion. These lines are made of imaginary concept of binary oppositional images. These images refer to the same idea. The idea is an explanation of imaginary possibilities that is made by Cummings to lead the readers' mind into his concept of possibilities. Readers' mind is already set to understand that "molehills are not made of mountains", or "hornets will not wail by children stung". By using this, Cummings explains the kernel idea that he explains in the lines "—long enough and just so long". This line shows an image of time range. Therefore, the matrix of this poem is "long". The change of contradictory things from impossible to possible

(though it is just an imaginary concept) shows the characteristic of unlimited range of time that becomes the model of the matrix.

The main theme spoken in this poem is the "love". It lies in the last lines of the poem that figusres how Cummings can love someone "long enough an just so long". In brief, this poem is an expression of love that Cummings feels. He feels that he loves someone deeply, that he can give himself totally without being bound by the course of time.

However, there is another significant thing appears in this poem. It is how Cummings uses strange clichés and descriptive system that are not usually used in love poems. Several words in this poem refer to social nuances. It is strange that Cummings uses the expression, such as "freedom is a breakfastfood". "Freedom" produces a different taste in this poem when it is combined with "breakfastfood". This sentence is the main starting point to start the of readers' imagination flow.

as freedom is a breakfastfood
or truth can live with right or wrong
or molehills are from mountains made

and water most encourage flame

and every finger is a toe
and any courage is a fear
—long enough and just so long
will the impure think all things pure
and hornets will be children stung

or as the seeing is the blind
and robins never welcome spring
nor flatfolk prove their world is round

The quotation shows that the expression "as freedom is a breakfastfood" is followed by a sequence of expressions that has the same kernel message. The messages are made of a pair of words that have been known in the society such as "truth an right is a unity". However Cummings put this in reverse (truth can live with right or wrong).

Thus, the kernel matrix inside "freedom is a breakfastfood" cannot be separated from the other lines. "freedom" is an expression of a condition that everybody can get easily (is a breakfastfood). Here the social criticism appears. It sounds like an irony. Cummings says that freedom, which is a familiar word to the people of America, is still impossible to do (just like to make truth can live with right or wrong).

However, the role of this first line is not as a mere social protest. It reflects a condition in the era this poem was made. It reflects an unfulfilled dream. "Freedom" entails the definition of a dream. It reflects a representation of every body's dream in the era of depression.

The use of such expression (freedom as a breakfastfood) in the first line may make effect to *dual sign* in the readers' mind when they pass the stage of lexematic interpretant. When the readers start the poem by reading the first line for the very first time, they may suspect that this poem is a political or religious poem. It makes the readers think that Cummings says his desire on freedom. However, the brainstorm moves to a more blurry image when the readers read the next stanzas. The next stanzas explain about the reality of "impossibilities".

The second stanza expresses illogical things. The lines consist of "conditional forms" that reflects "impossibilities" clearer. The difference is that this stanzas contains more clichés sets, such as "bald men's hair", "every finger is a toe", and "children

stung". The third stanza has the same kind of expansion. Cummings uses a repetitive idea of dual- reverse image to empower the image of the clichés.

The fourth stanza is the final explanation of the puzzle. Here Cummings explains how the images delivered in the previous stanzas cannot be let go from reality.

> worms are the words but joy's the voice
> down shall go which and up come who
> breast will be breast thighs will be thighs
> deeds cannot dream what dreams can do

The lines "breast will be breast thighs will be thighs/ deeds cannot dream what dreams can do" show Cummings' denial upon the dreams he delivers in the previous stanzas. The next lines show the main idea of "love" in Cummings' imagination. He says that he cannot deny that his life may end. This can be seen from the way he chooses "leaf" as an imaginary representation of his life. "Leaf" entails an image of something that is not everlasting.

> —time is a tree(this life one leaf)
> but love is the sky and I am for you
> just so long and long enough

The other significant phenomenon is the use of metaphor that is used by Cummings to describe the time range. The expression "just so long and long enough" refers to a simple understanding of "eternity". Cummings uses such expression to show his boredom on "over-romantic" expression in love theme. He shows that speaking about love is not a mere problem of romanticism, but honesty. He shows that "eternity" can be shown in another kind of expression.

The following lines show the difference between Cummings' expression and the older form of love poetry.

Cherish no less the certain stakes I gained,
And walk your memory's halls, austere, supreme,
A ghost in marble of a girl you knew
Who would have loved you in a day or two

(Edna St. Vincent Millay)

Millay, in her love poem tends to use romanticized words to support "love" theme in her poem. Thus, there is a contradiction between clichés used by Cummings and Millay.

In conclusion, the social criticism of this poem does not lay on the theme picked by Cummings, but on the way Cummings delivers his romantic expression without letting go the reality of life.

6. anyone lived in a pretty how town

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating any bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did.

Women and men(both little and small)
cared for anyone not at all
they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
sun moon stars rain

children guessed(but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
that noone loved him more by more

when by now and tree by leaf
she laughed his joy she cried his grief
bird by snow and stir by still
anyone's any was all to her

someones married their everyones
laughed their cryings and did their dance
(sleep wake hope and then)they
said their nevers they slept their dream

stars moon sun rain
(and only the now can begin to explain
how children are apt to forget to remember
with up so floating so many bells down)

one day anyone died i guess
(and noone stooped to kiss his face)
busy folk buried them side by side
little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep
and more by more they dream their sleep
noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes.

Women and men(both dong and ding)
summer autumn winter spring
reaped their sowing and went their came
sun moon stars rain

At a glance, this poem seems to reflect a social phenomenon. It describes a general condition of human life with its complexities. It can be seen from the way Cummings describes the flow of human life from the use "kid" and "died" which are understood as a normal sequence of human life. However, there are significant signs that should be noticed. First, there are several repetitions of seasonal sequence (spring summer autumn winter, and etc.) and several expressions like "with up so floating so many bells down".

The first stanza explains Cummings opinion on the society. The first line explains how Cummings sees the society in brief. He explains that everybody lives in a place where he cannot describe. It is shown on the use of "pretty how". The second line is made as a supporting explanation of the nuance of the first line. "Bell" is an object which is used by Cummings to lead readers' interpretant to the "meaning" it conveys. "Bell" is a metaphor of something continuous and quiet.

The next line (spring summer autumn winter) entails an image of human life sequence (spring: childhood, summer: youth, autumn: adulthood, winter: death). Along with this sequence, human tends to regret their failure (he sang his didn't) and to enjoy their success (he danced his did).

The next stanza explains about individuality. He figures that man and woman are the part of human general life. They are just a part of human life (both little and small). The matrix of this stanza is the image of individuality of each human that does not care of everyone else's life (cared for anyone not at all), but they only cared when others have the similarity (they sowed their isn't they reaped their same). "Sun moon stars rain" is a representation of individual atmosphere. It entails an understanding of a lonely life. Sun, moon, stars, and rain are separated each other. They nearly do not affect each other.

Autumn winter spring summer)

The line explains the time setting. In the previous stanza, such expression shows the sequence in human life. However, in this stanza this expression shows the opposition. It shows teenage era, since the word is ended by "summer" which symbolizes youth era.

The opposite of this stanza appears at the seventh stanza.

one day anyone died i guess
(and noone stooped to kiss his face)
busy folk buried them side by side
little by little and was by was

This stanza shows the ending sequence of human life. here, Cummings explains how "being dead" is the time when a man leaves anything he has.

The repetition takes an important part in creating the mood of this poem. It creates a narrative effect of the poem. It creates a low emotion effect that leads the readers' interpretation into "timelessness", which becomes the model of the poem.

The conversion is mainly developed by this repetition. This model is what Riffaterre mentions as combination of conversion and expansion. This is because the conversion is not related to an external hypogram. Cummings does not play much with hypogrammatic derivation to build interpretation in this poem. He prefers to play with repetition and dual opposition. The repetition is made to make a mood in the readers' mind, while dual opposition is mainly made to clarify the meaning of each object, so that the interpretant in the readers' mind does not run too wild.

There is an important word that plays important roles in the poem. The word is "noone". This word comes from the words "no" and "one".

This word appears three times in the poem. It appears in the third, seventh, and eighth stanza. The position of this word in each stanza does not affect the literal meaning. There are no changes in meaning from" no one" to the other meaning. However, it plays important role in delivering the message in the poem.

children guessed(but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
that noone loved him more by more

The third stanza shows an image of life where human grows up. In this stanza, "noone" has two important roles. First, it attracts readers' attention. In this stanza, readers' mind has to stop to think about the meaning behind this poem for a moment. It is because this stanza brings an important message. It figures how a man enjoys his

childhood and then being set up in a contradictory condition "as up they grew". Second, it leads the readers' mind in the textual interpretant. In the lexematic interpretant process, readers' mind is set to translate this words into formal words that are possible. The words are "noon" and "none". These words may not be clichés, but they bring a special image. "Noon" brings the image of "loneliness". This word brings an image when the sun is right on the highest level. "None" brings the image of emptiness. Thus, in this stanza, "noone" entails the image of life sequence (from childhood to the time when a man feels loneliness in his old time.

> one day anyone died i guess
> (and noone stooped to kiss his face)
> busy folk buried them side by side
> little by little and was by was

This stanza simply speaks about a funeral. In this stanza, Cummings speaks how anybody may die and how every sequence of human life will be buried "little by little". In this stanza, "noone" appears as a bridge between the image that is brought in the third stanza and this stanza. The repetition is made to make a line in the readers' interpretant. The line connects this line and the other line that contains the word "noone". If Cummings puts "no one", the readers will not put a special attention.

In the eighth stanza, "noone" entails a more complex image. In this stanza, "noone" is not only used as a merely as a subject of sentence, but also as an important element to arouse readers' curiosity. Cummings does not explicitly mention a concrete subject. However, it only gives a series of "punning". It shows an image of unlimited time range. It figures how human life flows from time to time and rotates repeatedly.

> all by all and deep by deep
> and more by more they dream their sleep

noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes.

In this stanza, "noone" is put next to "anyone". The thing should be noticed from this arrangement is that these words are oppositional each other.

Thus, though "noone" is not the matrix of the poem, it plays important roles in the poem. First, it attracts the readers' focus on the important lines where Cummings puts the important messages. Second, it stimulate readers' imagination to flow wilder, so that the process of interpretants, both lexematic and textual, can flow farther.

The social criticism is not explicitly shown in the poem. It is because the poem is mainly dominated by descriptions. However, several direct opinions on the society appear in several parts of the poem. The expression shows Cummings' opinion upon common people's characteristics:

Women and men(both little and small)
cared for anyone not at all
they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
sun moon stars rain

children guessed(but only a few
and down they forgot as up they grew
autumn winter spring summer)
that noone loved him more by more

when by now and tree by leaf
she laughed his joy she cried his grief
bird by snow and stir by still
anyone's any was all to her

someones married their everyones
laughed their cryings and did their dance
(sleep wake hope and then)they
said their nevers they slept their dream

stars moon sun rain
(and only the now can begin to explain

how children are apt to forget to remember
with up so floating so many bells down)

one day anyone died i guess
(and noone stooped to kiss his face)
busy folk buried them side by side
little by little and was by was

all by all and deep by deep
and more by more they dream their sleep
noone and anyone earth by april
wish by spirit and if by yes.

Women and men(both dong and ding)
summer autumn winter spring
reaped their sowing and went their came
sun moon stars rain

The expressions such as they "sowed their isn't they reaped their same", "she laughed his joy she cried his grief", "laughed their cryings and did their dance", and "reaped their sowing and went their came" show the characteristics of human individualism. In sum, the social criticism that appears in the poem is about Cummings' view on the society.

B. The Way Cummings Delivers His Criticism

In this sub chapter, the way Cummings criticizes society through his poems is again analyzed in the frame of Riffaterre's semiotics of poetry. However, the difference is that the first sub chapter applies the theory directly to find the social criticisms inside the poems, while this sub chapter explains how the social criticisms are put inside the poems in the point of view of the poet. The poems have a distinctive character. The dictions and physical form of the poems are strange if they are compared to the poems

before 20th century. His style is a reflection of the way he thinks on the society. It is a reflection of his point of view upon freedom.

The first stage in Riffaterre's semiotics of poetry is how the poet delivers the message (meaning) in the poetry in the very first time the reader read the poem. This is what commonly known as "poem's significance". It appears in the heuristic reading level.

In creating significance, Cummings uses "creating meaning" most. It can be seen from the way he creates the poem by using the term that anyone may not understand. There is no exact explanation for the terms that he creates. For example, the words that is compound together in a unity like "noone", "breakfastfood", and "molehills" do not have an exact meaning, since they not written in the formal grammar. Readers will understand that the word "breakfastfood" has the same meaning with "breakfast food". However, a question remains; "What is the exact message of this writing style?".

There is an important clue that should not be forgotten. Cumming is an individualist, especially in literature and arts. He does not make a special parameter on aesthetic value. His definition of aesthetic in poem is what he and the readers like.

This is how he protests the aesthetic point of view of romantic era. He implicitly says that the beauty of a poem is something measured. Something meaningless may be more attractive that something that is considered to have a deep meaning.

After the readers pass the first (heuristic) level of reading, readers interpretation will automatically follow to the hermeneutic level where they are involved. "Sign production", "Text Production", and "Interpretant" are three different concepts that cannot be let go each other in hermeneutic level. Sign is created by the poet as the fundamental factor to lead reader's interpretation. Sign is hidden inside text, while

interpretant is the imaginary process where the result of heuristic reading combines with hypogram. However the process of exploring the core meaning in the poem is dependent on poet's style.

The most significant example of this case is Cummings' view on the aesthetic level of poeticity. Poems in the era before Cummings end to use specific conventions. They are typography, rhyme scheme, diction, and tone. The example of this case is Shakespearean or Petrarchan sonnets. Sonnets have a special convention of rhyme scheme that is made to make poetic effects. This kind of convention is created to support a special reading tone.

Shakespeare's iambic pentameter is an example. Shakespeare' iambic pentameter is made based on human's heartbeat pattern. Cummings, in a different way, creates a special pattern to make euphonic effects on his poem. However, Cummings creates this pattern based on his own.

```
ask
        him
            ask
                who
                    (ask and
                    ask
                    and ask
ago and)ask a
simple
crazy
thing
singing
in the snow
```

The example shows the tone created by Cummings is a combination between typography arrangement and repetition. For Cummings, it is a way to create an artistic value. The difference from Shakespearean poems is on the process of heuristic reading process. In

Cummings, the tone appears along the reading process in the very first time the readers read the poem. In Shakespeare, the tone does not appear in the first time the readers read the poem, but the readers read the rule of reading first, and then they can get the artistic value from the tone.

> Romeo: *"What light shines through yonder window breaks?"….*
>
> *"It is Juliet, and I am the sun…"*

In the quotation above shows how the text does not indicate a special reading pattern, but the readers can only read and know the pattern after they know Shakespeare's pattern on iambic pentameter.

In Riffaterre's semiotics of poetry, the difference between the two poems above is that they affect the readers on the interpretant process. Cummings' poeticity can be recognized in the level of lexematic interpretant. While in Shakespeare, the readers know the poeticity after the textual interpretant process has happened. The readers can only recognize the poeticity after they know the hypograms that supports the readers' knowledge.

Thus, there is a significant difference between Cummings' style and poets before his era in the way they perceive readers ability in reading poetry. Cummings sees poetry as something universal. He perceives that the readers do not have to master special ability to enjoy his poems, while Shakespeare creates his poems only for the people who know how to read his poems.

Cummings expresses his social criticisms in the level of text production.

```
ask
      him
            ask
                  who
                        (ask and
                        ask
                        and ask
ago and)ask a
simple
crazy
thing
singing
in the snow
```

From the example, it can be seen how Cummings uses repetition as the main way to
control the readers' emotion. However, repetition is not the main focus. Its focus is on the
way he combines repetition and typography. When the repetition leads readers' emotion
flow, the typography supports the flow by giving visual illustration.

The other sign of social criticism is Cummings' experimental style. Cummings'
style is an explicit form of criticism. Cummings always uses words and writing style that
never appears in the formal grammar.

as freedom is a breakfastfood
or truth can live with right or wrong
or molehills are from mountains made
—long enough and just so long
will being pay the rent of seem
and genius please the talentgang
and water most encourage flame

as hattracks into peachtrees grow
or hopes dance best on bald men's hair
and every finger is a toe
and any courage is a fear
—long enough and just so long
will the impure think all things pure
and hornets will be children stung

There are several types of deviation in Cummings' poems. First, Cummings uses spacing
arrangement that is out of formal grammar convention, such as "breakfastfood",

"talentgang", "hattracks", and "peachtrees". These deviations do not affect to the new meanings creation.

> it is most mad and moonly
> and less it shall unbe
> than all the sea which only
> is deeper than the sea

Second, there are words that is made as simplifications, or new words from that create special meanings. They are "moonly", "unbe", "hes shes", and "theys". These words have different meaning from their original meaning. "Moonly" does not appear in the formal grammatical writing. However, readers understand that it is an adjective though it does not appear in the formal dictionary. The word "unbe" becomes another form of "not be". It is Cummings' another way to express his disagreement on the formal grammar. "Hes shes" and "theys", are the other example of Cummings' distinctive style. He makes these nouns into plural through the words.

In conclusion, the way Cummings delivers his social criticisms is divided into three major ways. First, he uses "creating meaning" as the basic way to attract the readers in the first level of understanding. Second, Cummings stimulates readers' interpretation. It cannot be neglected that Cummings was also a cubist. The typography patterns in Cummings' poems (that is also the important element in delivering social criticisms) is influenced by the principles of form combination in Cubism Third, Cummings delivers his criticisms through making a contrast between clichés or any characteristics of the conventional poems with his view upon reality.

However, the most important thing is that Cummings' way to deliver social criticisms is mainly based on two main reasons. First, his criticism is an expression of his

disagreement on the conventional pattern of poem. Second, it is a reflection of his view that poem is something personal.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATION

A. CONCLUSION

This chapter shows the conclusion of the analysis of the poems shown in the third chapter. The search for social criticism in Cummings' poems in this thesis is mainly based on two main ideas which become the research questions. They are the social criticisms appear in E.E Cummings poems and the way Cummings delivers his social criticisms.

There are six poems being analyzed in this thesis. The poems are *mortals), if you can't eat you got to, anyone lived in a pretty how town*, *love is more thicker than forget*, *as freedom is a breakfast food*, and *(will you teach a*. The poems are taken from *50 Poems*, an anthology of E.E Cummings.

The analysis produces results that there are five social criticisms in E.E. Cummings' poems.

1. Cummings shows his disagreement on the way people see every aspects in life in an unrealistic way.

2. In the second poem, Cummings criticizes the way the society survives from the economic depression in that era. Cummings tells the people to survive by standing on their own feet.

3. Love cannot be let go from reality.

4. Cummings criticizes people's skepticism in seeing the social condition in the depression era. He asks people why do they not find the answer to escape from this rhetorical question. They only flow to the direction where the reality takes them. Cummings tells the society not to give up to the condition.

5. Cummings delivers his opinion how people become individualists along their life sequence.

In the second chapter of analysis, it is known that Cummings delivers his social criticisms in three ways:

1. The most dominating element in this poem is Cummings' tendency to use 'creating meaning' in most of the lines in his poems. It can be seen on how he uses many syntactic elements that cannot be understood by readers in general. He uses "creating meaning" as the basic way to attract the readers in the first level of understanding.

2. Cummings stimulates readers' interpretation. It cannot be neglected that Cummings was also a cubist. The typography patterns in Cummings' poems (that is also the important element in delivering social criticisms) is influenced by the principles of form combination in Cubism

3. Cummings delivers his criticisms through making a contrast between clichés or any characteristics of the conventional poems with his view upon reality.

However, the most important thing is that Cummings' way to deliver social criticisms is mainly based on two main reasons. First, his criticism is an expression of his disagreement on the conventional pattern of poem. Second, it is a reflection of his view that poem is something personal.

B. RECOMMENDATION

In the scope of Sebelas Maret University of Surakarta, this work is probably the first work which discusses poems from experimentalism era. Such poems are important to discuss in the sense that they had contributed a great influence in the world of poetry. They had become an important foundation of genre and idealism in world of modern poetry.

The use of Riffaterre's *semiotics of poetry* is also crucial in the process in finishing this work. Riffaterre's theory with its "readers-oriented" base is one of the representative literary theories. It is because most of modern literary works are made based on the flow of readers' demands and the principle of "art for art", so that the former theories that were made based upon the assumption that work of arts have a special standard pattern is probably no more representative to be used as approach.

Thus, since this work is an imperfect product, the writer suggests to the next researchers to step deeper into the world of modern literature to enrich the discourse in English department. Literature is a dynamic discipline.

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