

# The Graphological ,Typographical and Orthographical Devices in the poetry of e e Cummings

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## Abstract

Critics were not always on the American poet Edward Estlin Cummings' side and mostly he was a target to their invective criticism .The reason is that the style of this poet is inventive and eccentric to such an extent that it makes his poems difficult for the reader unfamiliar with his style. The invented a new style by which he transforms the traditional language to a means to express his feelings and ideas into a visual art . He works with great freedom on the shapes and sizes of letters and their distribution on page , the words and their syntactic function and also on grammatical rules and punctuation to make the influence he desires . There is a strong connection between form and content in the poetry of Cummings. The poet draws with words and letters to present a visual image and this makes it impossible to read his poetry aloud .

Edward Estlin (e e) Cummings (1894-1962) is not always an easy poet to understand. This is because Cummings invented a wholly new type of poetry. Once the barrier between him and his reader is broken, it is as though the reader has burst into a new world of poetry where traditionalism is still felt in theme and substance while the medium is new and invigorating. He is the inventor of a new technique by which he succeeds in turning conventional language into dizzying command of vocabulary .He was much criticized for his use of unusual typography by which he re-explores traditional subjects. He is

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known for changing nouns into verbs and visa-versa .His poetry in not of the kind that can be read aloud.

Graphology, Typography and Orthography:

Graphology means the study of handwriting in order to understand people's characters while typography means the arrangement, style, and appearance of the printed words on the page. Orthography, on the other hand, means the study of spelling; the principles underling spelling. To some extent, spelling represents pronunciation also. So the deviation examples are easily found in orthographic (the way in which the words are spelt) arrangement .In literary creation discarding of capital letters and punctuation marks where conventions call for them, jumbling of words and eccentric use of parentheses are expressive devices for many writers .The Twentieth century American poet e e Cummings is such a master who effectively employs all the possibilities of visual patterns in his poetry .<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the typographical deviations of Cummings' poetry, Rajiv Dixit asserts that one can find that this area of his poetry has not been quite systematically, probably, because a number of intricate semantic problems get involved with it.

The reader notices that the letters and words of the orthographically deviant poems have been separated or Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Joined in a random fashion. No study which seeks to define the innovative style of the poetry of Cummings can ignore those graphic techniques whereby the poet achieves an expressiveness that demands participation of the eye and visually commands the responses a reader makes .<sup>2</sup>

Walter Sutton asserts that Cummings is best known for his eccentric typography and verse arrangements, and so he assumes that Cumming's first book of verse *Tulips and Chimneys* (1923), established the attitudes and conventions that would distinguish all his work .<sup>3</sup> The poet wished to sacrifice the formal typography and syntax (the logic of language) to celebrate the life and passion. He preferred the lower-case 'i' which designates the

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natural unsophisticated self , to the capital personal pronoun ‘I’ which represents the rational censorious ego .This indicates that it is the natural self that speaks in the poems .<sup>4</sup> What Cummings aimed in that volume was to distort and modify the conventional syntax for his own ends. Distinctive typography and verse arrangements soon became a hallmark of his work.

According to Dixit, the most apparent graphic techniques used by Cummings involve (i) the abolition of the conventional rules of the distribution of capital letters and the use of the lower-case (i) for the first person singular pronoun as in “ i thank you God for most this amazing /day” (C.P., 663) and (ii) irregularities of arrangement of the components of words and sentences . A capital letter may be thrust in the middle of a word as in “ mOOn Over tOwnsmOOn /whisper /less creature huge grO/pimgness” (C.P.,383) . The capitals are used here to imitate the roundness of the moon and to signify the eternity of the circle .

The poet’s use of punctuation marks like full stops ,colons. Semi-colons ,commas ,exclamations and question marks very often performs the job of emphasis . About the exclamation mark beginning his first poem in 50 Poems ,” ! Blac “(C.P.,486 ), Cummings himself said that it can be called an emphatic ‘ vary ‘ . Similarly , the unpronounceable ‘?s’ and ‘(‘ are often used .

Another common orthographic technique that is frequently used by Cummings may be called the ‘ visual stanza’ or ‘pictograph’ in which lines are arranged in reference not to rhyme and meter , but to a shape reflecting the poet’s thought . The ironic dedication to *No Thanks* (C.P,382) lists in the shape of a wine glass :

TO

Farrar & Rinehart  
Simon & Schuster  
Coward - McCann  
Limited -Editions  
Harcourt , Brace  
Random house

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Equinox Press

Smith &Hass

Viking Press

Knopf

Dutton

Harper's

Scribner's

Covici , Friede

Similarly, the poem 'little tree' (C.P,29) visually suggests a Christmas tree:

Little tree  
little silent Christmas tree  
you are so little  
you are more like a flower  
who found you in the  
    green forest  
and were you very sorry  
    to come away?  
see        i will comfort you  
because you smell so  
sweetly  
i will kiss your cool bark  
and hug you safe and tight  
just as your mother  
    would,  
only don't be afraid  
look        the spangles  
that sleep all the year in a  
    dark box  
dreaming of being taken  
    out and allowed to  
    shine,  
the balls the chains red  
    and gold the fluffy  
    threads,



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the single secret will still be man  
what if a keen of a lean wind flays  
screaming hills with sleet and snow :  
strangles valleys by ropes of thing  
and stifles forests in white ago ?  
Blow hope to terror ; blow seeing to blind  
(blow pity to envy and soul to mind)  
---whose hearts are mountains ,roots are trees ,  
It's they shall cry hello to the spring  
What if dawn of a doom of a dream  
bites this universe in two,  
peels forever out of his grave  
and sprinkles nowhere with me and you ?  
Blow soon to never and never twice  
( blow life to isn't : blow death to was)  
----all nothing's only our hugest home ;  
the most who die , the more we live

The printed form of a poem is an instance of graphological deviation in that it abides by non-poetic rules of standard punctuation . Some more adventurous poets like Cummings , however, try to go beyond the conventionally sanctioned poetic licenses in matter of verse typography , presumably because they find the available orthographic system inadequate for expressing themselves fully .

Cummings' poem " I(a)" is a much praised example of this type of deviation . It is not a complete sentence and there are four words looking like a pictogram : 'a leaf falls loneliness'. The form of the poem helps the reader seize the two ideas ; loneliness and the parenthetical interjection of the fall of a leaf . The poet frequently utilizes parentheses where they would not ordinarily be used . This form is exemplified clearly in this poem (C.P,673 )

I( a

Le  
af  
fa

ll  
s)  
one  
I  
Iness

As far as capitalization is concerned , it is regarded as an important element in Cumming’s poetry since it is one of the means by which graphology is carried out as in his famous poem “anyone lived in a pretty how town”. In this poem , there are two examples of capitalization both of which follow the only two periods in the poem. The avoidance of capitalization at the beginning of sentences and the scrambling of punctuation marks represent an effort to break down the syntactical (logical) integrity of the sentences .

The capitalization of letters within words is often intended to serve as a guide to emphasis and a key to meaning as in “mOOOn” poem (C.P.,383):

mOOOn Over tOWns mOOOn

whisper  
less creature huge grO  
pingness  
whO perfectly whO  
floAt  
newly alone is  
dreamiest  
oNLY THE MooN o  
VER ToWN  
SLoWly SPRoUTING SPIR  
IT

It is appropriate that the moon is magnified as the luminary of the subliminal dream world , the ‘ real ‘ world of the Romantic and Surrealist alike .The capitalization of the ‘O’ in ‘tOWns’ suggests a common property in and a link between the natural and human worlds . The large double OOs of the ‘mOOOn’ may also suggest the eyelike gaze of presiding spirit in nature .







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Some of Cummings' (Ibid :93) poems reveal a fondness of over genius and mechanical contrivance that was to become habitual . In poem 9 of No Thanks ( 1935 ) (C.P., 392) , the letter 'o' is placed marginally at the left of the first line of the first stanza :

O pr  
gress verily thou art m  
mentous supere  
lossal hyperpr  
digious etc I kn  
w & ig you d  
n't why g  
to yonder s  
called newsreel s  
called theatre & with your

wn eyes beh  
Id The

Confronting such a text , the reader is necessarily more preoccupied with the mechanics of reading than with the poet's rather obvious theme of the emptiness of technological progress . The arrangement seems to hold more interest as a visual puzzle than as a complex of various aspects of form . In this respect it more closely resembles the work of the later Concretist poets , who were influenced by Cummings ,than it does most poetry in the modern organic tradition .

Robert E .Wegner asserts that Cummings finds illimitable joy in every thing alive . He turns on oftentimes brilliant and vitriolic satire upon those people who do not respond to life and upon the conventions , institutions , and beliefs with which they surround themselves to avoid or disguise reality.<sup>8</sup>

Because of this basic attitude , Cummings' poems often take on a radical appearance on the page . Subjects are presented for the simple purpose of calling attention to the prosperities of their vitality or for the purpose of dispelling set notions or beliefs

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about them . Hence , poems such as “ r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r” (C.P.,396) either intrigue readers with the ingenuity of their technique or cause them to decide that Cummings is writing in a private language to please only himself and perhaps the esoteric few :

r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-g-r  
who  
a)s w(e loo)k  
upnowgath  
PPEGORHRASS  
erinigint(o-  
a The ): 1  
e A  
!p:  
S  
a  
(r  
rIvIng  
.gRrEaPsPhOs)  
to  
rea(be)rran (com)gi(e) ngly  
, grasshopper ;

Through the spacing of word and letter and the use of capitals , the poet attempts to simulate the responses , particularly the auditory and visual responses , to the leap of the grasshopper from point to another . When the grasshopper is on motion or when we see him only out of the corner of our eye , we cannot be sure of his identity ,for this reason the letters of the word are jumbled until the end of the poem , when the grasshopper has to come to rest , is still, and can be clearly seen for what it is . Other devices used to simulate visual responses may be found in the descending , staggered printing of the word ‘leaps’ to indicate the initial spring of the grasshopper , and in the spacing between the letters ‘S’ of ‘leaps’ and the letter ‘a’ of the word ‘arriving’ to suggest the arc or total distance of the leap . The capital letters of

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‘PREGORHRASS’ are designed to suggest to the auditory sense the dry rattle of the grasshopper’s wings in flight . In the penultimate line the parenthetical interruptions slow the tempo of the reading in such a way as to correspond to the gradual coalescing of impressions which confirm that the object of our immediate attention is a grasshopper .

The whole poem “ grasshopper” , according to G .Haines , is an attempt to deal with words visually , and to create art as a single experience , having spatial , not temporal extension ; to force poetry toward a closer kinship with painting and the plastic arts ,and away from its kinship with music . It is a picture of an action rather than a description of it .<sup>9</sup>Furthermore . the word ‘ grasshopper’ itself , whose eleven letters behave like a grasshopper in a bait box , wildly hops around in the poem , leaping lines . landing in the middle of a word ( 1.5) or a sentence (1.12).

Less radical in its appearance on the page is the poem “t,h;r:u;s,h;e:s” (C.P., 820) . Like “ grasshopper” , this poem tries to draw the reader’s attention to a simple incident or scene . Heightened awareness of this seemingly insignificant scene leads to a new dimension of understanding about existence , achieved not through mental but through sensory apprehension :

T,h;r:u;s,h  
;e :s  
are  
silent  
now  
.in  
Silvery  
Notqu  
-it-  
Eness  
Dre(is)am  
s  
a

the  
o  
f moon

The marks of punctuation in the first line have two purposes: (1) they make the reader ponder the word (the why of such odd typography) and then extend this pondering to the significance of the word, ‘thrushes’. Cummings wants the reader form the image of the thrushes in his/her mind. He asks the reader to think of the word and in the process of thinking see its meaning. Hence, the punctuation is a device.

There is a visual connotation in the punctuation. It asks the reader to see the thrushes on a bunch of a tree or bus, clustered perhaps, but at any rate spaced as separate little beings (just as the letters of the word are spaced by punctuation).... All perched and settled for their night sleep.<sup>10</sup>

The time of the poem is shortly after twilight when the atmosphere of silvery...dreams”. This interpretation implies an ambiguity that Cummings’ syntax enforces.

We see that ‘in silvery not quiteness (is) a dream of the moon’. What is that dream? The ‘t;h;r;u;s;h;e;s/are; . They ‘are...ams.’ The thrushes are a dream of the moon. The moon is a dream of the thrushes. The syntax forces this double interpretation to a single awareness----that the moon and the thrushes beautifully complement each other, that the moon takes its being from the thrushes and vice versa. The two objects of the poem, the ‘moon’ and the ‘thrushes’, are combined spiritually into one.

This poem thus becomes a metaphor for a way of life, for a way of being alive: to see the spiritual relatedness of things. That is, through the power of syntax and typography, splintered vision is made whole .

Cummings’ name is associated with unconventional punctuation and capitalization, word displacement, and unusual arrangements of stanzas, lines, words and even individual letter to produce visual typographical forms.

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The ideogram is probably cummings' , the most difficult form, his terse poems combine visual and auditory elements. Sounds are suggested, but they may be onomatopoeic rather than linguistic--- that is, heard associated with a visual image, but not pronounced. Consider the poem “!blac” in *50 Poems* (C.P.p.487), for instance:

	!blac	
K	K	(1 <sup>st</sup> St.4 lines)
	agains	
	t	
	(whi)	(2 <sup>nd</sup> St.1 line)
	te sky	
	?t	(3 <sup>rd</sup> St.4 lines)
	rees which	
	h fr	
	om droppe	(4 <sup>th</sup> St.1 line)
	d	
		(5 <sup>th</sup> St. 4 line)
	,	
	Ie	
	af	
	a: ;go	(6 <sup>th</sup> St. 1 lines )
	e	
	s wh	(7 <sup>th</sup> St. 4 lines)
	IrII	
	n	
	.g	(8 <sup>th</sup> St. 1 line)

Commenting on this poem, Adams says that the only critical comment on this poem that we know of suggest that the typographical arrangement has “added the entire enormous machinery of a thunder-storm.”<sup>11</sup> A statement the poet made in a letter seems more relevant:” for me, this poem means just what it says...and the’! ‘which begins the poem is what might be called an emphatic”<sup>12</sup>.

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The exclamation mark with which the poem begins indicates that something anterior to the poem has already happened. The first impression is visual-----‘black against (whi)te’----followed by a feeling of wonder and amusement as indicated by the phonetic suggestion of why (‘whi’) and the question mark. The next impression is that of the sky, then the trees with the realization that from them dropped a lead. At this point a comma intrudes itself, and this comma is important for it indicates a pause (its traditional use) and the beginning of a new awareness which is imposing itself and merging with the previous impressions--- the awareness of a falling lead .<sup>13</sup>

It is on the level of perceptive insight and significant awareness that the poem is ultimately addressing the reader. However, in the light of Cummings’ themes it is probable that these words are suggestions of the cyclic motions of life and death. On one level this is precisely what this poem is describing: reintegration through death. The falling leaf is a symbol of dying. This particular vitality of the falling leaf is conveyed through typography and graphology. With the placing of the letter ‘a’ in the line ‘a;go’ we have a syntactical inversion. These marks of punctuation operate symbolically in much the same fashion as they operate literary----to indicate pause, sequence, and integration. The leaf dropped ‘a;go’ which is as much as to say for a moment or two ago, the colon and semicolon then represent pauses just as in traditional syntax<sup>14</sup>

The last three stanzas of the poem, including the words ‘goes whirling’ are spaced and broken to correlate the tempo of the reading with the progress of the leaf downwards through the air. The ‘I’s in the word ‘whirling’ are vowel glides and are capitalized to give visual balance to the line and possibly to suggest the glide of the leaf earthward

Wegner confirms that this poem, due to its economy of statement and image, makes demands upon the reader. Conflict between the appearance of a new moon at twilight and human

apathy gives tension to the poem<sup>15</sup> . Cummings favors the moon, deplores indifference to such vital splendor. but by this time, he had found out that the simple reference to those things in life which awe him is not enough: they had to be vitalized on the page. Hence the reader must discover the moon for himself, must realize that this poem and the "mOOOn" poem are nearly synonymous. The poem describes the appearance and effect of the moon without once using the word 'moon'.

The moon is both 'afloat' and 'a float'. Cummings has positioned the word to get its effect as both an adjective and a noun. What is it that sustains the moon, gives it that perfection of poise so complete that it fixes itself in the mind's eye? The poet doesn't know, can only wonder: hence, the question mark. the magic of twilight and 'you' as an image of love are all part of what invest the moon with awe. There is no transition here. The moon, response to twilight, and awareness of beloved are inseparable.

A comma after the word 'twilight' would, of course, render the line capable of being read only one way. As it is, without punctuation, the line is elliptical, enforcing the ambiguity of the word 'you'. The complete line --- 'I beloved, a complement in the form of a metaphor. Twilight itself is a mystery. From this point on, the poem develops and enforces the implications of the relationship established between the feeling of love and the uninhibited response to the evening moon at twilight.

The moon, then, is not just an object in the sky, but is as vibrant as love and life itself. For this reason, it is personified by the relative pronoun 'who' and pictorially represented by the single mark of parenthesis. The words 'dream' and 'imagine', tell us that the moon is even 'more' alive. The moon 'is' the dream, not something vague and distant, but the personification of what man dreams, the realization of love that man imagines exists. Look at the moon, the poem is saying, and see alive (more am) the abstract perfections man yearns for in dreams and imaginings.



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The shape of the poem ‘bright’(C.P.p.455) is figuratively meant to suggest a ray of light streaming from its source---a star. Note the way the poem spreads out, the increasing number of lines in such successive stanza.

Easily recognized is the fact that the question marks in the poem stand for the missing letters in the word ‘star’. The star as it is emerges loses one question mark after another until the word appears complete, as does the object it represents: a star. They also suggest the wonder and awe one feels before this spectacle which represents growth. The remaining words in this poem also demonstrate this transition, ranging from the early physical descriptive (‘big,’ ‘soft’) to the concluding conceptual and spiritual descriptive (‘holy’ and ‘alone’).

The parentheses in the poem show a progression in the contemplation of the effect of the star. As the poem proceeds, the parentheses, include more words, indicating the growth awareness beyond the purely visual. In short, the poem is saying that the experience of seeing a star is the meaning of life, the mystery of existence, representing birth and growth.

Generally speaking, cummings’ handing of spacing, typography, and punctuation marks provide visual guidance in most of his poems which are better understood if they are seen on the page. Kennedy (asserts) that “in fact his poems cannot be read aloud”.<sup>16</sup>

A typographical example of Cummings in which the self merges with nature is his poem “birds” (C.P.p. 448). It represents an image of birds and their songs fading into vastness of a twilight sky. The parentheses in the poem represent swallows flying at dusk, while the diminishing stepped letters at the end depict the birds’ vanishing, soon silent, singing ‘voices’. The birds’ voices fade into ‘Be’ and ‘now’ and ‘soul’ until they ‘are’ ‘a’ part of the silence:

birds (  
here, invent  
ting air

U  
(sing  
tw  
illigH)  
t's  
v  
va  
vas  
vast  
ness. Be) look  
now  
( come  
soul;  
& : and  
who  
s) e  
voi  
c  
es  
(  
are  
ar  
a

The poem's ending is evoking. The hardly pronounceable dying fall of the ending refers not only to fading cries of the birds, but also to the dissolution of the self into twilight, and to paradoxical oneness of song and silence, of bird-voices and man-soul. The question 'who/ s)e voi / c/ es/ ( /are' I deliberately left incomplete: who sings here? Part of the answer is in the first stanza: not only the birds, but 'U' sing with their silent song of flight. The 'voices' represented by 'are/ar/a' mirror the shape of the 'v/va/vas/vast/ness' of the sky .<sup>17</sup>

### **Conclusion :**

Cummings is best known for his poems and their unorthodox usage of capitalization, layout, punctuation and syntax. There is extensive use of lower case; word gaps, line breaks and gaps appear in unexpected places; punctuation marks are omitted or misplaced, interrupting sentences and even individual words; grammar and word order are sometimes strange. Many of his poems are best understood when read on the page. When read in the correct fashion, his poems often paint a syntactical picture as vital to the understanding of the poem as the words themselves. As well as being influenced by notable sources, modernists, including G. Stein and E. Pound, Cummings' early work drew upon the imagist experiments of Amy Lowell. Later his visits to Paris exposed him to dada and surrealism which in turn permeated his work. While some of his poetry is 'free verse' (with no concern for rhyme and scansion), many of his poems have a recognizable sonnet structure of 14 lines, with an intricate rhyme scheme.

A number of his poems feature a typographically exuberant style, with words, parts of words, or punctuation marks scattered across the page, often making little sense until read aloud--- at which point the meaning and emotion become clear. Cummings became more widely known as an avant garde poet because of his unconventional use of typography, syntax, and sometimes scandalous choices of words and topics. He had a fondness for scattering of dissent and self-reliance, attracted attention for his lack of capitalization, eccentric punctuation and phrasing, and often childlike playfulness. He worked in the Emersonian tradition of romantic transcendentalism , which encouraged experimentation, and might have been influenced also by Walt Whitman, the poet that Ralph Waldo Emerson had personally encouraged.

Cummings unusual typography slows the reader down, adding dramatic pauses when needed, and serves as a signpost to accentuate what the poet intends to emphasize. He capitalized

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only when he feels it necessary, even in the middle of the word. And thus it makes the process of understanding difficult. However, when the border between the poem and the reader is removed ,s/he can enter into the poet's mind and into a deeper sensual understanding of his poetry, his poetry suffers greatly when these eccentricities are removed, making the rhythm of the poem less impressive and minimizes its emotional impact, making the moment of identification with the poem more difficult.

Whether or not the poetry of Cummings is appealing to particular reader, his influence (due to his visual style, command of vocabulary and innovation) can not be denied. He did not have critics always at his side; in fact he had often been the target of criticism. As time wears on, however, readers continue to scope of his ingenuity and when the shock of his comma, pause and colons is resolved, critics turned a more serious eye to his work and discovered the layers and depth of meaning in the poems themselves.

### **Notes**

<sup>1</sup>Geoffrey N. Leech, *a Linguistic Guide to English Literature* (London: Longman Group Ltd, 1969), 47.

<sup>2</sup> Rajiv Dixit , *Patterns of Deviations in Selected Poems of E .E. Cummings* (Lancaster University , 1977 ) ,34 .

<sup>3</sup>Walter Sutton, *American Free Verse: The Modern Revolution in Poetry* (New York: A New Direction Book, 1973), 87-93 .

<sup>4</sup> Ibid .

<sup>5</sup> Rajiv Dixit 35-36.

<sup>6</sup> Walter Sutton , 88

<sup>7</sup> Ibid , 91

<sup>8</sup> Robert E. Wagner , *The Poetry and Prose of E.E.Cummings* (Harvard:Harvard University Press ,1965) 41-46.

<sup>9</sup> G . Haines “ The World and E.E.Cumming ”, in Norman Friedman (ed.) *E .E.Cummings : A Collection of Critical Essays* ( Englewood Cliffs :Prentice Hall , 1965 ),2.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

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<sup>11</sup> Robert M. Adams “ grasshopper’s waltz: The Poetry of E.E.Cummings” , Cronos 1 ( Fall ,1947 ,2, [www.questia on line-library .com/ read](http://www.questia.com/read) ( Retrieved on 4/14/2007 )

<sup>12</sup> Robert E. Wagner ,144.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 145

<sup>14</sup> Ibid , 146

<sup>15</sup> Ibid , 150-153.

<sup>16</sup> Richard S. Kennedy , *Dreams in Mirror : A Biography of E.E.Cummings* (New York : W.W.Norton & Company .Inc,1980 ),32

<sup>17</sup> Michael Webster as cited in Etienne Terblanche : The Osmotic Mandala : On Nature of Boundaries in E.E.Cummings’ Poetry [ Spring 10 (2001): 9-22 ] : [http :www .g usu.edu/ English /Cummings /issue 10 / Terblanche 10 .html](http://www.usu.edu/English/Cummings/issue10/Terblanche10.html) (Retrieved on 1-4-2007 )

## الاساليب الخطية والطباعية والاملائية

في شعر اي اي كمنكز

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جامعة بغداد-كلية التربية/ابن رشد

### المستخلص

لم يكن النقاد دوما الى جانب الشاعر الامريكي ادوارد استنن كمنكز وفي اغلب الاحيان كان هدفا لنقدهم اللاذع وذلك لان اسلوب الشاعر يتميز بالابتكار والغرابة لدرجة تجعل من الصعب على القارئ غير المطلع على ذلك الاسلوب فهم قصائده . فالشاعر مبتكر لاسلوب جديد يحول من خلاله اللغة التقليدية الى وسيله يسخرها للتعبير عن احساسه وافكاره بطريقه مرئيه . يتصرف الشاعر بحريه تامه في اشكال الحروف واحجامها وتوزيعها على الصفحة والكلمات ووظيفتها النحويه وكذلك بقواعد اللغة والتتقيط, لاحداث التأثير الذي يريده . هناك ترابط وثيق بين شكل قصائد كمنكز ومحتواها حيث ان الشاعر يرسم بالكلمات والحروف ليقدم صوره شعريه مرئية وهذا يفسر عدم امكانية قراءة شعره بصورة مسموعة .