

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

E. E. Cummings' Poetry as Political Satire

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This thesis entitled "E.E. Cummings' Poetry as Political Satire" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Baldev Pokhrel has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

The present research studies E. E. Cummings ten selected poems as a satire on American politics. It examines how Cummings attacks the politicians and denounces the pretensions of authority through the use of mimicry, parody, and personal ridicule, role playing, invective and burlesque. The study exposes the hypocrisy and follies of the politicians. The work is divided into four chapters. The first chapter gives a general introduction to the work. The second chapter discusses satire and its different forms as a theoretical tool. The third chapter analyzes the text to show political satire. And the fourth chapter is the conclusion of the work.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Cummings and Politics

This research studies E.E. Cummings' poetry in relationship to politics. Generally, Cummings' poetry is experimental in nature. It explores traditional poetic subjects such as love, the natural world and death in terms of theme. In addition, his poetry satirizes various social and political follies throughout the American society. So, Cummings satirizes the American politics and denounces pretension of authority through the use of mimicry, parody, and personal ridicule, role playing, invective and burlesque.

E.E. Cummings was a non-conformist. Being an individual not giving in to pressures to be just like everyone else was life's most important struggle for him. He challenged the forces that tend to suppress uniqueness and make people conform this challenge is reflected in his poetry. He writes:

To be nobody – but – myself in
world which is doing its best,
night and day, to make me
everybody else – means to fight
human being an fight, any human being can fight, and never
stop fighting. (qtd. in Baum 67)

Although from his childhood on, Cummings wrote poetry in praise of all that is living – above all, nature and the individual self, he was also a master of satire. He coined the word 'mostpeople' to criticize people who

follow the crowd (23). Cummings believed that individuals can only discover who they truly are if they don't worry what most people think.

This kind of temperament of Cummings equipped him well to be a satirist. In his writing, Cummings bitterly satirized any attitude or person that prevented man from being himself such as totalitarianism, progress, security and scientific explanations. He also made 'epigrammatic attacks' on his contemporaries and realistic vignettes of city life. (Kennedy 79).

As his career developed, he made use of all forms of satire: invective, personal ridicule, burlesque, mimicry, parody, role playing, and verbal irony. In doing so, he employed all kinds of wordplay: puns, circumlocution, slang, dialect, double entendre, misspelling, comic rhyme, and absurd allusion especially reference to patriotic songs, popular songs, advertising slogans, literary quotations, Latin phrases, proverbs, and nursery rhymes. For example, within a mere four lines, his epigram on Ernest Hemmingway employs a number of these devices.

Poetry and Politics

It is true to say that literature is influenced by the socio-political condition in which it is written. The poets from ancient to the present times have shown interest in public themes in many parts of the world. Shelley rightly says, "Poets are unacknowledged legislators of the world" (525). Poets cannot be limited to articulating their inner thoughts and feelings. Poets speak "consciously and conscientiously for a whole people or a whole class" (Bowra 3). What they say is marked and quoted and might even influence public in society.

In the ancient period, famous Greek poets like Virgil and Horace were well aware of the socio-political condition, which has been reflected in their poetry. Although they did not directly deal with the public themes, they carried on with the myths and symbols. Bowra says:

They were never far from the minds of the Greeks, who might sometimes disguise them in myth and symbol but were certainly not shy of them and admired such poets as Simonides and Aeschylus who wrote of them on a generous scale. Virgil and Horace owe to their political disquisitions (1).

In *Divine Comedy* politics is quite as fundamental as theology and certainly more dramatic, and Dante shows his taste for it when he places one pope, Celestine V, "who made the great refusal," in Limbo, and another, Boniface VII in Hell" (Bowra 1).

The movement of Romanticism is highly associated with politics. As this movement was influenced by French Revolution, all the romantic poets shared a consciousness of revolution. They were swelled with the desire for change. J.R. Watson, commenting on the political attitude of Romantic period writes:

Romantic poets' interest in nature and dreams is balanced by an equally strong interest in the social and political state of the world around them, and in the effect of this upon themselves as human beings. The tendency to see the romantic period as imaginative and irrational has to be

modified by the need to acknowledge its awareness of politics, class and international affairs. All the poets were politically committed. (76)

They revolted against normal rules of social conduct and society. They asserted their own individuality against the world. All the writers of this age were struggling to influence politics and economy of society in an era of uncertainty and instability.

Wordsworth and Coleridge put forth revolutionary ideas about society in the "Preface of Lyrical Ballad." Shelley was greatly concerned with the state of political affairs. He expressed his outrage against tyranny in *The Mask of Anarchy*. Similarly, Byron also wrote many poems dealing with the social and religious exploitation of individuals. So, the Romantic Movement was politically motivated.

In the modern period, poetry has steadily moved from conscious majesty and a cosmic outlook to the careful presentation of politics. C.M. Bowra points out that "this shift is extremely relevant to the whole question of political poetry" (70). Poets, in this age, have spent their lives perfecting their acquaintance with political affairs. T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound and E.E. Cummings are some bold poets who faced politics with a magnificent confidence. Eliot chose as his theme the indifferent and soulless nature of power. He extracted from politics this chilling, remote image and moved in a dimension where nothing matters but the human soul.

Cumming' poetry is multidimensional in style and theme. It picks up the social person and political issues. For Cummings fair political practice is the direct agent to affect the happiness of mankind. Political freedom is associated with his philosophy of social revolution. This philosophy takes many forms: sometimes centers around the theme of ascent of humanity and sometimes around the inner individualistic fever of the individual as in the poems "my sweet old etcetera" and "I sing of Olaf glad and big."

Cummings' interest in political questions was so strong that he published his first work *The Enormous Room*, a novel, based on political theme. It tells of the outrage and terror and hope and fear of men caught in the mesh of wartime – government.

Richard S. Kennedy points out Cummings "as a political satirist." Cummings' most of the writings can not be separated from his social and political context. In this regard, Dawson writes:

Poets are no more insulated from political events and controversies than are only other class of people. Indeed, they are less so, in that poets' work in language, the same medium in which political concepts and demands are formulated, contested and negotiated. If this is generally true it is of particular relevance in periods of significant historical change, when political issues impress themselves with increased urgency on all section of society and give rise to vigorous debates concerning fundamental political principles.

(48)

Cummings wrote large number of political pamphlets and articles in magazine and lots of poems reflecting contemporary socio-political situation. Cummings' poems are exciting and demanding for a number of reasons. In the first place, they contain a very considerable amount of his voluminous reading-philosophical, scientific, mythological, religious and political. Secondly, they frequently attempt to describe which is beyond description. Cummings drew no essential distinction between poetry and politics. He had the capacity to understand a human reaction in the social situation and he has 'synthesized' it in his poems. That is why his poetry demands a kind of intelligence, in the process of meaning – construction, to balance the historical events and the meaning of his poems.

There is indeed a close connection between his work and events of his life time. The situation of the period to which he belonged gets reflected in his poems. The historical events of the twenties and the thirties can be identified as the most painful phase of economic dislocation following the First World War. They were the years of trouble everywhere – economic depression widespread unemployment and social unrest, which have a direct association with politics. These issues are taken up by Cummings so as to criticize the authorities.

For Cummings, a politician is like a salesman who always keeps "Excuse me" on his lips. From politicians to presidents, everyone uses that. He encourages readers to look at the world in a new way.

Cummings' abundance use of satire on politics can be found in his poetry. Richard S. Kennedy categorizes his satire targeted to different

aspects of society. Cummings has hatred against war, rage against politicians. He wants to criticize the people in the government in order to correct the bad practices. Thus he speaks for humanity. Some of his poems like "pity this busy monster, mankind and fine stop thief help murder save the world" carry on misanthropic moods. In these poems Cummings used different forms of satire to make his attack powerful and effective.

Regarding the use of satire on politics, Kennedy writes:

The glorification of war with its attendant patriotic posturing was a continuing target of Cummings' satire during both the World Wars. Russia's attack on Finland in the Second World War was one occasion, but a more complicated situation arose when Russia invaded Hungary to put down the uprising of 1956. Cummings went to fuming rage because the U.S. broadcasts over radio free Europe had encouraged liberation movements in Eastern Europe but then the U.S. government did nothing to help Hungary . . . The result was the poem "THANKSGIVING." (49)

All presidents of the United States during his adult life time, from Wilson to Kennedy, were attacked in one satire to another. Given his objection to groupism and collective action in society, it is no surprise to find Cummings opposed to communism. But he had special reason for his hatred after his first hard observation of the soul-smothering effects of the Soviet Police state during a trip through Russia in 1931. His diary of this

visit revised to become his book *Eimi*, which is his most important prose work and milestone of political satire.

II. THEORETICAL MODALITY

Satire

Satire is both a specific literary genre and a literary manner. As a genre, it has reference to a poetic form originated in the second century B.C by the Roman satirist Lucile's; practiced with distinction by his successors, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal; and best described by Quintilian in his *Institutio Oratoria* (about 5 A.D). This formal verse satire written in Latin hexameters was dramatic, with the satirist, through a dialogue with an adversary, exposition of vice and folly but means of critical analysis. Alexander Pope's epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot is an eighteenth century English example.

The word "Satire" is derived from the Latin (lanx) "Satura" ("full plate"; plate filled with various fruits"- hence, a melody). By implication, it means a hotch-potch in literature. But its origin often has been confused with the Greek satyr play- the fourth play in the dramatic bill, with a chorus of "goat men" and coarse comic manner. According to Gilbert Highet, "the essence of the original name was variety in a certain down-to-earth naturalness, or coarseness, or unsophisticated heartiness" (231).

A satire, generally speaking, is an attack on foolish or wicked behavior by making fun of it often by using humor, sarcasm and parody. C. High Holman defines satire "as a literary manner in which the follies and foibles or vices and crimes of a person, humankind, or an institution are help up to ridicule or scorn, with the intention of correcting them" (293). This manner may be present in various art forms and may employ

many methods. Satire is also applied in magic songs and ritualistic invective in Greek, old Irish and Arabic literatures, where the ritual curse was believed to have powerful effects.

Satire has usually been justified as a corrective of human vice and folly. Satires are the jokes about serious things. So, although satire is often comic, its object is to evoke not mere laughter but laughter for a corrective purpose. It always has a target such as pretense, falsity, deception, arrogance- which is held up to ridicule by the satirist's unmaking of it. Because the satirist usually cannot speak openly or does not wish to do as he chooses means that allow him to utter the unspeakable with impunity, with regard to a Satirist, C. High Holman comments:

His viewpoint is ultimately that of the cold eyed reality, why penetrates sham and pretense for a didactics purpose. The portrayals generally are at variance with outward appearances, but they contain recognizable truth, and it is this truth that gives the satirist his license to attack. (293)

However, satire differs from the "comic" though both use laughter. Comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself, while satire derides; that is, it uses laughter as a "weapon and against a butt that exists outside the work itself" (Abrams 275). That butt may be an individual, or a type of person, a class, as institution, a nation, or even the entire human race.

A satirist thus attacks them with a motive of correcting human vice and folly. In this regard, Alexander Pope remarked, "those who are ashamed of nothing else are so of being ridiculous" (qtd. in Abrams 276).

Its frequent claim has been to corrigible faults, excluding those for which a person is not responsible. As Swift said speaking of himself in his ironic "Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift (1739):

Yet malice never was his aim;
He lashed the vice, but spared the name . . .
His satire points at no defect,
But what all mortals may correct . . .
He spared a hump, or crooked nose,
Whose owners set not up for beaux. (qtd. in Abrams 276)

Satirists like ironists say one thing and mean another. Wayne C. Booth introduces the term "stable irony", by which he means that once a reconstruction of meaning has been made, the readers are not then invited to undermine it with further demolitions and reconstructions. But irony to D.C Muecke is:

A way of writing designed to leave open the question of what the literal meaning might signify: there is a perpetual deferment of significances. The old definition of irony-saying one thing and giving to understand the contrary- is superseded; irony is saying something in a way that activates not one but an endless series of subversive interpretations.

(31)

Satirists present one thing or situation under the garb of another, which may appear ridiculous on the surface. The combination of just and earnest is a permanent mark of satiric writing- the central method of

device. A satirist, though he jokes and makes readers laugh, tries to reveal human vice and folly, which (to him) is the truth. Satirists declare that their truth is what people do not want to hear. While tracing the history of satire back to the ancient time, we find two main conceptions of its purpose: one is to wound, to punish, to destroy, and the other is to warn and cure. The first types of satirists believe that the rascality is triumphant in the world, and are pessimistic. Jonathan swift says that though he loves individual, he detests mankind. These misanthropic satirists look at life and find it, neither tragic nor comic, but ridiculously contemptible and nauseatingly hateful. Gilbert Highet draws the distinctions between pessimistic and optimistic satirists and their writings:

The misanthropic believes it (evil) is rooted in man's nature and the structure of society. Nothing can eliminate or cure it. Man, or the particular gang of miserable mankind who are under his scrutiny, deserves only scorn and hatred. . . The satirist is close to the tragedian. (235) He (optimist) believes that folly and evil are not innate in humanity, or, if they are, they are eradicable. They are disease which can be cured. They are mistakes which can be corrected . . . sinners are not devils, fallen forever. They are men self-blinded, and they can open their eyes. (236)

The two most important satirists were Juvenal and Horace, who represent pessimist and optimist respectively. Juvenal illustrates rhetorical or tragic satire of which he is at once the inventor and the most

distinguished master. His satire attacks vices or abuses in a high-pitched strain of impassioned declamatory eloquence. Horace and his followers assail the enemies of common sense with the weapons of humor and sarcasm so that the wrong doer will get rid of the wrongs. These types of satirists believe in the doctrine "No one errs willingly." The optimistic satirists write in order to heal and the pessimistic satirists in order to punish. In Horatian Satire, according to Abrams (188), the character that the speaker manifests is a witty and tolerant man of the world, who is moved more often to wry amusement than to indignation at the spectacle of human folly, pretentiousness, and hypocrisy. But in Juvenalian satire the character of the speaker is that of a serious moralist who decries modes of vice and error in a dignified and public style.

Satirists always aim at revealing the bitter truth; no matter whatever motives they may have behind their works. Early experiences of life make the people view the world differently. In this regard Highet says:

In fact, most satirists seem to belong to one of two main classes. Either they were bitterly disappointed early in life, and see the world as a permanent structure of injustice; or they are happy men of overflowing energy and vitality, who see the rest of mankind as poor ridiculous puppets only half-alive, flimsy fakes and meager scoundrels. (241)

Satirists wish to stigmatize crime or ridicule folly, and thus to aid in diminishing or removing it. Dryden says he who draws his pen for one party must expect to make enemies of the other. According to him, the true

end of satire is the amendment of vices by correction. He says he who writes honestly is no more an enemy to the offender than the physician to the patient, when he prescribes harsh remedies to an inveterate disease; for those are only to prevent painful surgery.

A satire, on the surface, appears to be full of aesthetic feelings or like a romance, but its underlying intentions attack a particular target in a disguise. Satire, according to Abrams, is "the literary art of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward it attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation" (187). *New Encyclopedia Britannica* defines it as "artistic form, chiefly literary and dramatic in which human or individual vices, follies, or shortcomings are held up to ensure by means of ridicule, derision, burlesque, irony or other methods, sometimes with an intent to bring about improvement" (467). But all ironies are not satires. However satires are often stable ironies. Morton Gurewitch, in his Ph D. Dissertation on European Romantic Irony, describes irony as only corrosive.

Irony, unlike satire, does not work in the interests of stability. Irony entails hypersensitivity to a universe permanently out of joint and unfailingly grotesque. The ironist does not pretend to cure such a universe or to solve its mysteries. It is satire that solves. The images of vanity, for example, that world's satire are always satisfactorily deflated in the end; but the vanity of vanities that informs the world's irony is beyond liquidation. (qtd. in Booth 92)

Irony, as dictionaries tell us, is saying one thing and meaning the opposite. For its clarification, quoting Booth, we have:

Irony is usually seen as something that undermines clarities, opens up vistas of chaos, and either liberates by destroying all dogma or destroys by revealing the inescapable canker of negation at the heart of every affirmation. It is thus a subject that arouses passions (preface IX).

Northrop Frye, in *Anatomy of Criticism*, says the ironic fiction-writer, deprecates himself and, like Socrates, pretends to know nothing, even that he is ironic. Highet says: "Any author, therefore who often and powerfully uses a number of typical weapons of satire-irony paradox, antithesis, parody, colloquialism, anticlimax, topicality, obscenity, violence, vividness, exaggeration-is likely to be writing satire" (18).

Practice of Satire

There has been common and widespread practice of satirical writings. Highet's oversimplification on history of satire is: "Most of us are apt to think that the history of satire begins with the Romans of Republic, continues in Latin for three centuries, and diverges into Greek with Lucian" (35). Highet sees it as one of the most original, challenging and memorable forms of literature, and says: "it has been practiced by some energetic minds-Voltaire, Rabelais, and Swift; by some exquisitely graceful stylists-pope, Horace, Aristophanes; and occasionally, as a paragon, by some great geniuses-Lucretius, Goethe, and Shakespeare" (1).

One of the chief kinds of Greek satirical writings was philosophical criticism, which is supposed to have begun with Lonion Xenophanes. The lines below, from his poem "Leers or Looking Askance", satirize the whole human race:

Now, if hands were possessed by oxen, by horses and lions,
and they could paint with their hands, and carve themselves
statues as men do,

Then they would picture the gods like themselves with
similar bodies. Horses would make them like horses, and
oxen exactly like oxen. (qtd. in Highet 36).

It is already mentioned the satire is almost as old as literature itself. But in England in the eighteenth century it was the basic form of literature. There was social political and religious unrest among the people. People of the Augustan age wanted certain freedom and excellence in their constitution which resulted in the revolution. There were naturally different groups of people holding different views and opinions demanding different kinds of freedom. In this concern Halifax, a statesman, demands in his character of Trinner (1688) an impartial law based on faith and a healthy compromise between monarchy and republicanism. Though James II, a Catholic, threatened constitutional tradition, it was reduced by William III and he was praised by Locke calling him their great restorer. Any how conventional parliament was reinstated in 1688. Thus we see that the aim of politician of that age was to deal with the needs of normal man. It was not philosophical. The authors from 1668 to 1800 such as Samuel

Butler, Dryden, Codwin, Burke and others were concerned more with current practical practices' than with philosophical principles. At that time, religion politics were intermingled with a party, business, election contests, foreign policy, church and state. The prevalence of corruption, perpetual agitation, pamphlets and news sheets and cries for liberation were the catchwords voiced by the people. Richard Sargged wrote in his "Epistle to Sir Robber Walpole": "From liberty each nobler science spring bacon, brightened and a Spenser song; a clerk and Locke new treats of truth expose and Newton reaches heights unknown before" (176).

After various struggles among themselves, they got political liberty. As they (the people of the 18th cent.) got freedom they wanted "full freedom." There was a sudden and speedy change among the people. They wanted to jump from one pole to another at once. Most of them, particularly aristocrats misutilized their rights and duty. They broke some conventions which were necessary for harmony in the society. Consequently there was a lack of social order. Flirtation of girl was very common. W.H. Hudson says that "the manners of the Augustan Age were coarse; politics was scandalously corrupt. Dryden (comparatively) it would be better to quote Dr. Johnson views as revealed in his *The Lives of Poets*. He says:

Dryden drew more of man in his general nature and pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation and these of Pope by minute

attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden and more certainty that of pope. (123)

The style of Dryden is precious and varies, that of Pope is cautious and uniform, Dryden obeys the motion of our mind, and Pope constrains his mind to mind to his own rules of composition. Dryden is sometime vehement and rapid; Pope is always smooth, uniform and gentle. Again he says:

The dilatory caution of Pope enabled him to condense his sentiments to multiply his emerged and to accumulate all that study might produce or chance might supply. The flights of Dryden therefore are higher, and Pope continues longer on the wing if Dryden's fire the ablaze brighter, of pope's the heat is ore regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation and pope never falls below it Dryden's read with frequent astonishment and pope with perpetual delight. (231)

Jonathan Swift was satirist of more rapid and sweeping type than Pope. His *Gulliver's Travels* (1763) is a bitter satire on the human race. Swift once said to Pope, "I hardly hope or detest that animal called man" (265). This remark is an elaboration of his cynical attitude. He is also considered as a misanthrope. All these aforesaid authors contributed in the amelioration of the 18th century society by their satirical writings.

Pope has a unique place among them. He does not write personal satires only. For instance, most people would accept *The Rape of the Lock* as a true master piece of light satire that is to say, which is amusing and

good tempered, yet not with an element of serious social criticism. The poet has universalized the poem making Belinda, a symbol of the fashion of the 18th century.

In the 19th century, Mark Twain became the best-known American satirist, publishing satires in a variety of forms, including 'news satire' and full-length books. In Britain, at roughly the same time W.S Gilbert created seemingly harmless and unobjectionable comic operas that often tore apart the customs and institutions held so dear by the British public.

In the 20th century, satire has been used by authors such as Aldous Huxley and George Orwell to make serious even frightening commentaries on the dangers of the sweeping social changes taking place throughout Europe. The film, *The Great Dictator* (1940) by Charlie Chaplin, is a satire on Adolf Hitler and his Nazi army. A more humorous brand of satire enjoyed a renaissance in the U.K. in the early 1960s with the *Satire Boom*, led by such luminaries as Peter Cook, Alan Bennett, Jonathan Miller, David Frost, Eleanor Bron and Dudley Moore and there is an increasing perception that satire must be explicitly humorous, which has not always been the case.

Forms of Satire

Although the purpose of satire has always been to correct the faults and weaknesses of human beings, it has been expressed in different forms. Some of them are discussed below.

Humor

Humor means to arouse laughter or create comic situations. The origin of the word 'humor' is Latin, which is used for 'Liquid', "fluid" or "moisture."

In early Western physiology, one of the four fluids of the body that was thought to determine a person's temperament and features, were four humors (fluids) of the body (yellow bile, black blood, and phlegm) were in proper proportion. When one fluid exceeded its normal amount, then disproportion occurred. These four fluids are to remain in balance otherwise, the normal temperament of a person happens to be misbalanced.

It was believed that the individuals in whom this disproportion occurred would be in a choleric humor if yellow bile were predominant. There would be melancholy humor if blood were predominated and phlegmatic humor if phlegm were predominant. Whatever humor predominated, the lack of balance indicated a deviation from normal, an excess that requires correction.

As far back as Plato and Aristotle, they took laughter as a proper corrective of the excessive. When we laugh there emerges excessive of one element. The object of humor is to create laughter to satirize the event or situation. Humor is an artistic device to correct one's excessiveness and to ridicule upon an incident and situation. The person who possessed an excess of any humor became humorist.

The New Encyclopedia of Britannica defines humor as "the only form of communication in which a stimulus on a high level of complexity

produces a stereotyped predictable response on the psychological reflex level" (20:682). It means the response can be used as an indicator for the presence of the illusive quality that is called humor. The study of humor provides clues for the study of creativity in general.

Satire is activated through humor. In humor, both the creation of the subtle joke and the secretive act of perceiving the joke involve the delightful mental movement of a sudden leap from one plane of associative context to another.

An example of a masochist is taken for the humorous state. A masochist is a person who likes a cold shower in the morning so he takes a hot one. It is a twisted matter. One does not believe that the masochist takes his hot shower as a punishment: he only pretends to be believed.

There is a bewildering variety of moods involved in different forms of humor including mixed or contradictory feelings. In the subtler types of humor, the aggressive tendency may be so faint that only careful analysis will detect it like the presence of salt in a well – prepared dish.

In Aristotle's view, laughter was intimately related to ugliness and debasement. Cicero held that the province of the ridiculous lay in a certain baseness and deformity. Rene Descartes believes that laughter was a manifestation of joy mixed with surprise or hatred or both. In Francis Bacon's list of what causes laughter, the first place is given to deformity. One of the most frequently quoted utterances on the subject is this definition in Thomas Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). "The passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from a sudden conception of some

eminency in ourselves by comparison with the infirmity of others or with own formerly" (683).

How the humor came into use in western literature is a wide range of research, it goes back to the time of Plato and Aristotle in Greek literature. In Greek tragedy, the humorous characters were presented in plays, and later in Shakespearian comedy they appeared as successfully as in the Greek stages.

James Bergson says, "Laughter is the corrective punishment inflicted by upon the unsocial individual" (683). In laughter, we always find an intention to humiliate and consequently to correct our neighbor. Sir Max Beerbohm, the 20th Century English wit found "two elements in the public humor: delight in suffering contempt for the unfamiliar" (87). The American Psychologist William Mac Doug argues: "Laughter has been involved in the human race as an antidote to sympathy a protective reaction shielding us from the depressive influence of the shortcomings of our fellow men" (683).

Much of theorists agree that the emotions discharged in laughter always contain an element of aggressiveness. Laughter provides relief from tension. It also satirizes the situation considered to be opposite from the reality. Sigmund Freud involves Spencer's theory of humor into his own with special emphasis on the release of repressed emotions in laughing (684). In the mind of man, a vast amount of stored emotions exist derived from various, often unconsciousness, sources: repressed sadism, unavowed fear and boredom. These are released by the help of humor.

Humor is a task as delicate as analyzing the composition of a perfume with its multiple ingredients, some of which are never consciously perceived while others would make one wince. People are literally poisoned by their adrenal humor; it takes time to take a person out of a mood. Fear and anger show physical after effects long after their causes have been removed.

The purpose of humor is to laugh at people to rectify their faults. Laughter is not acquired skill but a natural gift. But there are other outlets such as competitive sports or social criticisms which are acquired skills.

Invective

The simplest direct form of satire is invective, which generally means rude language, and unpleasant remarks that somebody shouts when they are very angry. According to Holman, "invective is forthright and abusive language directed against a person or a cause, making a sudden, harsh revelation of damaging truth" (274).

Satire as a literary genre may be defined as the expression in adequate terms of the sense of amusement or disgust excited by the ridiculous or unseemly, provided that humor is distinctly recognizable elements that the utterance is invested with literary form. Without humor satire becomes invective.

Another form of direct satire is exaggeration in which the good characteristics are assessed over and the evil or ridiculous ones are emphasized.

Parody and Mimicry

Parody, which can be interchangeably used with mimicry, is one of the most delightful, natural, satisfying and often the most effective forms of satire. In contemporary usage, a parody is a writing that imitates another work in order to ridicule, ironically comment on, or poke affectionate fun at the work itself, the subject of the work, the author or fictional voice of the parody, or another subject. As literary theorist Linda Hutcheon puts it, "parody . . . is imitation with a critical difference, not always at the expense of the parodied text" (6). Another critic, Simon Denith, defines parody as "any cultural practice which provides a relatively polemical allusive initiation of another cultural production or practice" (9).

Parody, in a broader sense, is one of the chief shapes which satire assumes. We may define it as initiation, which, through distortion and exaggeration, evokes amusement, derision, and sometimes scorn.

In 1693, John Dryden suggested that the word "parody," was not in common usage. In his preface to the satires, he says, "We may find that they were Satyrique Poems, full of parodies; that is verse patched up from great poets, and turned into another sense than their author intended them." (123). In "Macflecknoe," he created an entire poem designed to ridicule through parody.

Dryden imitates Virgil's *Aeneid*, but the poem is about Thomas Shadwell, a minor dramatist. The implicit contrast between the heroic style from Virgil and the poor quality of the hero, Shadwell, makes

Shadwell seem even worse. When dressed in Aeneid's clothes, Shadwell looks all the more ridiculous.

Jonathon Swift is the first English author to apply the word 'parody' to narrative prose, and it is perhaps because of a misunderstanding of Swift's definition of parody that the term has since come to refer to a stylistic imitation that is intended to belittle. Swift says that a "parody is the imitation of an author one wishes to expose" (4). In essence, this makes parody a bit different from mockery and burlesque, and given Swift's attention to language, it is likely that he knows this. In fact Swift's definition of parody might well be a parody of Dryden's presumed habit of explaining the obvious or using loan words.

In the broader sense of Greek 'parodia,' a parody can occur when whole elements of one work are lifted out of their context and reused, not necessarily to be ridiculed. Hutcheon argues that his sense of parody has again become prevalent in the twentieth century, as artists have sought to connect with the past while registering differences brought by modernity. Major modernist examples of this recontextualizing parody include James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which incorporates elements of Homer's *Odyssey* in a twentieth century Irish context, and T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which incorporates and recontextualizes elements of a vast range of prior text. (Hutcheon 23).

In this way, parody is closely related to satire and is often used in connection with it to make social and political points. Examples include Swift's *Modest Proposal*, which satirizes English neglect of Ireland by

parodying emotionally disengaged political tracts, and in contemporary culture, "the daily show" and; the Colbert report, which parody a news broadcast and talk show, respectively, to satirize conservatism and other political and social trends.

Burlesque

Burlesque, which is closely related to parody, generally means a performance or piece of writing which tries to make something look ridiculous by represent in it in humorous way. In literature, burlesque is a comic imitation of a serious literary or artistic form that relies on an extravagant incongruity between a subject and its treatment *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines burlesque:

In burlesque the serious is treated lightly and the frivolous seriously; genuine emotion is sentimentalized and trivial emotions are elevated to a dignified plane. Burlesque is closely related to parody, in which the language and style of a particular author, poem or other work is mimicked, although burlesque is generally broader and coarser. (655)

The long history of burlesque includes such early examples in Greece as *Batrachomyomachia* (the Battle of the Frogs and Mice), an anonymous burlesque of homer, and the comedies of Aristophanes,. The long winded medical romance is satirized in Chaucer's fourteenth century *Tale of Sir Thopas*. Italian burlesque of the fifteenth century attacked the concept of chivalry as an aristocratic notion lacking common sense, and it

thus anticipates Cervantes' novel *Don Quixote*, which is, however, of a size and seriousness that takes it out of the reach of burlesque.

English burlesque is chiefly dramatic, notable exceptions being Samuel butler's satiric poem *Hudibras* (1663), an indictment of puritan hypocrisy, and the prose burlesques of Swift and Fielding. George Villiers', Dryen's Thomas Otway's, John Gay's and Richard Brinsely's works are some of the outstanding survivals from an age when burlesque was cruelly satirical ad often defamatory.

Besides, humor, invective, parody and mimicry and burlesque, the either forms of satire include personal ridicule and role playing which come under the indirect form of satire.

III. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Political Satire in the Poetry

E.E Cummings is a prominent American poet of the Lost Generation. Following the World War I, like other members of this generation, he became disillusioned by his war experience and alienated by what he perceived as the crassness of American culture and politics. He was in favor of complete individual freedom, which he believed was thwarted by oppressive American culture, religion and politics. That is why Cummings attacked politicians and mass-followers as he called them "mostpeople" through his poetry. So, the present study focuses on revealing his satire on poetics, and authoritative practices in America. For this purpose, the study delimits itself to the study of ten poems only: "F is for foetus (a ,", "a salesman is an it that stinks excuse," "(of Ever-Ever Land I speak," "kumrads die because they're told)," "red-rag and pink flay," THANKSGIVING (1956)," "my sweet old etcetera," "next to of course god america," and i sing of Olaf glad and big." In these poems, Cummings makes use of mimicry, parody, personal ridicule, invective and burlesque. In doing so, he employs all kinds of word plays: puns, circumlocution, slang, dialect, double entendre, misspelling, comic rhyme and absurd allusions so as to satirize and denounce the American politics. Through his radical experiment with syntax, typography, and line, he defamiliarizes common subject and thus criticizes conventional ways of perceiving the world.

Cummings' "F is for foetus (a" is one of the hard-hitting examples of political satire in American politics. This poem is a great satire on the American president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The initials FDR of his name are scattered in three stanzas. The very first part of the poem under "F" is a satire on him:

"F is for foetus (a

punkslapping

mobsucking

gravypissing poppa but

who just couldn't help it no

matter how hard he never tried) the great pink

supreme

diocri

ty of . . .(146)

Cummings satirizes the president by comparing him to the foetus. As "foetus" is an imperfect underdeveloped embryo, the president Franklin is an imperfect person. This humorous but indirect way of comparison exposes the president's immaturity in the field of politics. During his tenure, Franklin was criticized for his several political decisions and defects. Among his drawbacks is his deceitfulness, his inability to emotionally bond with those closest to him, and reckless stupidity. The

compound words" punkslapping," and "mobsucking" (Line 2, 3) reflect the president's attitude towards people. These words directly attack Franklin. "Punk" is a type of loud and aggressive rock music popular in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This music can be taken as a kind protest against the establishment. So, the president tries to suppress and prevent that protest. And the "mobsucking" implies that Franklin deceives and exploits people. Again Cummings describes him as a "gravypissing poppa" (Line 4). "Gravy" means money unexpectedly obtained from the people and "pissing" means wasting in a silly manner. So, Cummings attacks the president for wasting people's money in a silly manner. The president is supposed to be playing the role of a good father "poppa" but he is just a wastrel.

In the middle part of the poem, Cummings directly attacks both the president and democracy as he says a "hyperhypocritical Democrac" (Line 11, 12). Here "D" stands for Delano, middle name of the president. Cummings' point is that both the president and his idea of democracy are just pretentions. Thus, the poet condemns the hypocrisy of the politician as he further says, "sing down with he fascist beast" (Line 13, 14). Cummings makes use of invective here because he uses abusive language to criticize the president who is hell bent on averaging his opponents. He does not possess the virtue of forgiveness. The poet describes the president who is for "two eyes for and eye, and four teeth for a tooth" (Line 16, 17, 18). In the last line of the middle part, Cummings makes stinging satire on the

president through pun as he calls him "peacemuckers" (Line 20). Instead of bringing peace, the politicians like Franklin Roosevelt mock peace.

In the last part of the poem, Cummings advocates for actual freedom but not the kind of freedom as the Roosevelt said. He had come up with "Four Freedoms" first enunciated in the States of the Union address, January 6, 1941. They are: freedom of speech, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. But Cummings expresses his worry about common people's freedom. This becomes clear through the last part of the poem "F for foetus:"

The boodle's bent is the
Crowd inclined it's
Freedom from freedom
The common man wants
Honey sworkey molly pants. (146)

This shows that Cummings is not happy with the idea of Franklin's "Four freedom." So, he wants freedom from this so-called freedom. He is for the freedom of common, poor and weak people. These "four freedoms," according to Cummings help clever and powerful people.

"a salesman is an it that stinks Excuse" is another biting satire on the American politicians in particular and all the politicians of the world in general. The very title of the poem compares the politician to the salesman on whose lips the word "Excuse Me" is hung. In order to expose and emphasize the hypocrisy and folly of the politicians, the poet uses the capital letter "E" of excuse and "M" of me in the middle of the sentence.

Cummings uses the word "it" instead of s/he to describe the politicians and other people in high places, in crowded cities, and in ruts. As in the tradition of Emerson, he believed that evil was "not-being," but he believed it was created and enforced by governments, and political ideologists, he had strong opinions of governments including the Soviet Union and the United states. He once said that the Soviet Union was an "apotheosis of mediocrity" and also called the United States "a pseudocommunity enslaved by perpetual obscenities of mental concupiscence" (Pierce 59). In the first stanza of the poem, Cummings exposes the real nature of the politicians:

Whether it's president of the you were say
or a Jennelman name misder finger isn't
important whether it's millions of other punks
or just a handful of absolutely doesn't
matter and whether it's in lonjewrary
or shrouds is immaterial it stinks
a salesman is an it that stinks to please . . .(147)

In this extract, Cummings says that all the politicians whether they be the president or other politicians or "gentleman" as he spells "gennelman" or other popular people are same like salesmen. They all try their best to please but they cannot please the people. This shows that the politicians are the same all over, who pull the wool over people's eyes.

In the second part of the poem, Cummings describes the activities of the politicians who just think of their own interest. Cummings writes:

But whether to please itself or someone else
makes no more difference than if it sells
hate condoms education snakeoil vac
uumcleanrs their terror strawberries democ
ra (caveat emptor) cy superfluous hair

or Think we've Met subhuman rights Before. (147)

Cummings' point is that politicians do not do anything for the real benefit of the people. They just impart worthless and outdated education as he says "hate condoms education." Here the use of double entendre creates humor; and they terrify people in the name of democracy as he says "terror strawberries democ ra cy." Because of such activities common people have lost their basic human rights. This becomes clear in the statement "We're Met subhuman rights." So, Cummings attacks the politicians for such bad practices and appeals to all to denounce their authority.

In "of Ever-Ever Land i speak," Cummings attacks the fascist, materialist dictators. This poem is also a satire on capitalist mass society. In the first stanza, the poet uses humorously abusive language to expose the follies of the dictators:

(of Ever-Ever Land i speak
sweet morons gather roun'
who does not dare to stand or sit
may take it lying down). (149)

In this stanza, the poet points out the real nature of fascist. He calls them "sweet morons." Moron is an offensive way of referring to somebody who is stupid. But Cummings says "sweet morons" so as to make his satire mild. His further argument is that these fascists cannot proudly implement their oppressive policies, and neither can they act in a passive way. Rather they carry out their activity "lying down" that means they find a middle way. In the second stanza, Cummings makes satire on the materialistic attitude of these fascists:

down with the human soul
and anything else uncanned
for everyone carries canopeners
in Ever-Ever Land. (149)

In facism, human soul counts little. People are led to believe and say "down with the human soul." They just take the human beings as machinery things. And man is taken totally as a material being, and he does everything for material existence. For man, everything is uncanned because everyone carries can-openers" for his existence in the "Ever-Ever Land." The idea is that man should learn how to open can, eat and stay alive. In the following stanza, Cummings criticizes the secular practices of the communists:

Down with full and heaven
and all the religious fuss
infinity pleased our parents
one inch looks good to us. (149)

Her Cummings attacks the fascists who pay no heed to before-life and after-life; they have no regard for "hell and heaven." What they care about is the present materialistic life. They take man as an animal which is tethered to the present. This stanza is also a satire on fascist dictator who regards himself as God. They consider religions and infinity "fuss."

In "kumrads die because they're told)," Cummings attacks the communists for their senseless political beliefs. By misspelling comrades as "kumrads," the poet criticizes them because they do not use their sense. They just follow what they are told to do:

kumrads die because they're told)
kumrads die because they're old
kumrads aren't afraid to die
kumrsds don't
and Kumrads won't
believe in life) and death knows whie. (150)

Communists have been following age-old outdated political beliefs. They are indoctrinated in such a way that they are not "afraid to die." Human life is nothing for them, for they do not "believe in life."

Cummings attacks the Russians communists in the second stanza:

(all good kumrads you can tell
by their altruistic smell
Moscow pipes good kumrads dance)
kumrads enjoys
Freud knows whoy

the hope that you may mess your pance. (150)

In this stanza, Cummings exposes and attacks the hypocrisy of the communists. They show from the outside that they are in favor of the happiness and good of common people. But the poet raises question mark on their intention as he uses the phrase their "altruistic smell." The "kumrads" blindly follow the leadership in "Moscow." They are dancing to the tune of Communists in high ranks. This becomes clear through the line "Moscow pipes good kumrads dance." The reason for this Cummings puts forward is that the "kumrads" are psychologically indoctrinated. They are brainwashed. "s. freud knows whoy" proves this.

At the last of the poem, Cummings directly criticizes the communists for their fear of love. He says kumrads are "traveling in a futile groove:"

Every kumrade is a bit
of quite unmitigated hate
(traveling in a futile groove
god knows why)
and so do i
(because they are afraid to love. (150)

In another poem, "red-rag and pink-flag," Cummings attacks the fascists and communists' atrocities through nursery rhyme.

red-rag and pink-flag
blackshirt and brown
strut-mince and stink- brag

have all some to town

some like it hot

and some like it hung

and some like it in the twot

nine months young. (150)

One recognizes the *Walpurgisnacht* assemblage of Communists, Fascists and Nazis in the first two lines, and the murder and rape that follow are only too historically accurate. What matters in this poem is the emotion that Cummings' surprises – the disparity between innocent nursery rhyme and corrupt experience, the vulgar slang of "and some like it hung" (115) shows the nature of the Fascists in the second part.

THANKSGIVING (1956) attacks the Fascist American government. It attacks the "unworld" man – "a which that walks like a who," "democracy," and "the u s a." Nothing was done about Hungary because the UN is democratic and soft: liberty "begins to smell." The American president could not do anything; the UN could not do anything for Hungary to bring democracy. The president at the time was not prepared to go that far, nor even, for that matter, to jeopardize the atmosphere of improving relations with Moscow. The Hungarian uprising for democracy was crushed with the help of Russian government.

Originally, "Thanksgiving" is a ceremony in the US in which people give thanks to God for the harvest and for health. But in this poem, Cummings satirically uses 'Thanksgiving' for the US and the UN, who did

nothing for Hungary. They just acted as mute spectators. That is why Cummings ironically gives them thanks. The US and UN, who consider themselves the fathers of democracy, do not do anything to promote democracy in other countries in the world. They just bow down for their own petty interest: "As the god of our father's fathers bows / to a which that walks like a who" (Line 3, 4). The US and UN's hypocrisy is seen through the following whole stanza:

But the voice-with-a smile of democracy
announces night & day
"all poor little peoples that want to be free
just trust in the u s a" (151)

When the uprising began in Hungary, it "gave a terrible cry" for freedom and democracy (Line 10). It took a firm stand saying, "no slave's unlife shall murder me for i will freely die" (Line 11,12). But the so-called protector of democracy, UN ordered Hungary to keep quite:

be quite little Hungary
and do as you bid
a good kind bear is angry
we fear for the quo pro quid." (151)

The UN blames the US president for this. But the US president pretends that he is preoccupied with other things as he says, "i' m busy right now," (Line 24). So, Cummings condemns "democracy" and the "statue of liberty." He directly attacks:

So rah- rah democracy

Let's all be as thankful as hell
And bury the statue of liberty
(because it begins to smell) (151)

Cummings' poem "i sing of Olaf glad and big," first published in the volume *Viva* and in *Complete Poem, 1904-1962*, is an ironic retelling of the torture and death of a conscientious objector during world war I. The narrator writes with sympathy for Olaf, who, as both "glad and big," seems to embody the characteristics most prized by American: presumably blonde and blue-eyed due to his Nordic name, he is the ultimate mother's son. In a few brief lines, Olaf is further painted as compassionate and ethical; his "warmest heart recoiled at war / a conscientious objector." (Line 2, 3). However, Olaf's anti-war stance leads to even more violence. Olaf is taken "soon in hand" by his "westpointer" trained colonel as if he were a disobedient child, and is then beaten by a "host of overjoyed noncoms" (Line 7, 8), who resemble cruel children in a schoolyard. The narrator wryly comments on the officers' intolerance of Olaf, "kindred intellects evoke/ allegiance per blunt instruments" (Line 13, 14). Apparently, instead of understanding a humanitarian philosophy, the officers can only understand brutality as a means of communication. To this treatment Olaf responds not with equal brute force but with an understated but firm resistance. He responds to the officers "without getting annoyed / I will not kiss your fucking flag"(Line 18, 19). This elicits a grave and enigmatic response from the colonel, who "departs hurriedly to shave" (Line 20).

In the next stanza, this feeling is fulfilled with an episode of outrageous violence against Olaf. The narrator reminds the reader that those army officers are "a yearning nation's blue-eyed pride" (Line 21, 22). Right before it he depicts them in the worst possible light kicking and cursing Olaf. This violence continues until, as the narrator states, "their clarion/ voices and boots were much the worse" (Line 25, 26). By this backhanded description of the damaged boots, the reader can only guess at Olaf's condition, as he is the person receiving the kicks. The beating continues; Olaf is sodomized by a bayonet "roasted hot with heat" (Line 30).

Despite these actions, Olaf maintains his dignity. In yet another quite and defiant statement, he sits on his knees – or what the narrator ruefully describes as "what were once knees" and utters over and over, "There is some shit I will not eat." (Line 32, 33). In the next stanza, the reader, however, learns that Olaf's resistance did him little good. At this point, even the president of the United States is guilty of brutalizing Olaf: "our president of the assertions duly notified threw the yellow son of bitch/ in to a dungeon, where he died" (Line 36, 37).

The narrator's word choice underscores his feelings towards Olaf. The mention of "assertions duly notified" communicates the cold and impersonal nature of those who brutalized Olaf. However, the vehemence of the officers' true feelings comes through when Olaf is referred to as a "yellowsonofabitch." The irony of Olaf's fate is also accentuated by the metrical rhythm and perfect rhyme that is employed; the poem is almost

happiness skipping along, regardless of the brutalities being described. The poem is a childlike nursery rhyme and, at the same time, a serious statement of outrage.

The poem is a mock-epic as it mocks the heroic tradition of the ancient times. It parodies the *Aeneid* (c.99-19 b.c.) in which Vergil sings of arms and the man.

In "my sweet old etcetera," Cummings exposes the bad consequences of war. This poem is a satire on war since war is waged for political interest. During the war, there is great destruction and loss of life; people lose their near and dear ones. Many die unrecognized and unknown. This is what Cummings wants to convey when he says, "my sweet old etcetera." The repeated use of "etcetera" in the poem shows that human life has no value.

In order to create humor and satirize war, the narrator says that his "sister isabel created hundreds (and hundreds) of socks not to mention shirts fleaproof ear-warmers" to be safe during the war. (Line 6, 7, 8, 9). The poet has not capitalized the first letter of "isabel" to convey the idea that human being is not important during the war.

The poem is full of satire and irony. The narrator's mother hopes that he would die etcetera, and his father considers it a privilege:

etcetera writers etcetera, my

mother hoped that

i would die etcetera

bravely of course my father used

to become hoarse taking about how it was
a privilege and if only he
could meanwhile my

self etcetera lay quietly
in the deep mud et

cetera

(dreaming,

et

cetera of

your smile

Eyes knees and of your Etcetera). (141)

The narrator's fear is that he would die unrecognized "quietly in the deep mud etcetera / dreaming etcetera." The use of capital letter of "Etcetera" in the end emphasizes the idea that war really renders people unimportant and valueless. The form of the poem also parallels with the theme. The scattered use of words and phrases, breaking of a word into two conveys this idea too.

The poem "next to of course god America i," is a biting satire on politicians who try to fool people. Although this poem is a seemingly nonsensical at first, it is actually a sonnet that demonstrates how politicians sometimes do the thinking for us "they did not stop to think" - amidst the rambling words of the politician, nothing important is said. The

words merely evoke of sense of duty to fool people into rushing off to war.

The whole poem is an example of this:

"next to of course god america i
love you land of the pilgrims' and so forth oh
say can you see by the dawn's early my
country it's of centuries come and go
are no more what of it we should worry
in every language even deafanddumb
they sons acclaim your glorious name by gorry
by Jingo boy gee by gosh by gum
why talk of beauty what could be more beaut
iful than these heroic happy dead
who rushed like lions to the roaring slaughter
they did not stop to think they died instead
then shall the voice of liberty be mute ?"

He spoke. And drank rapidly a glass of water. (149)

In this way, Cummings attacks upon the American politicians who are hypocrites and liars. So, it is futile to feel proud of "The Statue of Liberty" of America because the so-called American politicians turn a deaf ear to the freedom of common people. America who considers itself as a protector of democracy and freedom has trampled on the people's rights. Thus, Cummings bitterly criticizes the American politics.

IV. CONCLUSION

E.E. Cummings' ten selected poems constitute a brilliant example of political satire in American politics in particular and fascist world politics in general. The satire is targeted to the politician in high position such as the presidents, prime ministers and other leaders. The poet attacks the hypocrisy and fascist nature of the politicians. Satire and irony are freely used as a means creating humor as well as attacking the follies of the politicians. In doing so, the poet sometimes becomes very harsh as he uses abusive language to criticize them. Most of the times, he makes use of humor, parody, personal ridicule etc. In trying to achieve his goal, he deviates from the existing tradition of writing poetry; he uses small letters in the beginning and capital letters in the middle. Moreover, he abruptly breaks the words and scatters them randomly. This style helps to substantiate his point.

Cummings attacked almost all presidents of the United States during his lifetime. An especially hard-hitting example, "F is for foetus" appears here in this research work. The scattered capital letters spell out FDR, which represent Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The president is satirized for his hypocrisy as well as double standard. The poem is also a satire on Federalism, Democracy and Republicanism.

To Cummings, politicians are salesmen of their programs and ready to take resort to any means for success. The politicians are likened to things as he uses "it" to describe them in the poem "a salesman is an it that

stinks Excuse." This shows the cunningness of the politicians; the politicians are very good at lip-service that is what Cummings attacks.

Another poem "of Ever-Ever land i speak" is more of an attack on capitalist mass society where human soul counts little. People in this land are only concerned with the consumptions of material things. They take religion and philosophy as fuss.

The two poems, "kumrads die because they're told)" and "red-rag and pink-flag" attack communism and fascism. The poet criticizes their senseless policies and programs. People in those countries are forced to obey oppressive laws. "red-flag," written in the style of nursery rhyme exposes the atrocities which Cummings attacks using humor.

"THANKSGIVING " is a satire of the United Nations and United States of America, who just observed as mute spectators to the problem of Hungary. The UN and USA who consider themselves the father of democracy did not do anything in this direction in Hungary. That's why Cummings ironically gives them thanks.

"i sing of Olaf glad and big" is a parody attacking the politicians in high-ranking army officials who enter into war. This is also an attack on heroic tradition. Cummings' instrument of truth here is irony. From the beginning of the poem to the underplayed tribute of its final lines, we are led to ponder the relationship between what things seem and what they are. As the irony gathers, Cummings unmasks the modern bankruptcy of collective values.

"next to of course god america i" and "my sweet old etcetera" are also satire on war. The first is an attack on the politicians, who, through emotional speech, push people to war, whereas the second poem condemns the loss of lives because people die unrecognized during the war. In this way, Cummings satirizes the American politics and denounces the pretensions of authority in his poetry.

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