

There accepted forms
and rules of how



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There is a reason why there are different types of poems, there is a song, sonnet, villanelle, hymn, ode, elegy, versanelle and many more. The reason for this is the need for different ways to express the longing of the heart and the soul. Sometimes it is better to sing; sometimes it is best to speak of what was hidden and has to be revealed to the light of day. But even if there are different forms of poetry there are many writers and poets who are not contented with what is available to them and so they took the different forms and experiment on it, one of the best example is E.

E. Cummings. Yet even without the experimentations of Cummings there are plenty of examples on how poets use form to convey what they want to say. This paper will take a closer look at how form can impact the message of the poem. It has been said that Shakespeare, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Gwendolyn Brooks are some of the writers who were not afraid to bend the rules of poetry. Based on their achievements and their skills one can argue that this has been on purpose.

They did not do it just for the sake of experimentation or simply trying to create something new. They did on purpose to achieve a certain effect (Hirsch, p. 311). It can be said that words are not enough to express what they wanted the world to know and so they took what was available for them and then create a masterpiece by changing and even altering the universally accepted forms and rules of how to create poems. One of the best examples of not only artistic freedom but also the confidence to go against the flow and create original works is E.

E. Cummings. One commentator was able to capture the impact of Cummings poetry and this is what he had to say regarding the author: “ Although he says he is far from original, it is agreed by all that he was an innovative poet in many fields, especially form ... he attempts to deal with his words visually and this way takes his poem closer to visual arts and painting rather than music” (Korhan, p. 1). In other words Cummings wanted his readers not only to hear but to see. A good way to illustrate this technique is by looking at one of Cummings bizarre output which is entitled “ r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r” and it is difficult to say or read it and so it must be seen and this is how it looks: r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-rwhoa)s w(e loo)kupnowgathPPEGORHRASSeringint(o-aThe): leA! p: S a(rrlVlnG . gRrEaPsPhOs)torea(be)rran(com)gi(e)ngly, grasshopper; (Cummings, p.

1). This is more like code or a riddle rather than a poem. And the only reason why it made sense was the presence of the word “ grasshopper” at the very end of the poem. It can be interpreted as a grasshopper that jumps from one place to the next at random without pattern and without explanation. For instance, it is easy to understand the movement of a dog. Its master throws a ball he catches it and brings it back. A dog will jump and bark to get the attention of its master and this is easy to understand but a grasshopper has no logic to its movement. By writing the poem this way and using this form then the author was able to show the behavior of a grasshopper.

Cummings could have said the same thing in a few words but instead of talking about it he simply showed it using poetry but this time not the words that is contained in it but the form. The form is also part of the message. The form communicates something that cannot be said. In other times it is a way

to communicate using a few words, the efficient use of space allows expert lyricists and poets to create something that can create lasting impact in the hearts and minds of their readers. It can also be said that by bending the rules and experimenting on form the authors are attracting the readers to read their work. It also produces different layers of meaning instead of simply saying it with words there is another tool that can be used to send another message, one that can help the reader get deeper into the poetry.

This is the reason why poets like Cummings would not hesitate to go against the conventions of writing poetry. Aside from the visual aspect of form, there is another why form is used to show the theme of the poem. The form is not only the meter and the rhyme but also the choice of words and even the way it is arranged (Roza, p. 7). For instance authors would use repetition and word play such as the use of terms that are related to each other and therefore by placing them in a certain position the author is saying to pay attention to these words. The best example is a poem by Dylan Thomas entitled Do not Gentle into that Good Night. In Thomas' masterpiece he used repetition to highlight the most important points. He wanted the readers to understand the desperate cry of a son for his father not to surrender to death that easily.

The son knows that his father is about to die and he wanted to prevent it. In other words he wanted to lengthen his life by encouraging him not to give up and this was seen in how the author used repetition. By persuading him not to go and using the phrase Do not go four times he is making his desperation felt. And by repeating the word rage and to rage against the dying of light is his solution to the problem which is to say that the father should not only

desire to live but to fight for that belief and that right to stay alive. Aside from repetitions Thomas was also conscious about the way to play with words and he knew that there is going to affect his readers and make them understand what he was trying to say about the pain of death. He did this by using two opposite words and yet he positioned these words so that it will rhyme and therefore the readers will be forced to see the contrast between night and light. It was the son's warning to his father that darkness awaits him if he will not rage against death.

Conclusion

Form is not just there for the sake of order and logic. This is because authors can sometimes bend the rules not to create chaos but to clarify and to improve the communication between author and reader. There are times when words are not enough that a visual representation is needed.

Sometimes words describing a feeling or a scene is not enough so that the author will rely on repetition and a careful use of word play to make the readers focus on what they are really trying to say. The best examples of experimenting with form and the use of repetitions to create an effect are the works of Cummings and Thomas. Cummings did not hesitate to create something that can also be seen not just heard.

Thomas on the other hand used repetitions to highlight what he wanted to say and to add urgency to his message which is in fact his theme, to show a son's desperate attempt to save his father from sure death.

Works Cited

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