

Innocent love in e.e. cummings's poem since feeling is first

Literature



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Innocent Romantics

The concept of love is widely explored in literature, ranging from captivating odes about admirers to sorrow-filled compositions describing the loss of a sweetheart. Taking a charming spin on love, E. E. Cummings' poem, "since feeling is first," uses comparison to show that romance is propelled by the theme of purity, ultimately persuading his audience to follow their hearts over their minds when it comes to real-world love. The poet mainly focuses on the difference between a man whose center lies in wisdom versus a man who is in tune with his emotions, where the latter greatly prospers over the former when pursuing romance.

Cummings' first and second stanzas displays the differences between a man who overanalyzes situations and another who lets his feelings rule over his life. He initially states, "since feeling is first" (Cummings 1), starting his poem, as well as titling his piece, with a claim that emotions come before all other senses. Especially in a romantic context, as Cummings writes about, the act of identifying and acting upon one's feelings is essential. As a relationship stems from proclaimed affection, the thoughts that inhabit the mind are more propelled by the soul than logic. By following his heart, Cummings maintains a sense of purity and innocence, reveling in contentment with the company of his lover. The next lines state, "who pays any attention/to the syntax of things/will never wholly kiss you" (2-4), where Cummings provides reasoning for his original claim of feelings coming first. He displays two differing tones between these lines, putting down the egos of others while showing boundless affection for his lover. The love of his life

stands as a treasure, where he defensively guards her against those who are more logically inclined, as they do not prove worthy. Fittingly, Cummings' mention of syntax follows through in his writing, which lacks a complete usage of capitalization and punctuation. The formed sentences are broken up into lines, yet are not composed of the same format throughout. Whereas the start of some phrases are properly capitalized, others begin with lowercase letters and are not preceded by any punctuation, creating differences in the poem's composition. In this oddly-formatted style lies a mockery of those individuals guided by logic; although Cummings initially deems them undeserving of his lover, he furthers this by satirically poking fun at their overflowing intelligence directly through his writing. Through the humorous ridicule, he warns his readers against using knowledge to uncover the depths of romance. Instead of prospering through an authentic life, those who spend their time dwelling on logic waste away their time, missing opportunities to pursue an ideal romance.

Differing from the men who are propelled by logic, Cummings finds himself to be a man of pure emotion. He refers to himself in "wholly to be a fool/while Spring is in the world" (5-6), contrasting with other men who find themselves more involved with knowledge. When he is in the presence of his lover, he is overwhelmed by her beauty and begins to stutter and bumble through his words. Whereas some men are puzzled by intelligence and education, Cummings finds himself curiously dwelling on the charming woman in his life. The referral to "Spring" (6) symbolizes the lover, representing her encompassing attraction to Cummings as a season. With a mention of spring, the themes of purity and fertility come to mind, regarding <https://assignbuster.com/innocent-love-in-ee-cummings-poem-since-feeling-is-first/>

the falling of cherry blossoms, the blooming of a first love, and the gradual perking up of greenery when warm weather strikes. Emphasized by the usage of the word " lady" (10), the aura of the woman is filled with a teeming feminine innocence, which influences Cummings in choosing emotions over logic. He makes his intentions resonate with the woman he loves, going so far as to make "[his] blood [approve]" (7), making the relationship go past a mere physical state. As " Spring" (6) is capitalized, the concept of religion is brought upon the romance, putting an emphasis on the ethereal image of the woman. Just like God is always capitalized in scripture, the same importance is given by Cummings unto his lady, ultimately raising her on a pedestal. To amend these assertions, he claims to " swear by all flowers" (10). Here, there is a mention of the epitomal representation of the season, as spring would not appear the same without the image of multicolored flowers. Cummings promises his lady that he is telling the truth by personally bringing her essence into the deal, displaying complete confidence in his words. With his utter devotion to his lover, Cummings relays the message of pursuing romance with a sense of purity to his audience. With his outspoken certainty, it is difficult to both refute his claims and see the superiority of logic over emotions in a battle of romance.

While arguing that emotions rule over intelligence, Cummings emphasizes the additional potential in making the most out of life by seeking happiness, even in dreadful situations. He states, " Don't cry/—the best gesture of my brain is less than/your eyelids' flutter which says/we are for eachother" (10-13), bringing forth the claim that any form of intelligence pales in comparison to something as simple as a blink of an eye. This logic sinks

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down even further with the stark contrast between his lover's tears and the trivial flutter of her eyelids, deeming knowledge in an even more insignificant fashion. Cummings compares a moment in reality with a train of thought, diminishing the latter so that it eventually becomes obsolete. He finds real-life moments to be more essential than those in the minds of others, sending forth the message to take advantage of reality rather than be consumed with thoughts. Additionally, his plea of telling his lover not to cry indicates that he does not want to see her in a state of misery. When she is overwhelmed with sorrow, Cummings cannot help but feel the same way, as they exist in harmony and "are for each other" (13). He conveys the message that reality should be filled with joyous moments, rather than times of wallowing and heartache. Instead of existing in worry, Cummings wants his lover to "then laugh, leaning back in [his] arms" (13-14), and embrace the bliss of existence. Finding the world to be a place of happiness while lacking logic, he wants his other half to experience the world as he does. Once again, there is a recurring theme of innocence, where Cummings simply seems to look for his own definition of romantic happiness in a perfect world. A playful factor remains in this outlook, as he imposes his wonderment unto his significant other, just as a child would humorously affect the people around him with an infectious laugh. By climbing over hardships and replacing them with moments of comfort, Cummings tells his readers to embrace the joys of life and romanticize this notion of happiness. Propelled by an innocent lifestyle, his audience is influenced to turn aspects of their amorous relationships into a positive utopia, just as Cummings does himself.

Just as much as Cummings enforces positivity onto the romantic aspects of his life, he also finds a contrast between a long-lived reality and the eternal concept of death. When he states, " then/laugh, leaning back in my arms/for life's not a paragraph" (13-15), he embraces the positive aspects of life, as mentioned previously. Cummings does so with the intention that life is filled with these innocent moments, and he has time to make the absolute best for himself and his lover. With the comparison to a paragraph, Cummings implies that the series of sentences forms a simple-minded argument — one that is easy to understand. Although paragraphs may be detailed and eloquent when deeply analyzed, they merely consist of tiny segments of letters and punctuation tied together to prove a point. On the other hand, Cummings makes a claim that life is nothing like this simple chunk of text, instead focusing on the intricacy of a human life, consisting of thousands on thousands of paragraphs. However, regardless of this long-lived reality, he makes the best out of the entire situation, making sure he and his lover are always content and embraced in romance. The last stanza of his poem, where he states, " And death i think is no parenthesis" (16), showcases this encompassing happiness. The usage of parenthesis in a text displays a comment that is seemingly relevant, but can also be ignored and opted out. When Cummings states that death starkly contrasts with this form of punctuation, he implies that it cannot be omitted and disregarded. The premonition of mortality is everlasting, no matter how long life continues on for, which subtly offers a darker tone in comparison to the pure image of his poem so far. Instead of showcasing a theme of " carpe diem" throughout the poem, where the thought of the future is completely disregarded, Cummings

instead brings forth a reality check. Although some may find happiness in ignoring death, he offers a counterargument, where the idea of mortality ironically forces people to live in contentment. Cummings always finds positivity in his romantic life not only because he enjoys embracing joy constantly, but also due to the fact that death is unpredictable. He lives in contentment knowing that one day, he or his lover will perish from the world, leaving the other paralyzed with grief. Hoping to make the most out of the time he is with his significant other, Cummings embraces the grim reality of death and asks his readers to do the same. Living every day in happiness is a goal that he hopes his audience takes advantage of, as their near futures are all unclear and foggy, just like his own.

In conclusion, Cummings relays the message that the notion of love is driven by putting emotions over logic, which allows the relationship to form in purity. By comparing and contrasting the ideas brought up in the poem, readers are given a first-hand look into the joy-filled romance of Cummings and his lover, darkly propelled by the feeling of forthcoming death. In a way, this final mention of mortality offers a contrasting view on the overall innocence of the poem. Readers are forced to ask themselves what Cummings intended to do with this last stanza, which seemingly appears to break down the entire meaning of the poem that he has composed so far. There is a possibility that hidden underneath the veil of contentment, there always lies a thin layer of fear and concern. Perhaps he offers this opinion to show that no matter how often people encompass themselves in happiness and joy, there is never an entirety of that single emotion. Cummings' original

statement of emotions ruling over logic still remains, yet there is an underlying remark that this feeling cannot live up to its entire potential.