

Poetic Licence  
-- A Linguist's Eye-View\*

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ABSTRACT:

*The paper argues that the literary artist (like the ordinary speaker) must reckon with some basic underlying regularities governing the language in which his creations are embedded. He must do this if his literary artefacts are to remain cohesive communicative symbols, if they are not to end up being (ego-satisfying?) esoteric exercises for self-consumption. It attempts to explore the elbow room that the poet has (unlike the ordinary speaker) in his exploration of the linguistic code while stressing that there is a point of thus far and no further.*

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- \* (a) Alternative titles that I thought of 'Poetic Licence-- A Note on its Non-existence' and 'Against the Notion: 'grammar of poetry' ' reflect my earlier lines of thinking. The present title springs from a subsequent chastening.
- (b) This paper is really a 'note'. An exhaustive treatment of poetic freedom with language would far exceed the scope of a single paper.
- (c) Thanks are due to Mr. Vishwanath Mirle and Dr. E. Annamalai for a number of perceptive comments. My absolutions, of course, on both.

1.0. Like a clear-cut dichotomy of literary and non-literary language, the concept of 'poetic licence' also has a mirage-like quality. The concept of poetic licence<sup>1</sup> seems to be little explored, confused, totally misleading and as Grinder and Elgin (1972) put it, 'vastly seductive'. The tone of discussions about this particular notion suggests that the poet with his flood-gates of creativity thrown open is privileged to let his language flex to his whims and fancies and to thereby destroy the centripetal tendencies that bind the language together and ensure near perfect communication. It is surprising that this tone persists in circles which should know better.

1.1. This disquisition is a submission to the contrary. In particular it seeks (1) to underline the difference in the media of verbal art and 'pure' arts and (2) while defining the sense in which the verbal artist has a certain freedom, has more elbow room than the ordinary speaker, to endeavour to identify the point of thus far and no further<sup>2</sup> in his manipulation of the language. A caveat, before we proceed further, is in order: The force of the paper stems more from the questions raised than from the descriptive, discursive answers attempted. If the interrogatives get home, the purpose of the paper would be amply served.

2.0. It is a truism--a well-recognized truism--that language is in fact a hurdle in making literature a 'pure' art

like painting, sculpture, music etc. Many a time language can only approximate to our multifarious layers of experience, our feelings with all their meanderings, the subtleties of physical sensation and the labyrinthine complexities and nuances of our thoughts.<sup>3</sup> Poetic expression may well be seen as an attempt, to use a well-known Eliotian phrase to raid the inarticulate, by resorting to various devices which have been well documented: simile, metaphor, synecdoche, hyperbole, antithesis, oxymoron, transferred epithet, irony and so on.<sup>4</sup> The poet's freedom to manipulate the linguistic resources at his disposal to his advantage is part of his attempt to raid the inarticulate. But how far can he go? Should the lay reader, the literary critic and the linguist reverently take the poet's solecisms as quite warranted ipso facto ? and then indulge in some linguistic sophistry with ad hoc nonce rules to arrive arduously at an interpretation of what to me seem to be nothing more than narcissistic aberrations? There seem to be good reasons why the answers to the last two questions should not be in the affirmative.

3.0. First and foremost, let us underline the difference between the media of verbal art and 'pure' representational arts like sculpture, painting etc. 'All art is language'<sup>5</sup> only in the sense that both the verbal art and the representational arts attempt to capture life in all its resplendent beauty and sordid ugliness. They part company in the way they communicate it. When one takes up a piece of architecture, one does

not come to it with a previously established set of conventions,<sup>6</sup> as one does with a piece of verbal art nor does the architect have at the back of his mind a set of pre-established conventions. There is no 'code' in this sense, in Ravi Varma's paintings as you have in literature--a code, a communication medium that is shared across the artist and the connoisseur not only in the piece of art but also elsewhere in life. It is true some modern paintings go uncomprehended but that is NOT because of the barrier of the medium but because of the weltanschauung of the author which you do not share and so do some pieces of verbal art: If you cannot appreciate Kafka's 'The Castle' or Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot' (see Hoffer's article elsewhere in this issue) it is not because of the medium but because of the complex nature of the message.<sup>7</sup> Sol Saporta (1960), while ruling out the analogy language: poetry:: stone: sculpture, points out "the fact that language can be manipulated to serve an aesthetic purpose depends upon the communicative function of language which is part of its definition (whereas) stone has no such function so that no one can say that a knowledge of petrology can contribute to an understanding of sculpture". The ultimate test of the success of a literary composition is whether it has efficiently and effectively made use of this 'communicative function'.

A literary piece may leave one cold for various reasons: (a) because one is not aware of the various underlying 'extra-literary details' that are interwoven into the linguistic code. To give but one example George Orwell's 'Animal Farm' will lose its significance as a political allegory if one has no idea of the Russian revolution and its disillusioning after-effects (b) because one is oblivious to the series of images, symbols, allusions that a writer may invoke to get across his message e.g. T.A. Eliot's 'The Wasteland'; Akam poetry of classical Tamil literature (c) because of lacunae in one's own perceptual apparatus, experiences, sensibilities. e.g. Kafka's 'The Trial' (perhaps all of Kafka's literary output) Beckett's 'Waiting for Godot' or (d) because of radical inroads into linguistic structure e.g., ~~EE~~ Cummings. The first three reasons have to do with the nature of the message or the second order non-linguistic systems like symbolism etc. but not with the medium itself. The last has to do with the medium itself. Once one gets bogged down with the medium itself how can one go on to the message, the underlying sensibilities, which in turn, have implications about life, value systems, etc, which is what one is ultimately interested in? <sup>How</sup> Is poetic license <sup>license</sup> to strike at the very heart of the standard grammar, rendering the very first stage of communication ineffective?<sup>8</sup>

4.0. Language stores in its duality of structure (Martinet's 'double articulation') a tremendous amount of flexibility,

creativity. In its resilience, adaptability to express novel layers of man's experience, his ever changing perceptions and needs lies its viability as a communicative medium: It is realized or is available to the speaker in two ways: (a) Language per se is expressive i.e. one does not have to affront a constraint to express an exigency of thought, a nuance of meaning (b) Language becomes more expressive with some constraints being affronted.

4.1. This is not the place to deal more circumstantially with the inherent expressive energy of language, enormous as it is. Before, therefore, passing on to the (b) part of the expressive power of language, I'll briefly touch on the creative potential of the collocation of lexical items and its implication for literary discourse. The way lexical items--rich as they themselves are--collocate (which is what selectional restrictions are about) constitutes a fertile area of linguistic creativity. This provides the native speaker, the poet, with a linguistic mechanism to perceive the world in a new light, to perceive within the novel interesting and surprising connections between events and entities. It provides for ways (e.g. figures of speech) of expressing the poetic mind in its wildest flights of imagination and of yoking two disparate perceptions on a single plane. Utterances like 'she is a kid', (metaphor) of someone who is biologically and legally an

adult, 'I am a living corpse' (oxymoron) 'I drank four pegs' (metonymy) 'My house is a skyscraper' (hyperbole) 'I had a sleepless night' (transferred epithet) 'constipation of ideas' 'you are still green in my memory' (attribution of a physical quality to a non-physical entity). 'Janata Party has been a disappointment' (equation of a concrete noun with an abstract noun), 'Giridhar is Giridhar' are really compressions and would be outrages on our common sense if one does not know how such patently incompatible words can be brought together or in the last example how a seeming tautology is, in fact, not one. The second instance of 'Giridhar' refers to a quality in the man exemplifying another important feature of individual words viz. that they are not univocal but have poly-dimensional multiplex referential potential, deriving a particular meaning/reference from the linguistic environment in which they occur. This has two implications for poetic discourse: (1) in all figurative language, there is a methodological principle at work--the principle of economy--which is tailor-made for poetic expression; (2) exploring this basic quality of language, a poem in its tightly knit, derarefied world may generate novel, fresh meanings in its own setting--meanings which can potentially reverberate against one another and against the totality of the poem, making for the richness of poetic texture.

4.2. Now on to the expressive power which is gained by violating<sup>9</sup> some constraints. It seems to be obvious that the creative open-endedness of language is essentially semantic and

only peripherally, if at all, structural. Language is much more fluid, dynamic than (the now theoretically anachronistic?) semantic rules called selectional restrictions or SR's henceforth, can account for. At the risk of flogging a dead horse, I give below one example from Kannada (a South Dravidian language) of how SR's go overboard in our diurnal lingo. Let us see how one can go about writing an SR for the motion verb /baa/ 'to come' in a Kannada grammar. An SR requiring an animate subject ('typically' animate to include automata) will die a still-born death, as all the examples below (1) through (13) show an inanimate NP as the subject and they are extremely common in Kannada. A more plausible and attractive SR will specify that the referent of the subject--concrete or abstract--will become a property or attribute (physical or mental)--it was not before--of another NP in the sentence, cf. sentence (2) through (7). This will generate the ungrammatical sentence (10). Sometimes, the subject may be the object created--an object which was not in existence but has come into existence, cf. (9). This does not account for the ungrammaticality of (11), where /hū/ 'flower' has sprung into existence, cf. the felicitous (11a). As sentence (12) illustrates, the subject may be a time NP which is not the time of the locutionary act. But this SR is countered by the ungrammatical (13). One has to think of yet another SR where the subject is

is required to be a place NP, which the interlocutor is about to reach, cf. (1). One has to add to all these SR's another where the subject is a 'typically' animate NP. Note that the thirteen sentences do not exhaust all representative Kannada sentences which have /baa/ 'to come' (or its different forms) as the predicate.

1. maisuur<sup>1</sup> bantu<sup>2</sup>  
'Mysore (a toponym)<sup>1</sup> came<sup>2</sup>
2. ii<sup>1</sup> lekhanakke<sup>2</sup> ondu<sup>3</sup> akara<sup>4</sup> bandide<sup>5</sup>  
'To<sup>2</sup> this<sup>1</sup> paper<sup>2</sup> a<sup>3</sup> shape<sup>4</sup> has come<sup>5</sup>
3. nanage<sup>1</sup> sittu<sup>2</sup> bantu<sup>3</sup>  
'To me<sup>1</sup> anger<sup>2</sup> came<sup>3</sup>
4. ∅<sup>1</sup> nagu<sup>2</sup> bantu<sup>3</sup>  
'(to someone)<sup>1</sup> laughter<sup>2</sup> came<sup>3</sup>
5. ∅<sup>1</sup> fə:st klās<sup>2</sup> bandide<sup>3</sup>  
'(to someone)<sup>1</sup> first class<sup>2</sup> came<sup>3</sup>
6. ∅<sup>1</sup> bojju<sup>2</sup> bandide<sup>3</sup>  
'(to someone)<sup>1</sup> paunch<sup>2</sup> has come<sup>3</sup>
7. ∅<sup>1</sup> tiluvalike<sup>2</sup> bandide<sup>3</sup>  
'(to someone)<sup>1</sup> understanding/prudence<sup>2</sup> has come<sup>3</sup>
8. iiga<sup>1</sup> uuta<sup>2</sup> bartade<sup>3</sup>  
'now<sup>1</sup> meal<sup>2</sup> will come<sup>3</sup>
9. bele<sup>1</sup> bandide<sup>2</sup>  
'crops<sup>1</sup> have come up<sup>2</sup>
- \*10. ∅<sup>1</sup> ondu ishta<sup>2</sup> bandide<sup>3</sup>  
'(to someone)<sup>1</sup> a desire<sup>2</sup> has come<sup>3</sup>

- ?11. ondu hu<sup>-1</sup> bandide<sup>2</sup>  
 'A flower<sup>1</sup> has sprouted<sup>2</sup>
- 11a. ondu hu<sup>-1</sup> agide/bittide<sup>2</sup>
12. disembar<sup>1</sup> barli<sup>2</sup>  
 'let<sup>2</sup> december<sup>1</sup> come<sup>2</sup>
- \*13. hanmeradu gante<sup>1</sup> barli<sup>2</sup>  
 'let<sup>2</sup> 11 o'clock<sup>1</sup> come<sup>2</sup>

The above analysis shows that it is difficult to abstract a single feature even in this limited data which can be formalized in the form of an SR for the verb /baa/ 'to come'. In a word, "the concept of selectional restrictions is an epistemological blunder of the first rank" (Michael J. Reddy 1969 : 245). This is so not only because the semantic characteristics will prove too complex to be captured in any meaningful generalisation, but also because the 'beliefs of the speaker' about what one can say about what do not seem to be capable of being pinned down at a given point of time.<sup>10</sup>

This unformalizable ambivalence about what can be said about what (with the borderline between linguistic semantics and philosophical semantics becoming much more tenuous, if it still exists) affords the poet, it seems to me, his greatest freedom with language. This is welcome for his because wrestling with and groping for a pattern in his experience he tries to wring new meanings out of the subtleties of his experience with the world (unlike the ordinary speaker who

does not do this as consistently and insistently as the poet). In the bargain semantic rules give way under the pressure of meaning. The result is a set of novel utterances like 'He is suffering from her' (in Saul Bellow's Henderson the Rain King), 'to pleasure soul' (Yeats in 'Among School Children' to avoid the sense of self-effacement in the verb 'to please'), 'perform leisure' from 'perform work', 'sun-drenched ground' from 'rain-drenched ground', 'two miles ago' or 'a grief ago' from 'an hour ago' and so on. Pressure on more basic semantic constraints (if they can be called 'constraints' at all, cf. footnote 9) results in literary utterances like 'a green thought in a green shade' (Marvel), 'when skies are hanged and oceans drowned' (e.e. cummings). It is relatively easy to find motivation in a literary setting for such semantic breakthroughs rather than for structural innovations like 'Once below a time' (Dylan Thomas) 'I am tireder' (Hemingway in 'The Old Man and the Sea'), the cummingsyian 'a pretty how town' and that arch example of a structural violation 'he danced his did'.

Poetic discourse exemplifies best the dictum (which runs counter to the whorfian hypothesis) that language originates in extralinguistic situations, in experiences and ideas. As Anoop Chandola (1975) puts it, "It is the experience of the speaker that the language conveys, not the linguistic elements which govern his experience ... the speaker's free will has a lot to do with the gradual changing of the language".<sup>11</sup> The

burden of this paper is that the 'gradual change' effected in literary discourse is, in essence, in the (current?) compatibility of semantic material and not of structural material.

5.0. Even the semantic innovations, however, are not totally unbridled as suggested by a Somerset Maugham passage (1941 : 265) quoted in Bolinger (1968):

'In books on logic, they will tell you that it is absurd to say that yellow is tubular or gratitude heavier than air; but in that mixture of incongruities that makes up the self, yellow may well be a horse and cart and gratitude the middle of next week.'

Analogous to phonological gaps, there can be semantic gaps in a language. An example of a possible semantic gap-- 'lexical gap' for a lexicologist--would be the absence in English of 'a word that bears to plants the relation that "corpse" bears to animals' (Chomsky 1965 : 232). Such semantic gaps will or can never be filled, like structural gaps. An example of a possible structural gap in English is the absence of an interrogative ordinal. 'Whichth' would be banal, it seems to me, even if it were to be coined by Shakespeare. A semantic constraint on the creative potential of 'an hour ago' is that the word that precedes 'ago' must refer to something that can pass away with time so that a phrase like 'two skies ago' is inconceivable.

5.1. Further, if a language has polite imperatives, it would be incongruous in ordinary speech to utter them in an

angry or irritated tone of voice. But such apparent incompatibilities are made compatible in literature, especially in drama for a specific effect. Paradox, as has been recognized, is legitimate method in literature.

5.2. Pronominalization in English in non-embedded sentences is usually forward so that (2) below is ungrammatical.

(1) John<sub>i</sub> went home. He<sub>i</sub> was tired.

\* (2) He<sub>i</sub> was tired. John<sub>i</sub> went home.

John and He should not be co-referential if (2) has to be grammatical, as in (3).

(3) He<sub>i</sub> was tired. John<sub>j</sub> went home.

It seems this condition has to be relaxed in literature. It is possible to conceive of a literary composition which starts a discourse straightaway with a pronoun. After a series of occurrences of the pronoun, the writer connects them with an occurrence of a proper noun by making it clear (not explicitly, of course) that the actions/descriptions attributed to the pronoun, and those of the proper noun are of the same individual. But the poet can take no further liberties. For example, as has been seen (postal 1969 :214) NP's with compound derivatives as attributes behave as 'anaphoric islands' and continue to be impervious to the process of anaphora:

1. The girl with long legs<sub>i</sub> wants to insure them<sub>i</sub>

\*2. The long legg<sub>i</sub>-ed girl wants to insure them<sub>i</sub>

5.3. Poets have broken through subcategorization restrictions with success: 'I all alone beweepe my outcast state'

(Shakespeare: Sonnet no. 29) 'a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage' (Shakespeare: Macbeth). In these examples, an intransitive (to bewep and to strut, to fret) is made transitive. But not all intransitive verbs tolerate being made transitive. e.g.\* one year elapsed me, where an intransitive verb 'elapse' has been transitivized. Furthermore, the converse viz. a transitive being made an intransitive seems to be banal and may even indicate a total reversal of the intended meaning as in a language like Angami Naga (a Tibeto-Burman language spoken in North-East India). In Angami, which has no structural passive, a transitive verb like 'to kill' obligatorily takes a syntactic object. If the object is deleted one gets a passive sentence, the surface subject itself becoming the underlying object. An Angami poet, therefore, cannot take the liberty of deleting the object and still hope to retain the active sense.

5.4. Poets cannot affront presuppositions that underlie sentences. The sentence or clause which follows each sentence in the set of examples below violates the presupposition that underlies the first sentence, rendering the whole discourse ungrammatical/nonsensical.

- \*1. I realized/remembered/forgot/knew<sup>12</sup> that I was late but I was wrong.
- \*2. Rama chased the deer which was following him.
- \*3. I am a bachelor. My wife is a gynecologist.
- \*4. If I were the President of India.....  
(spoken by the President of India himself).

5.5. Poets cannot violate properties, which are peculiar to particular verbs. The epistemic verb 'to know' has this semantic property about it: 'knowing' is something that 'happens' and not something that you 'do' (cf. The Buddha's Enlightenment) so that the following remain banal.

\*1. I knew it for her sake.

\*2. I knew it reluctantly.

?3. If you want to know it, you can do so at 10 o'clock.

5.6. Grinder and Elgin (1972) talk about possibilities and non-possibilities in one's exploration of language in TG terms. I cannot but sum them up here. They point out, lines like

..... the ocean  
wanders the streets are so  
ancient .....

(e.e. cummings)

are possible because of what they call 'Overlap deletion' (possible only in poetic discourse) which deletes one instance of 'the streets' under identity with the other. But this transformation is subject to three constraints:

(a) The condition of phonological identity (not necessarily co-referential)

You can, thus, have  
she will kiss you  
you will kiss me —————> she will kiss  
you will kiss me

but not

she will kiss him  
he will kiss me —————> \*she will kiss him/he will kiss  
me

Notice that the syntactic functions of the identical elements may be different. In fact, they are, in the above example:

one of the identical elements is a subject and the other an object.

(b) They should have the same lexical reading i.e. they should belong to the same lexical category.

Thus,

Never tell a lie

lie in my bed → \*Never tell a lie in my bed

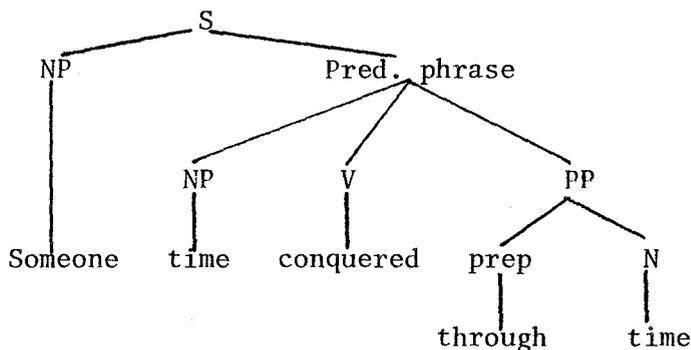
One of the phonologically identical elements is a noun and the other a verb.

(c) The sequences should be dominated by separate s-nodes at the time 'overlap deletion' applies.

Only through time time

is conquered → \*Only through time is conquered

(T.S. Eliot in Four Quartets : Burnt Norton)



One cannot delete one instance of 'time' in the above example without destroying the underlying structure because the two identical elements are dominated by the same s-node. Eliot, unlike a cummings, realizes this, albeit unconsciously



among many such in Ramanujan's poetry is in his poem entitled 'roomina markettinalli - In the Roman Market'. In the sixth stanza, the last lines read

aretereda<sup>1</sup> baq  
 yolage<sup>2</sup> baayi<sup>1</sup>  
 ttu<sup>3</sup>  
 muttiṭṭe<sup>4</sup>  
 half-open<sup>1</sup> mouth  
 -in<sup>2</sup> placed the  
 mouth and<sup>3</sup>  
 kissed<sup>4</sup>

The severing of /ṭṭu/ in the third line goads the reader to have two significant readings: (a) the interlocked state of the two organs and (b) the process of the two organs coming together.<sup>13</sup> But there are violations galore in Ramanujan's poetry (and this is what is germane to this paper) which, it seems to me, serve no purpose whatsoever (like the purpose of two readings as we saw just now) because of a constraint which is built-in the language.

Notice the following lines

sthairyada<sup>1</sup> kancu<sup>2</sup> kayisi<sup>3</sup> dehadacci<sup>na</sup>  
 na<sup>4</sup> mule mulegu<sup>5</sup>, kaluguru<sup>6</sup> kaiberaḷu<sup>7</sup> mugutudi<sup>8</sup>  
 (tata kutidda - Grandfather had sat)  
 steadiness-of-mind-of<sup>1</sup> bronze<sup>2</sup> having-heated up<sup>3</sup>  
 mould/shape-of-the-body-~~7~~ of<sup>4</sup> to every corner,<sup>5</sup>  
 toe-nail<sup>6</sup> finger,<sup>7</sup> tip of the nose<sup>8</sup>  
 ii<sup>1</sup> nimisa<sup>2</sup> huttida<sup>3</sup> kuusi<sup>4</sup> -ge  
 ge<sup>5</sup> akaṣa<sup>6</sup> niiliye<sup>7</sup> kannu<sup>8</sup>  
 (banna - colour)  
 this<sup>1</sup> minute<sup>2</sup> that-which-is-born<sup>3</sup> child<sup>4</sup> -to  
 -to<sup>5</sup> sky<sup>6</sup> blue-emph.<sup>7</sup> eye<sup>8</sup>

The first lines of these two parts of poems cannot stand alone so that neither "sthairyada kancu kāyisi dehadacci" nor "ii nimiṣa huṭṭida kūsi" makes any sense. In other words, the tearing apart of a bound morpheme serves no purpose.<sup>14</sup>

6.0. It seems to me that the kind of radical structural violations that cummings resorts to are not even a theoretical possibility. A conglomeration of 'word salads' (to use a katzian phrase) which many of cummings' poems are, are a theoretical possibility only in the sense in which many of the dialogues in a play like 'Waiting for Godot' are: verbal nonsense (the 'medium') conveying the 'message' of absurdity (see elsewhere in this issue). They are not a sedulous attempt to find an outlet, out of the 'balanced tension' of the poetic state of mind but rather spring from a childish propensity for surprise and variety or out of the adult's predilection for intellectual gymnastics, like the slesha poetry in Tamil.

6.1. Radical structural violations carry the 'focus-on-the-code' feature of poetic discourse to the wrong logical extreme.<sup>15</sup>

6.2. Are all structural violations necessarily 'poetic' because they appear in a formal collection of poems? How does one decide about the literariness of a 'he danced his did'? How does one decide what cummings meant by 'he danced his did' warranted such a transgression, given the existing resources? Doesn't the fact that linguists are still not unanimous about the reading of 'he danced his did' and the realization that one probably needs a peep into cummings' own mind defeat one of the basic

objectives of linguistic and literary theory? These questions must present themselves to anyone who believes that a creative writer, unlike a painter, is manipulating a socially motivated and shared code and not a privately invented language.

6.3. Frank Bliss and E.K. Mac Comac (1977 : 240) arguing against the adequacy of the current paradigms to explicate poetic texts say: "To reject poetry as ungrammatical and therefore not worthy of linguistic description puts a theory of language into a procrustean bed." There is a solid, largely immutable procrustean bed as far as the structural framework of a language is concerned. Any system of communication implies or presupposes such a procrustean bed. If a poet comes up with a phrase like 'two man' because 'two men' is redundant, one has to put him in the procrustean bed and dismiss the poetic quality of the phrase summarily.

7.0. Let us not, to conclude with an analogy, be like the psychologist who would account for any delinquent behaviour (e.g. rape of a girl) by some rationalisation or the other while forgetting the important fact that an individual--except for pathological cases--must conform to some behavioural norms to live in a society. Language, as Sapir pointed out, "is probably the most massively resistant of social phenomena." Does not the banality of most of cummings' poetry prove this?



<sup>4</sup>There is no implication here that figurative or metaphorical density is exclusive to literary discourse, as is often alleged. In fact, an open ear to a day's verbal exchanges will reveal that metaphor(ising) is central to our thinking and that it often constitutes an essential indispensable feature of mundane discourse. Metaphor in everyday speech may be frozen or may not be. I need hardly illustrate.

<sup>5</sup>I exclude 'music' from the discussion here because music, at its best, holds a special place in the realm of representational arts. Being the most freely creative of all arts, and existing as a construct of the human mind, rather than as an attempt to represent life it may have no 'communicative function'. It may have only affective function. In an ascending order of the level of abstraction, one has: theatre → literature → architecture → painting → music.

<sup>6</sup>Obviously the reference here is to 'societal' conventions and not to conventions which are peculiar to a particular art or to a genre in that art.

<sup>7</sup>This, perhaps, is one of the senses of Kafka's statement that ordinary language is soporific whereas language in a literary framework is not. The latter sets you thinking.

<sup>8</sup>To confront e.e. cummings' poetry (73 Poems) is not only to come face to face with a language with on common basis with the standard grammar but also to be forced to believe that English -- the English that Shakespeare, Yeats, Eliot used with such distinction -- is hopelessly inexpressive with its existing resources.

<sup>9</sup>To distinguish between 'violate' and 'explore' and to say with A.K. Ramanujan (1974) (personal communication) that " 'poetic language' is certainly not a 'violation' but an 'exploration' of language" seems to be an insightful proposition and would be true to the spirit of this paper. Thus, roughly a phrase like 'man the' or 'two man' would be violations and 'colourful red thoughts wake up easily', 'Golf plays John', 'The moon smiles' and the like would be explorations.

<sup>10</sup>Gopnik (1973), for an exposition of the inadequacy of the current theories to account for, in a principled way, the speaker's intuition of semantic well-or ill-formedness.

<sup>11</sup>Bolinger (1968) gives another interesting example of this "free will". It is also an example of the seed of creativity/flexibility in the stable core. The reflexive, in English while meaning "X operates on X" also means that X is viewed as indissoluble with emphasis on the undivided ego (strengthened by the appositive use in I myself). If the speaker wishes to dissociate himself, he has the means to do it by avoiding the reflexive. A song, says Bolinger, popular about 1921, had the lines, "I love me, I love me, Oh how I love myself". In a popular film (about 1959) the hero, who has just spilled perfume on himself is told "I do not see how can you resist you!"

<sup>12</sup>But curiously a sentence like "I remembered the wrong things" is perfectly felicitous, meaning, "some things came to my mind and they turned out to be wrong".

<sup>13</sup>The "violations" will be significant only if the two readings tie up significantly with or contribute to the poem as a whole. If they do not (I am not sure they do), they are also "exercises", aren't they?

<sup>14</sup>This is as far as I can see. I may well be myopic!

<sup>15</sup>Note that one cannot invoke the basic maxim, "language can potentially express anything" as an argument against structural violations because language can express anything periphrastically while the attempt in poetic expression is towards holophrasis, towards making the maximal use of minimum resources.

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