

Nature is a primary focus in the works of E.E. Cummings and the works of Wallace Stevens, but while Cummings advocates the wild, primal energy of nature, Stevens focuses on how human imagination can control and order nature, giving it meaning and significance. *Shargen focus*

The poem "When serpents bargain for the right to syrium!" by E.E. Cummings, presents a series of natural images which are in conflict with each other, such as, "when thorns regard their roses with alarm" (Cummings). This line demonstrates an unnatural conflict between usually harmonious natural objects. This poem continues to present natural objects in opposition with each other, mirroring the human conflicts which exist within society. "A wave is forced to sign" on the dotted line / or else an

ocean is compelled to close" (Cummings). Natural events are being ~~seen~~ personalized ~~with~~ with human ~~the~~ conventions and in this way Cummings is showing how absurd these social conventions really are, when compared to Nature in its reality. In this poem we see that "the oak begs permission of the birch / to make an acorn" (Cummings), which is absurd because plant life co-exists in a harmonious way that human society seems incapable of achieving. Each image presented by Cummings begins with the term, "when", implying a conditional time. "when serpents bargain for the right to squirm" (Cummings), shows that at such a time ~~that~~ when plants or animals must beg or bargain to do what comes naturally.

to them, only "then will believe in that incredible /
unanimal mankind (and not until)" (Cummings). This last
couplet of the poem demonstrates Cummings' preference
for the primitive world to which humans belong, but
from which they have separated ^{via} through social conventions.
Cummings is presenting a conditional question: when ~~will~~
Natural creatures begin to act in ^{an} ~~artificial~~ unnatural fashion
which mirrors the activity of human society, then will
believe that humans (who are animals) are not animals.
Cummings sees ~~the~~ humans as part of nature and the
idea that we are somehow above or beyond nature is just
a fictional convention imposed on people through
the unnatural conventions of society. Only when nature
itself becomes artificial will Cummings begin to accept

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It needs
to be done

The idea that humans should behave so artificially.

For Cummings, human society should attempt to

imitate nature because true humanity is part of nature.

Humans are part of nature as animals, and the problems

good
analysis

which arise in society are caused by the denial of

humanity's true identity (as nature) as natural, primal

creatures.

Wallace Stevens also focuses on nature in his poems,

but Stevens sees nature as something to be tamed and

ordered by human imagination. In his poem

"Anecdote of the Jar", the speaker places a seemingly

ordinary jar on a hill top and the jar "made the

stony wilderness / surround that hill" (Stevens).

Before the jar was placed there, nature was wild and chaotic, but the jar becomes the center around which ~~order is imposed~~ nature, "sprawled around, no longer wild" (Stevens). It is human imagination which first conceived of the idea of a jar, and it is human imagination which created this particular jar, and it is human imagination which decides to place this jar on the hill. It is human imagination that imposes order on the chaos of nature and gives it meaning. This same idea is evident in Stevens's poem "The Idea of Order at Key West": "The woman in the poem, 'sang beyond the genius of the sea.'" (Stevens), showing that no matter how beautiful the sounds of nature may be, they can't compare to the beauty and genius of sounds produced by the human

good ✓

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imagination. Those who listen to this singer in the poem ask, "Whose spirit is this? we said, because we knew / It was the spirit that we sought" (Stevens); it is the human spirit and imagination that give meaning to the world. Without humans imposing meaning on the world, the world is just material matter without any significance. Stevens tells us that, "It was her voice that made / The sky acutest at its vanishing ... She was the single ~~artificer~~ artificer of the world / In which she sang." (Stevens). It is human agency which creates the world that humans exist in. The sounds of the sea are described as, "meaningless plungings of water and the wind," but when a human

being uses language to impose order on that chaos,

"when she sang, the sea, / whatever self it had,

became the self / that was her song, for she was

the maker." (Stevens). Human imagination creates

meaning from the meaningless noise of nature, ~~transforming~~

~~transforming~~ imposing order on natural chaos.

Both Stevens and Cummings view nature as

~~transforming~~ a wild force, but while Cummings prefers

the wild, primal energy of nature, claiming that ^{it} is the

true nature of humanity which we've forgotten, Stevens

proposes that human beings are improving nature by

taming it and putting it in order through the use of

imagination, transforming it by viewing it from another

perspective, dreaming what it could be.