

## Richard F. Dietrich: On "Space being (don't forget to remember) Curved"

Cummings' "Space being...Curved" embodies a sarcastic and satirical protest against the way certain scientific theories appear to confine the spirit of humanity within a predictable and mechanical universe. The poem is structured around a contrast between two spherical images--the first that of Einstein's "curved universe," the second that of a billiard ball. The contrast points up the discrepancy between what Cummings understands the science of his day presumes--to explain the universe in a way that seems arrogantly to assign the role of creator to home sapiens--and what technology actually does with science--murder elephants to make billiard balls out of ivory (the "compassionate digit" ironically referred to is the "trigger finger"). Contrasted to what science presumes--to encompass the universe--technological achievement is ironically small, trivial, and destructive.

from Richard F. Dietrich, "Form and Content in Cummings' 'Space being...Curved.'" *Notes on Contemporary Literature* 12 (Nov. 1982): 5.

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