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PRETENTIOUS SCANSION, FASCIST AESTHETICS, AND A FATHER-COMPLEX FOR JOYCE: E. E. CUMMINGS ON SAPPHICS AND EZRA POUND

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This paper considers a Sapphic poem written by E. E. Cummings: 'the phonograph may(if it likes)be prophe', which takes aim at Ezra Pound's relationship to the classical tradition and in particular at Pound's classicising use of quantitative metre. Cummings' humourous but biting poem comments on Pound's literary ideas in the light of his fascist politics. Cummings' poem constructs a layered discussion about ownership of the Classical tradition and about the privileging of the Classical aesthetic versus the English ear in English-language poetry. Thus Cummings offers both a critique of Pound and, implicitly, a literary argument concerning the role of the Classics in English verse.

Among the poems of E. E. Cummings which were collected together posthumously in *Etcetera: The Unpublished Poems* (1983) is a lightly written but savagely honest account of Ezra Pound, probably composed in the early 1940s.[1] This sharp poem seems not to have attracted scholarly comment, but it is well worth attention.[2] The poem is a Sapphic which takes aim at Pound's pretentious classicising aesthetic. Cummings' modernist take on the Sapphic mocks Pound's own relationship to classical form. Cummings targets in

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1 Cummings (1983) 125; reprinted in Cummings (1994) 1016.

2 Even within scholarship specifically devoted to Cummings, the only mention of this poem which I have been able to find is the single remark offered by the editors of *Etcetera*, Firmage and Kennedy, who refer to this poem as 'a good-natured jibe at Ezra Pound's literary debt to Joyce' (Cummings (1983) 117). I am not aware either that anyone has connected the poem specifically with Pound's 'Apparuit', although that is surely Cummings' target (see below).

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particular Pound's idea of recreating classical quantitative metre in English, and in the process he formulates a larger account of the limitations of Pound as a poet.

Cummings' Sapphic on Pound is remarkable for its willingness to confront the relationship between Pound's literary aesthetic and his fascist politics.[3] Most of Pound's circle shied away from confronting this essential problem – and indeed that includes Cummings, most of the time. Cummings was a prominent defender of Pound after his arrest, the abortive trial for treason, and his incarceration on grounds of insanity.[4] However, Cummings' private feelings were more complicated, painful and convoluted.[5] Cummings left his Sapphic unpublished, but it now comes down to us as one of the most exact and incisive critiques of Pound's life and work.

Cummings' poem refers to the 'Sapphics' of A. C. Swinburne as well as implicitly activating 'Apparuit', a poem written by Pound in Sapphic stanzas which imports into English verse the idea of a metre determined by syllable quantity. Pound and Cummings (as well as Swinburne) were all steeped in the Classics, and Classical poetry had a profound influence on all three writers.[6] Cummings' Sapphic on Pound is explicit in its engagement with the Classics, openly naming its own form as Sapphic verse and punning on Latin words. Much of Cummings' own relationship to the Classics is present in the comment which he constructs on Pound's involvement with the Classical tradition. Cummings' poem is light and humourous, but it does not pull punches. It highlights the schoolboy pretentiousness and ineffectual snobbery of Pound's relationship to Classical metre. At the same time, it hints at the connection between Pound's classicising literary

3 Already in the 1920s, Cummings was alive to Mussolini's problematic use of the Classical heritage. In Cummings' play *Him* (1927), Mussolini appears as a character, greeted with fascist salutes and addressed as 'Caesar'; he has been roasting Communists alive, 'four hundred and sixty-five exactly, not including women and children'. See the new edition of *Him* (Cummings (2013) 61–4); cf. English (2004) 91 and 95–6.

4 Norman (1958) 321–4; Kennedy (1980) 405–6; Sawyer-Lauçanno (2005) 464–7. (The Sawyer-Lauçanno biography occasioned some controversy; see the careful and measured review by Webster (2004).) Cummings' public defence of Pound was reiterated in his *six nonlectures* (1953, repr. 1967) 66–70, from which a passage was also reprinted in a pamphlet of brief tributes solicited from major literary figures in commemoration of Pound's seventieth birthday (Auden *et al.* 1956). Robert Graves called Cummings out for his support of Pound in the *nonlectures*: see Graves (1972) 175 (originally published 1954).

5 In his private journal, Cummings wrote about his anxiety and personal distress. ('E' and 'P' here both refer to Ezra Pound.) 'Wish i could disentangle my psyche from E's;to the extent of separating the poet(souvent réussi)& the reformer(accablé de douleurs).' This long entry expresses *inter alia* Cummings' feelings of betrayal: 'As for the ethics:P wrote me that he was retiring(from fascist propagandizing)when the USA entered this war;& would work at translating Confucius. He wrote me that–and he didn't do it'; quoted Sawyer-Lauçanno (2005) 464–5. Webster (2012) explores some of the complexities in Cummings' negative feelings about Pound and his distaste for what Pound had become, as well as the importance of the friendship to both men.

6 While the relationship of Swinburne and Pound to the Classical tradition is well-known, Cummings' relationship to the Classics is less so. Classics was Cummings' principal field of study at Harvard. For work on Cummings and the Classics, see principally Baker (1959) on the quotation of a line from Catullus 3 in Cummings' 'o pr'; Kennedy (1976) esp. 269–79 for Cummings' encounter with the Classics as a Harvard undergraduate, cf. Kennedy (1980) 52–72; Lind (1982), mostly a collation of Greek references in Cummings' work and letters; English (2004), considering Aristophanic influence on Cummings' 1927 play, *Him*.

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snobbery and his fascism. The ultimate cut: Pound's classicising pretentions left him dominated by the knowledge that he could never be the writer that Joyce was.

This paper begins with Cummings' poem, which is dense and merits some unpicking. Section II then turns to Swinburne's 'Sapphics' and Pound's 'Apparuit' and considers the varying relationships to Sapphic metre and form shown by Swinburne, Pound and Cummings. Cummings' poem comes out of the vile behaviour of Pound in Italy in the early 1940s, but it looks beyond its immediate historical context. With the advantage of Cummings' own hindsight, the poem comments on issues which were central to the development of modernism in the 1910s. The modernist move towards free verse was connected to ideas about the natural rhythm and sound of words and the time required to pronounce syllables; these ideas were particularly associated with Pound, his literary circle, and his polemics about the nature of poetry. Cummings' Sapphic distils into a twelve-line poem a moment in his own thinking about Pound, Joyce, and the development of modernism, raising issues also of language, elitism, and ownership of the Classical tradition. Cummings' poem explores the limitations which are created for English verse when it snobbishly privileges the Classical tradition.

I. 'the adventure of Our Ezra'

Cummings' poem can be found in *Etcetera: the unpublished poems* under the rubric 'Late Poems: 1930–1962'. The editors of *Etcetera* have not clearly dated the poems that appear within this broad three-decade span, in part perhaps because the process of reworking has not left an absolute chronology. However, it is implicit in the Sapphic that James Joyce is dead (this is explained further below), and Joyce's death gives a *post quem* of January 1941.[7]

Like most of Cummings' poetry, the poem is untitled. Here it is in full.

> the phonograph may(if it likes)be prophe
> tic:for instance let me recount to you,in
> Sapphics quite dissimilar unto A.Swin
> burne's the adventure
>
> of Our Ezra,delver in mines strictly aes
> thetic(short aes long as it happens by ex
> ception)subjects,per what is loosely called a
> Victor Victrola

7 There might also be an *ante quem* of early 1946. Chronological principles seem to have influenced the editors' ordering of poems, and Cummings' Sapphic is followed three poems later by a poem which includes (internally to itself) the date 23 April 1946 (Cummings (1983) 128; (1994) 1019). However, the editors' arrangement is not on sufficiently clear principles to assert this with confidence. Possibly a more exact date could be secured by searching Cummings' manuscripts, to which I have not had access. No enquiries can be made of the editors of *Etcetera*, who are themselves deceased.

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–then right doggishly cocking one ear(bowwow)
our hero heard suddenly His Master's Voice:
"O Ezra, dear Ezra,come home to us now
for the clock in the(yes)steeple strikes(Yes)Joyce"

In approaching this oblique poem it may help to lay out first the main themes and central visual imagery, before turning to a more detailed analysis of the language.

The central visual image is that of Ezra Pound, in the posture of a dog, cocking his ear to the voice of James Joyce on the phonograph, which is 'loosely called a / Victor Victrola'. The 'Victor' is a make of phonograph (from the Victor Talking Machine Company) of which the Victrola is a sub-division.[8] In order to unpick the poem, the reader needs to refer the imaginative eye to an image which was iconic when the poem was written and which is still somewhat familiar now. It is the image of 'Little Nipper', a stocky white dog with floppy brown ears and a red collar, tilting his head into the horn of a phonograph. Above the phonograph is emblazoned 'Victor' in a large splash of lettering and at the bottom of the image is written 'HIS MASTER'S VOICE'. This is the branding ancestor of HMV Records, who still use a descendant of the old image.

The speaker in the poem addresses the reader directly and draws the reader's attention to the form of the poem ('in / Sapphics quite dissimilar unto A.Swin / burne's). The strategy of openly alerting the reader to his poetic form distinguishes Cummings from the studied obscurity of Pound's verse, as well as signalling that form is central to reading the poem. The tone vis-à-vis Swinburne is respectful. Cummings was much influenced by Swinburne and other Decadent poets during his undergraduate years at Harvard.[9] But in spite of Swinburne's early influence on Cummings, the verse here is indeed markedly dissimilar to Swinburne's. Swinburne's style is decadent and aesthetising; Cummings' style is jarring and almost pointedly unaesthetised.

Pound himself is described as pursuing 'strictly aes / thetic ... subjects'. This links Pound with the aesthetised Swinburne and is perhaps even a swipe at Pound, suggesting that Pound's own relationship to Swinburne could be construed as derivative.[10] However, the idea that Pound's work is strictly aesthetic – if that means also apolitical – should not be taken at face value. That suggestion is itself undercut within the poem, in particular by the reader's own knowledge of 'the adventure / of Our Ezra' (discussed in more detail below).

8 For images and very detailed information on the Victor-Victrola see <http://www.victor-victrola.com/> (accessed 5 May 2012).

9 Cummings talks in his second *nonlecture* about a neighbour (a Harvard professor; Cummings grew up in Cambridge, Mass.) who introduced him to Rossetti while he was still at school (1967, 29–30). He first encountered Swinburne's poetry at Harvard as an undergraduate: Kennedy (1976) 272, cf. 291.

10 Like Cummings, Pound was profoundly influenced by Swinburne and by the other Pre-Raphaelites and Decadents. Pound's early poetry is often seen as derivative, and *Ripostes* (in which 'Apparuit, appears) is usually deemed to show the first significant signs of real originality. On early Pound and Swinburne, see Martz's introduction to *Collected early poems* (Pound (1977) vii–xxi) – Martz views 'Apparuit' as 'Swinburnian sapphics' (xx) – and Hamilton (1992) 24–9, esp. 27 for 'Apparuit'. While *Ripostes* looks forward, the Pre-Raphaelite diction of 'Apparuit' in some ways looks backward: see below, n. 32.

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Pound is described as a 'delver in mines strictly aes / thetic(short aes long as it happens by ex / ception)subjects'. The reference to 'short' and 'long' implies Classical quantitative scansion, as opposed to the rhythm of stressed and unstressed syllables which forms the basis for metre in English verse. Cummings' emphasis on Sapphic form combines with these comments on metre, and together they direct the reader towards Pound's own Sapphic 'Apparuit', which is also Pound's only published foray into fully quantitative metre.[11]

Our Ezra and other Ezras

The poem says nothing explicit about Pound's fascism. But what is 'the adventure / of Our Ezra'? Any reader knows already what sort of adventure Ezra Pound has been on. He came from America (via Venice) to England, and then moved (via Paris) to Italy, where he lived for more than two decades. During the war, he promoted fascism and Mussolini, spewing poisonous anti-Semitism on the radio. Pound began writing radio scripts for others in 1940 and he began making his own broadcasts in January of 1941.[12] These broadcasts were not live, but pre-recorded, and so they may bear a connection to the choice of the phonograph as the central image in Cummings' poem. Pound recorded broadcasts from 1941 to 1943, and these have since been collected and published (Pound 1978). The poison in these broadcasts can hardly be conveyed by any excerpt, which inevitably dampens the rabid tone and the cumulative effect. But it is important to understand that to call these broadcasts fascist or anti-Semitic is not a case of making any complicated or subtle claim about cultural constructions. These broadcasts (to paraphrase and condense) make repeated, bloodthirsty calls to abandon the fight against Mussolini and Hitler and to destroy instead the 'kikes', kike-sympathisers, and usurers who have rotted Western civilisation and spread a filth worse than typhus.

When the Americans took Italy, Pound fled and spent some time in hiding before his arrest in May 1945. He was then returned to America for trial on a capital charge of treason: 'this selfstyled world's greatest and most generous literary figure' (wrote Cummings in public defence), 'who had just arrived at our nation's capitol, attired in half a GI uniform and ready to be hanged as a traitor by the only country which ever made even a pretense of fighting for freedom of speech', (1967) 69). Many literary friends rallied to his cause, and instead of being convicted of treason, Pound was incarcerated on grounds of insanity.

Cummings' poem might seem to date from around the time of Pound's arrest, if 'come home to us now' contains a reference to Pound's capture and return to America for trial. However, there are other dimensions to this line and it should not be pushed as evidence for the date of the poem. It is better to stick undogmatically with the general dating of sometime after January 1941. Even if the poem was written only shortly after that *post*

11 The experiment in quantitative metre was unique in Pound's corpus, but intimately related to Pound's larger ideas about metre and sound: see below, n. 24 and in particular, Adams (1977) 97; Adams (1988) 58.

12 Doob 'Introduction' (unpaginated) to Pound (1978). See Feldman (2012) for a recent and unflinching consideration of the full extent of Pound's commitment to fascism, with further bibliography.

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quem, Cummings – and likewise any putative reader – would have had knowledge of Pound's fascist activities.[13]

Cummings refers to Pound as 'Our Ezra', which is not standard American diction. To put 'our' in front of a proper name would be common enough in Ireland and in some areas of Britain, but it is not a feature of any American dialect. For the American Cummings, 'Our Ezra' is a marked phrase which raises the question, as opposed to what other Ezra or Ezras? Presumably the other Ezra is the Biblical Ezra; there are few other Ezras of much cultural prominence. (Cummings grew up in an ecclesiastical family: his father was a theologian and Unitarian minister.) The capitalisation of personal pronouns ('Our') which is used here also signals a biblical register. The biblical connection is anticipated in the 'prophe / tic' of the first and second lines, even if, to be exact, the biblical Ezra was a scribe and priest rather than a prophet.

In the biblical account, Ezra led a cohort of exiles back to Judaea by permission of King Artaxerxes of Persia, to join in the rebuilding of the Temple. When he arrived with his followers in Judaea, he was appalled to discover that the exiles who had returned somewhat earlier had begun to marry non-Jewish wives, endangering the purity of the returned community. Ezra, together with other Jewish leaders, set up an enquiry which determined who among the Jews had taken foreign wives; the enquiry forced them to repudiate those wives together with any children born of the marriage.

Neither Pound nor the biblical narrative comes out of the comparison well. Fascist Italy and twentieth-century ideas of racial purity make an uncomfortable lens through which to read the biblical story. At the same time, Cummings' play on Pound's Jewish name ironically highlights Pound's anti-Semitism.[14] Most importantly, by evoking the biblical story, the poem establishes that 'the adventure of Our Ezra' involves politics, fascism and ideas about national purity. Without requiring any more explicit reference to Pound's political activities, the poem summons the force of the reader's knowledge. Pound's fascism is the backdrop to the poem's biting comment on Pound's poetic style.[15]

The phonograph

By the 1940s, the phonograph or gramophone itself had potentially fascist connotations for the modernists, although these associations are not univalent. It has been argued, for example, that while Woolf in her novel *Between the Acts* associates the gramophone with

13 Cummings' familiarity with the radio broadcasts themselves was probably second-hand, since in a letter to Pound he stresses that he does not possess a radio: *Selected Letters* no. 128, dated 21 March 1942 (Cummings (1972) 163); cf. Webster (2012) 57. However, an earlier letter from Cummings to Pound refers to the growing controversy in America surrounding Pound's activities and Cummings' greeting in that letter parodies Pound's broadcast style: no. 126, dated 8 October 1941 (Cummings (1972) 161). If Cummings had really not heard any of the broadcasts, he clearly knew all the same what Pound sounded like on the topics in question.

14 Cf. Cummings' reference to Pound as, among other things, a 'Wandering Jew' in his *Selected Letters*, no. 126 (Cummings (1972) 161).

15 One of the journal's peer reviewers has also made the valuable suggestion that for Cummings, as an American, 'Our Ezra' may suggest our, i.e. America's Ezra – further highlighting Pound's treason.

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fascist control of the mob and the drowning out of individual thought, she also manipulates the meaning of the gramophone in order to create a space for protest against fascism (Pridmore-Brown 1998). Some modernist writers held an elitist prejudice against the gramophone on account of its association with the entertainment of the masses and its role in disseminating supposedly low culture.[16] This dissemination of recorded material could be understood as an attack on true artistic merit and authenticity. 'For modernists, the primary weakness of the gramophone was that it was imitative' (Knowles 2003, 5–6). In Cummings' poem, these ideas of inferiority and imitation colour the image of Pound listening to the voice of Joyce.

The connotations of the phonograph for a modernist authorship and readership are important in dating Cummings' poem to after Joyce's death in January of 1941. The phonograph was associated with death and with the preserved voices of the dead, as well as with the death or loss of the artistic soul in mere mechanical reproduction (Knowles 2003). Most crucially, the image used by the Victor Talking Machine Company would have been widely readable to an earlier audience as the image of a dog listening to the voice – not just of his master – but specifically of his *dead* master, drawing on the sentimental Victorian genre of the pet mourning his master at the graveside (Knowles (2003) 7; Rice (2003) 158–9). When Pound listens on the phonograph to the voice of Joyce, it should be understood as Joyce's posthumous voice. This reading is reinforced by the final two lines of the poem, in which the voice on the phonograph speaks. The voice evokes – or considering the modernist connotations of the phonograph, perhaps we should say 'imitates' – a folksong about death. The final line of the poem also evokes the final lines of Joyce's *Ulysses*, and so Cummings' reader may make a further connection: Joyce himself, earlier in *Ulysses*, summoned the same image of the dog listening to the phonograph in an echo of the burial of Paddy Dignam.[17]

'our hero'

Ear to the phonograph, 'our hero heard suddenly His Master's Voice'. The phrase has a sarcastic and diminishing force. There is something of the modernist anti-hero in the term, especially in context of the reference to Joyce. But where the modernist anti-hero is often an appealing character, this reference to Pound as 'our hero' does not show warmth. There is more warmth in Cummings' frequent references, throughout his poetry and prose, to the 'unhero' or 'nonhero', than there is in the sarcastic 'our hero'.

For Cummings, the sarcasm of 'our hero' connects directly to pride and the inflated ego. He uses the phrase of himself in a letter to his mother, dated 29 March 1941 (and thus from broadly the same time period as his Sapphic):

16 Carey (1992) 42 and 157, briefly in the context of wider points.

17 Joyce (1993) 448. This scene is part of the surreal and dream-like sequence of the 'Circe' section. The dog and Paddy Dignam blend together, and the blurring of dog and man in Joyce brings the scene closer to Cummings' poem. On Joyce: Knowles (2003) 2–4; Rice (2003).

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> "You New Englanders" remarked Charlie Malamuth in Moscow,sagely wagging his handsome head "are strange folk." We are. I began to realise it years ago, when my friend Gilbert Seldes accused me of what he called "the egocentric predicament". If Gilbert had been a Catholic he'd have used another phrase–"the sin of pride." For what he meant was that really,underneath everything,I considered myself pretty dam omniscient. –Well,our hero(being a New Englander)vigorously denied all. But very gradually I began to notice that if something happened which prevented me from doing as I pleased,then(by Jove)I tended to feel downright frustrated:nay,even personally insulted! Talk about "childish"! Maybe,some day,I'll be blessed with a touch of true humility. (Cummings (1972) 159)

Cummings wrote about Pound's stubborn pride in an entry in his personal journal:

> But America did "win this war":therefore,P(having bet a thousand percent on the completely wrong horse)is in trouble. And now he writes me(in effect) that everybody's mistaken except himself! (Quoted in Sawyer-Lauçanno (2005) 465)

Cummings' 'our hero' highlights Pound's insufferable arrogance.

'(Yes)Joyce'

The poem's discussion of Pound's style is framed by the image of his doggish subservience to James Joyce. The final two lines of the poem offer the words which Pound hears as he cocks his ear to the phonograph:

> "O Ezra, dear Ezra,come home to us now
> for the clock in the(yes)steeple strikes(Yes)Joyce"

These lines rework an early American folksong, 'Father, Dear Father' – an appropriate allusion, since the phonograph is after all a means for replaying music. Cummings himself had a life-long love of popular culture.[18] The folksong is sung in the persona of a child, begging a father who is out late after work (presumably drinking) to come home to Mother and to another child, brother Ben, who is ill in the first verse, who worsens in the second verse, and who dies in the third verse.

> Please Father – dear Father – come home with me now.
> The clock in the steeple strikes one.
> You said you were coming right home from the shop.

18 Cummings' love for popular culture: see Mullen (1971). Carey (1992) opened an ongoing debate about modernism and its elitist distaste for the culture of the masses.

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As soon as your day's work was done.
Our fire is all out, and our house is all dark,
And Mother's set watching since tea.
Poor brother Ben is so sick in her arms,
And no one to help her but me.[19]

The first two lines of this verse recur in the song's following verses, repeated verbatim except that the clock strikes two and then three.

Cummings' exploitation of this folksong brings mortality and father issues to the fore. In the song, the child calls a father home. In the poem, the relationship is inverted: when Joyce calls Pound home, there can be no doubt that the father-figure is Joyce. To underline the point, Cummings' steeple-clock strikes – not one, two, or three – but 'Joyce', to whom Pound parenthetically answers 'yes', 'Yes', in allusion to the closing line of Joyce's *Ulysses*: 'and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.'[20]

This image of Pound, dominated by a father-complex for Joyce and by awareness of his own literary inferiority, is the final verdict expressed in Cummings' poem. It is time now to see what lurks behind this cutting verdict. Section II turns to the other poems activated by Cummings: Swinburne's 'Sapphics' and Pound's own Sapphic 'Apparuit'.

19 For song and online voice recording, see the Wolf Collection archive at http://web.lyon.edu/wolfcollection/songs/stuartfather1281.html (accessed 12 May 2012). The Wolf Collection cross-references Brown (1952) vol. III, #24 (pp. 48–50) and Vance Randolph (ed.), *Ozark folksongs* (rev. edn.), 4 vols, University of Missouri Press, 1980: vol. II, No. 308, but of these two, I have only been able to consult the Brown volume. I quote the text as given in the online version from the Wolf Collection; Brown gives two further texts. Variations are minor. Brown attributes the original to Henry C. Work.

20 One of the journal's peer reviewers has queried this reading for two reasons. First, if it is Joyce's voice on the phonograph, why is Joyce referred to in the third-person ('the clock... strikes ... Joyce')? Secondly, in spite of Pound's admitted envy of *Ulysses*, is it plausible to present Pound as having a father-complex for Joyce given that Pound took a paternalistic interest in the young Joyce, aiding his literary career and also helping him out financially? On this second point, I believe that Cummings is dealing with a profound change in Pound and in his own perception of Pound. Cummings himself had something of a father-complex for Pound, but this changed over time and in particular after 1939. See Webster (2012) 49, 53. As Webster observes: 'In many ways the [1939] visit helped Cummings overcome his "FatherComplex" sense of inferiority towards Pound, if only from the shock of meeting the psychically damaged Ezra in the flesh.' Pound was now 'someone to be pitied' (53). The financial help which Cummings (and others) gave to Pound for his defence fund (see Norman (1958) 299) was another role reversal. In the 1940s, Pound also lost the role of literary fixer – this loss hit him personally very hard, and he turned to Cummings in hopes that Cummings could recreate something like this role for him (Webster (2012) 57–8). Pound became almost childlike at times in the 1940s, and I think it is plausible to read Cummings as suggesting the father-complex for Joyce in the context of these various aspects of role-reversal. As for the textual point – that if it is Joyce's voice, he refers to himself in the third person – I don't think that this is impossible, given the way that Joyce plays with shifting voices in his own work. It is not surprising to find Joyce 'singing' in Cummings' poem. Joyce was a serious singer and even contemplated a singing career: Ellmann (1982) 126, 150. One could argue that the voice on the phonograph is an impersonal voice, singing to Ezra Pound about Joyce. But Pound is listening to 'His Master's Voice'. (The fact that the master is Joyce is reinforced by the Voice/Joyce rhyme.) I think therefore that it must be Joyce's voice itself that Pound is listening to. In any case, the essential point is that Joyce is dominant in this relationship. My thanks to the reader for raising these valuable questions.

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II. 'carven in subtle stuff'

Swinburne's 'Sapphics'

Cummings' poem advertises its own form as 'Sapphics quite dissimilar unto A.Swin / burne's'. A. C. Swinburne's Pre-Raphaelite 'Sapphics', from *Poems and Ballads* (1866), are beautiful and fluid. His poem talks of Sappho's choice in favour of music and lesbian love, defying 'the white implacable Aphrodite' and her heterosexual Loves. In his final two stanzas, Swinburne imagines that the ghosts of Sappho and her lesbian poet lovers can still be heard:

73 Bý the grév seá-síde, unassuáged, unheárd óf,
74 Únbelóved, unseén in the ébb of twílight,
75 Ghósts of oútcast wómen retúrn laménting,
76 Púrged not in Léthé,

77 Clóthed abóut with fláme and with teárs, and sínging
78 Sóngs that móve the heárt of the sháken heávén,
79 Sóngs that breák the heárt of the eárth with pítý,
80 Heáring, to heár thém.[21]

Swinburne's verse is metrically impeccable. The understanding of the Sapphic form here is the one which Swinburne, Pound and Cummings all share, viz. three lines of the form:

– ⏑ –×– ⏑⏑ – ⏑ – –

and a final (Adonic) line of the form:

– ⏑⏑ – –.[22]

It is a difficult metre to achieve in English. The last syllables of each line present a particular challenge: the double stress of the spondee does not come easily in English in that final foot position. Rudyard Kipling's Sapphic poem 'The Craftsman', for example, takes the easier

21 Swinburne 1925) 333–5. Scansion marks are mine, not Swinburne's.

22 For the ancient Sapphic form: West (1982) 32–3; Morgan (2010) 181–9. Complications within the Greek or Latin Sapphic forms do not have much bearing on Swinburne, Pound and Cummings. Pound expressed scorn for Horace's second foot spondees (see below, n. 30). Swinburne seems to be expressing the classical *caesura* as well as interacting with the basic metre, with strong pauses in some of his lines indicated by a semi-colon or occasionally other mark of punctuation. He does not apply any strict rule about the *caesura*; what the reader senses, though, is that the aesthetic of the *caesura* is reflected in his verse, e.g. 'Faded all their crowns; but about her forehead,' (l. 33), 'Paused, and almost wept; such a song was that song.' (l. 39). It is equivocal whether Pound's 'Apparuit' captures a relationship to the classical caesura; Regier (1980) 322 thinks that it does.

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road and ends many lines (both main and Adonic) with the trochee. (We will return to Kipling's poem briefly later.) There is perfectly good precedent in English verse for taking the last syllable of the Adonic line as free ¯˘˘¯×, but it seems to me that Swinburne aims for ¯˘˘¯¯, and it is his form that lies behind Pound and Cummings. The Sapphic metre is a challenging metre in English, and Swinburne rises to the challenge. Some of Swinburne's line-ends are particularly stylish: 'unsándálled', 'revértéd'. Monotony at the line-end is avoided with an impressive array of one, two, three and four syllable words. In an eighty-line poem, there are only perhaps nine lines where it is hard to credit the full double stress at the line-end.[23]

The discipline of Swinburne's metre is a large part of what makes his verse so compelling. Swinburne exploits the distance between the Sapphic rhythm and the natural rhythm of the English language and uses it to create a haunting voice. The rhythm of Swinburne's lines pulses without being in any way sing-song. A reader who did not know the Sapphic metre could learn it from this poem: the lines themselves lodge the metre in the reader's mind, and the metre builds and draws the reader in. Writing about beauty and music, Swinburne manages to write lines which are themselves beautiful and musical and which find the lyric potential of the Sapphic in English. The otherworldly quality of his own verse engages the reader in listening as if to the echoes of Sappho's music.

Pound's 'Apparuit'

Pound's 'Apparuit', from *Ripostes* (1912), imports into English verse the Greek and Latin idea of syllable quantity. *Ripostes* represents the shift to Imagism which became a defining move in Pound's poetic trajectory. 'Apparuit' itself is closely connected to Pound's lifelong interest in 'absolute rhythm' – the idea that words possess inherent and absolute qualities of rhythm, emotion and music.[24] 'Apparuit' remains essential to understanding Pound's poetic trajectory, although he came to abandon its limiting attempt at classicising quantities in favour of a looser approach to rhythm (cf. Martin (2012) 182–3). It might be surprising that Cummings returned to this 1912 poem when, approximately three decades later, he was struggling with what Pound had become. Cummings could have taken aim at the more recent poetry, but perhaps that would have been too easy: 'Pound may or may not

23 l. 2 ('feather'); l. 32 ('laurel'); l. 33 ('forehead'); l. 35 ('summer'); l. 36 ('ever'); l. 45 ('departing'); l. 51 ('chosen'); l. 61 ('scattered'); l. 63 ('faces') seem not entirely convincing. The reader's expectation can create stress when an equivocal syllable falls in a stressed position, so scanning a poem like Swinburne's 'Sapphics' is a subjective exercise.

24 For Pound on metre, see in particular the 'Treatise on Metre' in his *ABC of reading* (1961) 195–206; Adams (1977) and (1988); Carne-Ross (1967), cf. Carne-Ross (1964), 34–5; and the very recent discussion in Martin (2012), 181–7, which lays out both the arrogance and the elitism of Pound's pronouncements on metre. Pound desired (as Martin puts it at 186) to control the discourse of metre, so as to 'position himself as the arbiter and authority'. For the basics on *Ripostes* in the context of Pound's literary evolution, see Witemeyer (1999) on Pound's early poetry; Carr (2009) on Imagism, esp. 354–5; Hamilton (1992) for the French Symbolist and post-Symbolist debt, esp. 14, 33–9, 43–5; Moody (2007) 158–81 on a more biographical note. Text of 'Apparuit' from *Ripostes* (1912), rpr. in *Collected early poems* (1977) 182. 'Apparuit' evokes Dante's first sight of Beatrice from *La Vita nuova*.

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be now "insane"–most certainly he isn't his was;nor has he become his was for years! & never did I feel the "cantos"(except for a line here and there)good . . .'.[25] The young Pound, on the other hand, had influenced Cummings very deeply, and Cummings shared Pound's interest in the musicality of words.[26] It was this early admiration for and literary debt to Pound which Cummings struggled to resolve in his conflicted efforts to distinguish between poet and propagandist.

Here is 'Apparuit' in full, scanned with markings for stress (e.g. Gólden) and markings for long and short syllables (Gōldĕn), combined so that both stress and quantity can be read (Gŏldĕn).

APPARUIT

1 Gŏldĕn rŏse thĕ hoŭse, ĭn thĕ pŏrtăl Ī săw
2 theĕ, ă mărvĕl, cărvĕn ĭn sŭbtlĕ stŭff, ă
3 pŏrtĕnt. Lĭfe dĭĕd dŏwn ĭn thĕ lămp ănd flĭckēred,
4 caŭght ăt thĕ wŏndĕr.

5 Crĭmsŏn, frŏstȳ wĭth dĕw, thĕ rŏsĕs bĕnd whĕre
6 thoŭ ăfăr mŏvīng ĭn thĕ glămŏroūs sŭn
7 drĭnkst ĭn lĭfe ŏf eărth, ŏf thĕ aĭr, thĕ tĭssuē
8 gŏldĕn ăboŭt theĕ

9 Greĕn thĕ wăys, thĕ breăth ŏf thĕ fiĕlds ĭs thĭne thĕre,
10 ŏpĕn liĕs thĕ lănd, yĕt thĕ steĕlў gŏĭng
11 dărklў hăst thoŭ dăred ănd thĕ dreăděd aĕthĕr
12 părtĕd bĕfŏre theĕ.

13 Swĭft ăt coŭrāge thoŭ ĭn thĕ shĕll ŏf gŏld, căst-
14 īng ă-loŏse thĕ cloăk ŏf thĕ bŏdў, cămēst
15 straĭght, thĕn shŏne thīne ŏrĭĕl ānd thĕ stŭnned lĭght
16 făděd ăboŭt theĕ.

17 Hălf thĕ grăvĕn shoŭldĕr, thĕ throăt ăflăsh wĭth

25 From Cummings' journal, quoted in Sawyer-Lauçanno (2005) 465.

26 For Cummings' ideas about the connections between poetry and music, see Antretter (2001). In a note-to-self, Cummings referred to Pound's musicality as 'δωρια', quoted by Antretter at 186 and likely (as Antretter notes) connected to Pound's poem of the same title, also from the collection *Ripostes*. The fact that Cummings picks up on the Greek term underlines his sensitivity to the Classicising connotations of Pound's melopoeia. *Ripostes* greatly influenced Cummings and, among the poems from *Ripostes*, Cummings especially admired 'The Return': see Norman (1958) 43 and 160. 'The Return' can be read as a development out of 'Apparuit'. It is influenced by Sapphic rhythms, but it is not in a strict Sapphic form and it is not quantitative in the same sense as 'Apparuit'. Altogether, it is a less self-involved and more successful poem. See Carne-Ross (1967) and Adams (1977) 105–7.

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strȃnds ŏf lī́ght ĭnwŏ́vĕn ăboū́t ĭt, lŏ́velī-	18
ēst ŏf ā́ll thĭ́ngs, fraíl ā́lăbā́stĕr, ā́h mḗ!	19
swī́ft ĭn dĕpā́rtĭng,	20
Clŏ́thed ĭn gŏ́ldĭsh wḗft, dḗlĭcā́telў pḗrfḗct,	21
gŏ́ne ăs wī́nd! Thĕ clŏ́th ŏf thĕ mā́gĭcā́l hā́nds!	22
Thoū́ ă slī́ght thĭ́ng, thoū́ ĭn ā́ccḗss ŏf cū́nnĭng	23
dā́r'dst tŏ ăssū́me thī́s?	24

There is no external point of reference for the idea of syllable quantity in English, and Pound's approach to quantities is essentially intuitive (cf. Adams (1977)). Pound deals in syllable quantity and not simply in long or short vowels. The ear, for Pound, is the judge. Long syllables are created by agglomeration of consonants only when the consonants actually have the effect of slowing down the syllable, not simply by rule.[27] There are extant recordings of Pound reading some of his own poetry (though not of 'Apparuit' itself).[28] Pound's voice was low and resonant. The 'r's are heavily rolled and slow down the speech. Pound read his poems in a voice assimilated to an Irish accent which he had adopted in London under the influence of W. B. Yeats (Witemeyer (1999) 45). Even more than Yeats, Pound read with an exaggerated variation in syllable length which suggests the influence of Italian language patterns, and this sonorous lingering over long syllables contextualises his idea of quantity in English.

In the scansion of 'Apparuit', the phrase 'with dew' (l. 5) clearly constitutes the most significant metrical defect and was remarked upon unfavourably at the time.[29] Apart from the problems in line 5, assessment of Pound's metrical accomplishment is essentially a matter of personal opinion.[30] To my ear, the greatest weakness of Pound's scansion lies in his treatment of the sound 'ee'. Pound relies heavily (eleven times) on 'ee' for the creation of long quantities, but in a short position he puts the last syllables of 'steely' (l. 10), 'darkly' (l. 11), 'body' (l. 14), and 'delicately' (l. 21).[31] The lack of stress does not seem to

27 See Adams (1977) for discussion of Pound's pronouncements on quantity; note esp. Pound to Mary Barnard about the need to '*hear*' length – 'Whatever the Greeks may have done, one does not *hear* the beginning consonants of a word as musically part of the syllable of the last vowel in the word preceding' (quoted at 105).

28 <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound/x/Pound.php>, accessed 27 July 2012.

29 Adams (1988) 59 and n. 12 for Edward Marsh's criticism, cf. Adams (1977) 104; Moody (2007) 168. Whether or not one allows 'with' as long, 'dew' certainly does not sound short.

30 Adams (1988) 59–8 scans the poem, and I am indebted to his scansion for a check on my own; cf. Adams (1977) 103–4. My scansion differs at some points from his, principally in assigning stress as well as length to the final syllables of lines 5, 8, 9, 12 and 16, but I think they could be read either way. I read the second syllable of 'camest' and 'with' – the final syllables of lines 14 and 17 – as long through the weight of their consonants; Adams reads them as short. Pound prefers a trochee in the second foot: cf. Adams (1977) 104 and (1988) 59, noting Pound's comments in a letter dated 22 January 1934: 'Try writing Sapphics. And NOT persistently using a spondee like that Blighter Horrace, for the second foot. If you really learn to write proper quantitative sapphics in the Amurikan langwidge I shall love and adore you all the days of my life … eh … provided you don't fill 'em with trype.' (*Selected Letters* no. 270, to Mary Barnard; Pound (1950) 252).

31 Cf. 'frosty' in l. 5, which is the same sound pattern; here the 'y' falls in the free fourth-syllable position.

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me to shorten the quantity – that is to say, it does not genuinely take less time to pronounce the 'ee' of these syllables than to pronounce the 'ee' elsewhere. This inconsistent treatment of 'ee' interferes with the reader's attempt to internalise the quantitative project. There are various other minor points; as Adams observes, the first syllables of 'subtle' (l. 2) and 'cunning' (l. 23) are points where 'stress alone makes a short syllable long' (1977, 105; 1988, 60).

The metre has strengths. At certain points a discrepancy between accent and quantity creates tensions in the verse (Adams (1977) 104; (1988) 58). Pound's use of syllables slowed through agglomeration of consonants shows considerable control. Heavy following consonants affect the scansion of: 'lamp' (l. 3); the first syllables of 'crimson' and 'frosty'; 'with', 'bend' (l. 5); the first syllable of 'tissue' (l. 7); 'land' (l. 10); 'hast' (l. 11); 'swift', 'shell', 'cast-' (l. 13); the second syllable of 'camest' (l. 14); 'with' (l. 17); 'strands' (l. 18); (loveli-)'est' (l. 19); 'weft', both syllables of 'perfect' (l. 21); 'wind', 'cloth' and 'hands' (l. 22). These twenty-one examples are not evenly distributed within the poem. Thirteen of the twenty-one fall within four individual lines, and two of those lines are adjacent (ll. 5, 13, 21–2). Pound appreciates that an agglomeration of consonants is more effective in slowing syllable pronunciation when these syllables are clustered together, within lines which are not dominated by long vowels.

There is brilliance in Pound's handling of the idea of quantity in English, but on the whole, it is an unappealing performance. Cummings indicates, in his oblique fashion, that 'Apparuit' is not a very likeable poem, and many readers now would surely be tempted to agree. Pound's choice of register feels as if it serves primarily to open up forms which are useful for their long quantities: longer verb forms ('drinkst', 'dar'dst') and archaic second-person pronouns and possessives ('thee', 'thou', 'thine').[32] The language throughout the poem ('steely', 'darkly hast thou dared', 'dreaded aether') serves metrical convenience and is overcooked. Where Swinburne uses metre to draw the reader in, Ezra Pound holds his reader at arms-length. The metre is a show and the reader's role is to admire. Indeed, Pound was capable of considerable self-indulgence as a poet, and especially when it came to his metrical accomplishments. Concerning his own 'Salve O Pontifex!' from *A Lume Spento* (1908) – a tribute to Swinburne, as it happens – Pound said later, when he chose to reprint it: 'Balderdash, but let it stand for the rhythm.'[33]

The Sapphic form and exploration of the poetic endeavour

The Sapphic in English has emerged as a form particularly suitable for reflecting on the poetic endeavour itself.[34] Such reflection can be offered with a light touch, as in Kipling's

32 The diction recollects the Pre-Raphaelites and Decadents (Swinburne among them), and some scholars have defended it: e.g. Regier (1980) 320. On the diction, see also Hamilton (1992) 6, 35. Some have found the metrical experimentation to be on the whole appealing, even if flawed, e.g. Adams (1988) 60.

33 Quoted by Martz in the introduction (x) to Pound (1977); cf. Moody (2007) 176.

34 For the connotations of the Sapphic form in the Classical tradition, see Morgan (2010) 181–283; see also 1–48 for more general observations about how poetic forms come to carry expectations about subject matter, tone, etc. Collins (1976) also discusses the allusive potential of form, drawing examples from several poets including Cummings' poem 'i sing of Olaf glad and big' which, as Collins suggests, alludes to Classical and post-Classical epic (8–9).

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'The Craftsman' (mentioned above), which opens with Shakespeare in the pub reminiscing about the Cleopatra he had known:

THE CRAFTSMAN

Once, after long-drawn revel at The Mermaid,
He to the overbearing Boanerges
Jonson, uttered (if half of it were liquor,
Blessed be the vintage!)

Saying how, at an alehouse under Cotswold,
He had made sure of his very Cleopatra
Drunk with enormous, salvation-contemning
Love for a tinker.[35]

The poem continues similarly through Juliet, Lady Macbeth and Ophelia, as Shakespeare talks until sunrise.

Where Kipling's exploration of poetic creativity adopts a self-deprecating tone, Swinburne's is in a more consciously elevated register. Swinburne offers a version of Aphrodite's encounter with Sappho, positioned in a close dialogue with the themes and imagery of Sappho's own 'Hymn to Aphrodite'.[36] Swinburne's 'Sapphics' conjure the immortality of Sappho's poetry with the vision of her pale forehead, around which 'Shone a light of fire as a crown for ever. / Yea, almost the implacable Aphrodite / Paused, and almost wept; such a song was that song' (ll. 36–8). Swinburne finds the origin of Sappho's exquisite verse in the Lesbians' rejection of Aphrodite and heterosexual love. From the kisses of the Lesbians, 'Mouth to mouth and hand upon hand' (l. 51), emerges music (ll. 57–60):

Newly fledged, her visible song, a marvel,
Made of perfect sound and exceeding passion,
Sweetly shapen, terrible, full of thunders,
Clothed with the wind's wings.

Swinburne's poem ends with the imprint of the Lesbians on the now empty and haunted land: 'All withdrew long since, and the land was barren / Full of fruitless women and music only'

35 Kipling (1940) 348.

36 Fr. 1. In his *six nonlectures*, Cummings himself refers to Sappho's 'Hymn to Aphrodite' as 'a magically luminous invocation' (1967, 51). Cummings also, apparently, once remarked to friends that Sappho's hymn was the 'Noblest poem, messieurs, noblest poem ever written.' Anecdote from Burton Rascoe's *A bookman's daybook*, quoted Norman (1958) 205; Lind (1982) 146. As an undergraduate at Harvard, Cummings' appreciation of Swinburne went hand in hand with his own study of the Classics. It was one of Cummings' Classics teachers, Theodore A. Miller, who introduced Cummings to the poetry of Swinburne – also of Tennyson, Shelley, Keats, Catullus, Horace and others: Kennedy (1976) 272.

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(ll. 69–70). But the lingering, haunting regret of the last few stanzas does not undercut Swinburne's celebration of Sappho's poetry. Rather the opposite: the pathos at the end of the poem heightens the stirring, unsurpassable, lingering nature of Sappho's music.

Cummings himself explored very similar themes in an early Sapphic poem, dating from his undergraduate years at Harvard. Like Swinburne, Cummings explores lingering and transience, earthly life and poetic glory, and sunset.

SAPPHICS

Whén my lífe his píllar has raísed to heávén,
Whén my soúl has bleéded and buílded wóndérs,
Whén my lóve of eárth has begót fair póéms,
Lét me not línger.

Ére my dáy be troúbled of cóming dárknéss,
Whíle the húge whóle ský is eláte with glórý,
Lét me ríse, and máking my sálutátión,
Stríde into súnsét.[37]

The youthful Cummings, having published these 'Sapphics' in *The Harvard Monthly*, left this poem by the wayside; it was never included in any of his collections. These stanzas lack the majesty of Swinburne's 'Sapphics', whose influence they show to the point of lacking real originality. Cummings has learned directly from Swinburne how to end a Sapphic line. Apart from 'poems' (l. 3), the line endings are either borrowed verbatim ('heaven', 'sunset') or else closely follow Swinburne's language patterns. But while Cummings' early 'Sapphics' are not a masterpiece, they demonstrate his control of Sapphic metre.[38] When Cummings again turned his hand to Sapphic verse for 'the phonograph may(if it likes)be prophe', he adopted a broken and disjunctive metre. This is not because the form was beyond him; his broken form and metre are themselves part of his comment on Pound.

Pound's 'Apparuit' builds on the use of the Sapphic form in English as a form suitable for exploring the nature of poetry itself, but Pound takes this in a different direction from his predecessors. Unlike Kipling, Swinburne or Cummings in his Harvard-era 'Sapphics', Pound does not take poetry directly as his subject matter. But his poem is still about the nature of the poetic endeavour, perhaps more than it is about its ostensible subject

37 Published in *The Harvard Monthly*, Jan. 1916; Cummings (1994) 873. Scansion marks are mine, not Cummings'.

38 Cummings is often associated with free verse and with the development of a visual, Cubist-influenced style, in which the layout of the poem on the page is integral to its meaning and words are frequently broken up into syllables or even individual letters. But he also used many traditional metres and forms including, to name only a few of his forms, Shakespearean and Petrarchan sonnets, ballades, English ballads, haiku, terza rima and Spenserian stanzas. The sonnet remained his most central form; cf. Cummings' own comments in *six nonlectures* (1967) 30.

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matter, which is swamped by the poem's involvement in its own language. 'Apparuit' is driven by its exploration of the nature of metre in English and its attempt to put English metre onto a new footing. The final section of this paper looks specifically at Cummings' response to Pound on matters of form and metre, and at the attitudes to Classical verse and English poetry which the positions of Pound and Cummings variously imply.

Cummings on Pound

Cumming's broken, modernist Sapphic is itself an exploration of the nature of metre in English as well as a comment upon Pound. Pound's 'Apparuit' introduces quantitative metre into English with the idea of creating a richer, supposedly superior English poem. Pound saw himself as working with quantities natural to English, and of course it is perfectly true that the English ear hears long and short vowels and that a native speaker will be sensitive to the time taken to pronounce a word or a syllable. But what Pound most succeeds in doing with 'Apparuit' is making an English poem sound not very much like it was written in English.[39] Cummings punctures such nonsense. If a poem is going to be written in English, then it is the weight of the English language and the English poetic tradition that counts most.

Here is Cummings' poem again, with scansion (mine, not Cummings') marked. Scansion here marks stress; Cummings is certainly not taking the quantitative approach which he implicitly criticises in Pound's work.

the phónográph máy(if it líkes)be próphé	1
tíc:for ínstance lét me recoúnt to yoú,ín	2
Sápphics quíte dissímilar únto Á.Swín	3
búrne's the advéntúre	4
of Oúr Ézra,délver in mínes stríctly aés	5
thétic(shórt aes lóng as it háppens bý éx	6
céption)súbjects,pér what is loósely cálled á	7
Víctor Victrólá	8
–thén right dóggishly cócking óne ear(bówwów)	9
our héro heard súddenly His Máster's Voíce:	10
"O Ézra, dear Ézra,come hóme to us nów	11
fór the clóck in the(yés)steéple strikes(Yés)Jóyce"	12

In the first two stanzas, lines 2–4 and 6–8 scan in perfectly correct Sapphic metre, but lines 1 and 5 do not scan exactly to the Sapphic pattern. In both lines, the first foot is reversed,

39 Adams (1988) 58 observes: 'It is ironic that the poet who flayed Milton for writing English as if it were Latin should have spent so much energy hunting out English quantities.' But Adams' ultimate judgement on 'Apparuit' is sympathetic to Pound: 'The pleasure they [the Sapphic stanzas] bring is the surprise of English words fitting to a Greek metrical frame' (60).

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opening with an iamb (˘ ¯) instead of the Sapphic trochee (¯ ˘); in line 1, this has a knock-on effect also for the second foot. The first metrical assertion of the poem ('the phónográph') is, therefore, an assertion of the primacy of the iambic rhythm – the rhythm which is most natural to the English language. By breaking the Sapphic form in the first two feet of line 1 and in the first foot of line 5, Cummings is also exercising the English first-foot licence. By signalling his relationship to iambic rhythm and by taking this first-foot licence, Cummings taps into aspects of English poetry which are central to the English verse tradition and quite independent of the Classical tradition and Classical metre.

Kipling, Swinburne, Pound and Cummings in his early 'Sapphics' all eschew rhyme, but in these later Sapphic verses, Cummings uses rhyme as another way of asserting the primacy of the English ear. The Sapphic form seems to give way as rhyme takes over. In the first stanza, although lines 2 and 3 rhyme, the stanza could not really be said to be on a rhyme scheme. Rhyme begins to assert itself in the second stanza, which uses half-rhyme on an 'a a b b' scheme. But the impact of the rhyme is softened, firstly because it is only half-rhyme, and secondly because the effect is obscured by the mid-word enjambment of lines 5 to 6 and 6 to 7. However, by the third stanza, the Sapphic has lost significant ground. Here a full line is substituted for the final Adonic line, generating a quatrain on a strong 'a b a b' rhyme scheme. Most of lines 1–8 are enjambed mid-phrase or even mid-word, but none of lines 9–12 are enjambed, which further tips the scales in favour of the rhyme over the broken Sapphic form.

In lines 2–4 and 6–8, it is unlikely to be immediately obvious to a reader how correct Cummings' Sapphic metre is. Most readers will have to get out the pencil and mark the stresses before the accurate Sapphic metre is apparent. While Swinburne seduces his reader into feeling the Sapphic metre in spite of its unfamiliarity, the disjunctive language of Cummings makes it very hard to feel any rhythm. This absence of pulsing rhythm does not come from any lack of metrical artistry. Some of Cummings' scansion is very clever, and 'Víctor Victrólá' could hardly be bettered for witty Adonic rhythm. And yet, Cummings' abrasive, broken language actively disguises the correctness of his metre, as if to deny that the pulse of Sapphic metre can be instinctively felt in English. The lines in which a rhythm does pulse are lines 10–11. The metre of these lines has come under the influence of the folksong, 'Father, Dear Father', which Cummings reworks in lines 11–12. With the four-beat pulse of 'Please Fáther – dear Fáther – come hóme with me nów', imitated in lines 10 and 11, Cummings shows how much more easily the English ear falls into rhythms that are native.

Cummings' assertion of the primacy of English within the context of English poetry is not a broad-brush rejection of non-native forms, as his attitude to Swinburne demonstrates. This non-native quality of the Sapphic rhythm is precisely what Swinburne exploits in order to evoke a scene which is foreign and otherworldly. The unfamiliar metre of Sapphic stanzas naturally creates distance for the English reader, and Swinburne turns that sense of distance into a yearning for Sappho's music. Cummings' respect for Swinburne underlines the point that his disdain for the pretentious use of Classical metre constitutes a comment falling specifically on Pound.

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Cummings describes Pound as a 'delver in mines strictly aes / thetic(short aes long as it happens by ex / ception)subjects'. Cummings' reference to syllables 'long by exception' sounds like something out of a schoolboy Latin or Greek grammar.[40] It hints that Pound's experiment in quantitative metre is essentially adolescent – a point which is reinforced by the suggestion that Pound could not outgrow a father-complex for Joyce, who had pushed the English literary tradition (and, with *Ulysses*, its relationship to Classical models) to a level which Pound could never match. Cummings neatly lampoons Pound's Latinity. The line breaks after 'aes' and 'ex' create two Latin words, and 'aes' ("copper") puns wittily on the image of Pound as a 'delver in mines'. The Latin is clever, but it is also an artifice: the Latin words are artificially created by breaking up English words, and this manufacturing of words highlights the artificiality of Pound's own endeavour. For all Pound's pronouncements about uncovering innate rhythm, a verse based on quantitative metre is simply not natural to English.

In Cummings' poem, Pound's own voice is marginalised and paranthesised. In the second stanza, within the parenthesis, Pound's voice is invoked: '(short aes long as it happens by ex / ception)'. This phrase does not present Pound himself as speaking, but it does seem to summon Pound on metre, and to satirise him. We do not hear Pound speaking directly until the third stanza, where Pound is deprived of his own highly aesthetised and contrived voice to the point where his first vocal contibution is not even human – '(bowwow)'. His second contribution, '(yes)', '(Yes)', aligns him with the voice of Molly Bloom at the close of *Ulysses* and might be read as feminised. By marginalising Pound in this manner, Cummings seems also to suggest that Pound's pretentiousness renders his poetic voice ineffectual.

By holding his reader at arm's length, Pound's unlikeable 'Apparuit' takes pleasure in the exclusionary aspects of Classical literature. Pound's disdainful attitude to the reader associates him with highly problematic attitudes to the Classics. His belief that he could harness the Classical tradition and use it to elevate English verse into a superior metrical form taps into the assumption that there is an inherent superiority to Classical literature and to the sort of people who appreciate it.[41] Cummings' demolition of 'Apparuit' is brilliant and perfectly on target. Cummings' 'long by exception' captures Pound's pretentiousness and adolescence. His reference to Pound as 'our hero' hints at the

40 Cummings was at secondary school (at the Cambridge Latin School) from 1908–1911 and at Harvard from 1911–1916. As an example of a contemporary textbook, see D'Ooge's *Latin for beginners* – published first in 1909 and again in 1911. The 1911 edition uses the phrase on p. 16: 'The u in **nūntiō** is long by exception.' Older textbooks emphasised the importance of quantity rather more than current textbooks. 'To read Latin well is not so difficult, if you begin right. Correct habits of reading should be formed now. Notice the quantities carefully, especially the quantity of the penult, to insure your getting the accent on the right syllable' (D'Ooge (1911) 10).

41 Pound's snobbery encompasses Eastern as well as Western Classics. In his very short 1930 'Credo' (republished 1973, 53), Pound writes: 'Having a strong disbelief in abstract thought and general statement as a means of conveying one's thought to others I have for a number of years answered such questions by telling the enquirer to read Confucius and Ovid. This can do no harm to the intelligent and the unintelligent may be damned.' Pound goes on to say that, 'Given the material means I would replace the statue of Venus on the cliffs of Terracina. I would erect a temple to Artemis in Park Lane.'

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arrogance. He captures the artificiality of Pound's quantitative endeavour, and he implies that Pound's artificiality makes his poetic voice ineffectual. Cummings' own use of metre and form rejects Pound's literary snobbery and asserts the right of English verse to take ownership of the Classical tradition and to mould it to the English ear. Cummings' own immensely likeable relationship to the Classical tradition is dynamic and energising, and it asserts above all the rights of quality over snobbery.

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