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E. E. Cummings: From Parenthesis to Personality (Part I)

Summary

The paper presents the unique oeuvre of E.E. Cummings, who claims an outstanding position in the heritage of American poetry, as a case of *Bildungsdichtung*. This status is largely due to his highly innovative and iconoclastic approach to poetic composition, starting from his early rebellious endeavours drawing on an astounding variety of non-standard and downright shocking potentialities of the English language (including such peculiar linguistic and stylistic idiosyncracies as drastic changes of the syntactic English word order, shifts at the morphology and word-formation level, unorthodox use of punctuation, extravagant typography and spacing or arrangement of space between the lines, a diversity of meters and rhymes, as well as seemingly eccentric imagery), to his later and invariably maturer poetic diction – the diction of one who has apparently come to terms with the world and his fellow-beings, realising that genuine wisdom resides in the understanding and forgiveness of the inherently fallible human nature rather than in its continuous sardonic scrutiny.

Key words: E.E.Cummings, uniqueness of rhetoric, poetic truth and human truth, epiphany

E. E. Cummings: Od oklepaja do osebnosti (1. del)

Povzetek

Članek oriše umetniški in človeški razvoj ameriškega pesnika E.E.Cummingsa, ki ima v ameriški književnosti poseben sloves. Utemeljen je na Cummingsovi nezmotljivi avtorski govorici ter vrsti njegovih izvirnih posegov v ustaljeno pesniško dikcijo, ki jo spoznava za preživeto, iztrošeno, neprepoznavno in zatorej vredno temeljite prenove. Takšno prenovo najde Cummings v mnogovrstnih preigravanjih skrajnega dometa angleščine ter njene leposlovne izraznosti, od osupljivih jezikovno-slogovnih bravur, kot so na primer drastično spreminjanje ustaljenega skladskega reda, premiki na oblikoslovni in besedotvorni ravni (posamostaljena raba glagolov, zaimkov, prislovov in veznikov), neustaljena raba ločil (zlasti oklepajev) ter velike/male začetnice, nenavadna tipografija in razmiki oziroma razporeditev prostora med verzi, preigravanje raznoterih oblik metruma in rime, do navidez čudaškega podobarstva in drugih retoričnih ter vizualnih prijemov. Razprava sledi razvoju avtorjeve pesniške in osebnostne konstelacije, ki jo zaznamujeta mladostno vihravo uporništvo ter poznejši zreli uvid v bistvo človeškega poslanstva.

Ključni pojmi: E.E.Cummings, revolucija retorike, pesniška in človeška resnica, epifanija

E. E. Cummings: From Parenthesis to Personality (Part I)

for life's not a paragraph

And death i think is no parenthesis

1. Introduction

The greatest names of 20th-century American poetry, such as Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, and in the last decades John Ashbery, undoubtedly include E(dward) E(stlin) Cummings. But while Cummings' poetic expression and spirit had received occasional attention in the Slovene cultural circles,¹ it was only in 2006 that a translation of his selected poems was published in book format. Rather than to the Slovene *Geistesgeschichte*, this belated Slovene reception is probably to be attributed to the form, style, and language of Cummings' work, for his poetic experience is articulated in a highly idiosyncratic, experimental idiom, extremely difficult to imitate or reflect in any target language. This, of course, means that many of his well-nigh *emblematic* poems are simply not transferable to any other, different, language system. While this is to a degree true of many poets, the inner structure of Cummings' expression in fact rests on the closest possible interdependence of content and form – sometimes, as will be shown later, to the point of their amalgamation into a tightly knit cohesive and coherent organism. According to a 1940 letter by William Carlos Williams, who was known for his extraordinary ear for language, “[i]n the use of language Pound and Cummings are beyond doubt the two most distinguished American poets of today” (qtd. in Matthews 1985, 251). Williams even included the figure of Cummings in his famous epic *Paterson* under the name of Hopper Cumming (derived from one of Cummings' early poems which graphically represents the movement of a grasshopper, with the letters and syllables hopping over each other on the page in various combinations, until the poem literally jumps over the edge), sending him to his death in the waterfalls of the Passaic River, which represents the living stream of language. In a sense, then, Williams portrays Cummings' poetic horizon as embracing both birth and death, success and defeat, originality and exhaustion – as if foreseeing the absence of further linguistic innovations in Cummings' subsequent work (he died in 1962). Instead of these, Cummings significantly expanded the horizons of his thought, filling the existing form with new contents – contents which were to influence not only American but world poetry at large.

In many respects, E. E. Cummings, poet, writer, playwright, and essayist (Cummings himself would certainly include – and doubly emphasise – his painting, although his pictures² are little

1 Cummings has received fairly little attention from either Slovene literary critics or translators. While the earliest references to his work appeared as early as 1926, his poetics was not given detailed treatment until 1963 (M. Jurak. 1963. E. E. Cummings: uveljavljeni eksperiment v poeziji. *Problemi* 1, no. 8: 779), with the first translations of his poems arriving in 1965 (H. Pribac). Since then, selections from his work have been translated by V. Taufer, M. Avanzo, P. Semolič and V. Pejović, and U. Mozetič.

2 Interestingly, Cummings spent far more time on his painting than on his poetry, a fact attested to by thousands of his notes on various aspects of painting, such as colour theory, analysis of the human form, the “intelligence” of painting, reflections on the Masters, etc. Striving for recognition as an all-round artist, he went so far as to invent dialogues which promoted his artistic activity with the utmost earnestness and commitment, despite their ironical tone: See appendix A.

known today and rate far lower than his literary works), holds an exceptional place in modern literature. On the one hand, there are many critics, especially those opposing the modernist movement in literature, who would group him with avant-gardists, dadaists, surrealists, and even futurists. On the other, there are those who see his works as marked with indisputable features of the romantic tradition and symbolism, which has often earned him the labels of a “sentimentalist” and “perennial adolescent”. His love lyrics, moreover, which the author of this article considers to be among the world’s most beautiful, have been repeatedly dismissed as “infantile”. The unfavourable reviews may be said to culminate in a piece by Philip Horton, who evaluated Cummings’ poetry collections over the previous fifteen years for the *Partisan Review* (Friedman 1996, 90–1).³ According to Horton, the poet’s “notorious typography” is a mere “historical curiosity”, while his satirical mingling of the trivial and the serious leads to a complete confusion of values, resulting from his deliberate rejection of knowledge. Other more or less vituperative views include Horace Gregory’s description of Cummings in the *New Republic* as “the Jazz Age Peter Pan”, “fixed in rigid attitudes of youth” in his defiance of the ruling values of the modern world (ibid., 88), and Edwin Honig’s piece in the *Kenyon Review* (one of the severest), which proclaims Cummings’ poetics to be “cantankerous and juvenile”, capable of neither acting nor feeling but merely thinking, as a mere “public confession of opposing selves” (ibid., 94).

All these views raise the following question: How was it possible to level charges of artistic immaturity, lack of aesthetic dimension, and all manner of simplification at a poet nowadays considered one of the most fanatic rebels and nonconformists in the American literary experience, an author with the most radical, original yet precise poetic idiom? Although the decisive majority of reviews have been positive and highly favourable to Cummings, the fact remains that no critic would have ventured a similar dismissal of, say, the (ultra)modernist poetics of Ezra Pound or Wallace Stevens. What, then, are the elements in Cummings that have prompted (and probably always will prompt) conflicting critical responses, while paradoxically ensuring him relatively high popularity with readers? And not only with readers, but with undergraduate students as well – during his lifetime, when he was invited to give lectures and poetry readings, as well as today, when he is discussed in university classes worldwide. A strikingly enthusiastic critical response was offered by Ezra Pound, who rated Cummings’ poetry collection *is 5* (1926) as the second most important book of the 20th century, before Joyce’s *Ulysses* and immediately after *The Apes of God* by Wyndham Lewis. His popularity with readers, on the other hand, is attested to by statistics: at the time of his death in 1962 he was second on the list of the most widely read American poets, preceded only by Robert Frost.

The reasons for Cummings’ popularity with readers are fairly obvious: he is one of the few

3 Friedman contributes a thorough evaluation and re-evaluation of critical responses to Cummings from 1922 to 1983, complemented by an exhaustive list of poets, critics, and other academics who have dealt with Cummings in one way or another. It includes such names as Cleanth Brooks, Kenneth Burke, Malcolm Cowley, Hart Crane, John Dos Passos, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Robert Graves, Marianne Moore, Octavio Paz, Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, and William Carlos Williams. At the same time, Friedman seeks to answer the question why Cummings has not been ranked with the great modernist poets by a number of other critics. In his opinion, the main reason lies in the relation between Cummings and his audience: while delighted by the author’s relaxed, joyous, confident attitude, the readers feel deprived of the true context of inner struggle which gives significance to his poetic vision and techniques (ibid., 89).

modernist poets to write about love (as well as sexuality, particularly in his early and middle periods)⁴ in a straightforward and simple but original manner, with an enviable lighthearted humour which brings together sensuality, satire, and exceptional openness to the entire physical world, urban and rural alike. At the same time he remains highly serious, always striving for a metaphysical surplus. The finish which separates him from other modernist lyric poets is his ability to encapsulate a mood of love in a single moment, invest it with the voluptuousness of pleasure, and finally exalt it to sublime devotion. This is where Cummings comes closest to the romantic subjectivity, a subjectivity unburdened by any experience of the scepticism, ambivalence, and paradox which underlie modernist vision and are present in the poetry of T. S. Eliot (“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”) or Wallace Stevens (“Final Soliloquy of the Interior Paramour”) – and, of course, in that unofficial avatar of Anglo-American love poetry, the poem “Lullaby” by W. H. Auden. Since the latter naturally invites comparison with Cummings’ poem *somewhere i have never traveled, gladly beyond*, the two should be illustrated here with a few representative lines:

*Lay your sleeping head, my love,
Human on my faithless arm;
Time and fevers burn away
Individual beauty from
Thoughtful children, and the grave
Proves the child ephemeral:
But in my arms till break of day
Let the living creature lie,
Mortal, guilty, but to me,
The entirely beautiful.* (Auden [1937] 1973, 2098)

*somewhere i have never traveled, gladly beyond
any experience, your eyes have their silence:
in your most frail gesture are things which enclose me,
or which i cannot touch because they are too near
...
(i do not know what it is about you that closes
and opens; only something in me understands
the voice of your eyes is deeper than all roses)
nobody, not even the rain, has such small hands* (Cummings 1972, 366)

In comparison with Auden’s, Cummings’ attitude to love appears rather more sentimental at first glance because it is not conditional or momentary – not the result of a passing inspiration, which would make it transitory or at least entail the inequality of the two participants, as is evidently the case in Auden’s poem. While Auden’s speaker, addressing a sleeping lover,

4 Some of Cummings’ erotic poetry is surprisingly daring and explicit, such as the following piece from the collection & [AND] (1925): See appendix B.

is in a position of dominance, Cummings' speaker (or, rather, the poet's own projection)⁵ never addresses a beloved person who is not at least hypothetically present. Most importantly, Cummings' notion of love differs from all others in not depending on a three-dimensional modernist coordinate grid, where a transcendental vision can only be reached via a struggle. By Cummings, this vision is approached through a fourth dimension as an intuitive and immediate experience. He appears to be untouched by the fundamental rift between reality and truth which preoccupies modernist poets, especially in his earlier poems, which surprise the reader with their author's masterful understanding of the world and its laws. But a deeper reading of Cummings' poetological maxims, such as the introduction to his *Collected Poems* (1938), reveals indisputable and significant points of contact with the philosophy of high modernist poetics:

*... never to rest and never to have:only to grow.
Always the beautiful answer who asks a more beautiful question* (Cummings 1972, 462)

These lines unmistakably evoke Rilke's poem "Der Fremde" (1908):

*Und dies alles immer unbegehrnd
hinzulassen, schien ihm mehr als seines
Lebens Lust, Besitz und Ruhm.
Doch auf fremden Plätzen war ihm eines
täglich ausgetretenen Brunnensteines
Mulde manchmal wie ein Eigentum.*

The similarity between the two is no accident, for Cummings was thoroughly acquainted both with Rilke's poetry and his *Letters to a Young Poet* (1903–4). He quoted a passage from the latter in his first 1952 Harvard lecture (all six lectures were published in 1953 under the title *i: six non lectures*) to express what he considered the essence of art criticism:

*Works of art are of an infinite loneliness and with nothing to be so little reached as with criticism.
Only love can grasp and hold and fairly judge them.* (Cummings [1953] 1995, 7)

Cummings' rootedness in the physical world – indeed, his sheer delight in it, his denial of the (modernist) ever-changing value standpoint, his persistent assertion of the ego through rejecting inherited, norm-bound patterns of perception, his consolidation of his own identity while

⁵ Another point where Cummings significantly diverges from most of his contemporaries is the relation between the author and the speaker, where Cummings again draws closer to the romantic tradition than to modernism. In contrast to Eliot and Pound, who establish this relation on the principle of a *persona* or mask (e.g. with J. Alfred Prufrock and Hugh Selwyn Mauberley respectively), or Stevens, whose speaker – a subtle metaphysician – has no connection at all to the author – the manager of the largest insurance company in Boston –, Cummings resembles Whitman in deliberately creating an image of his speaker, to which he then consistently subordinates his emotion, thought, and his private life in general.

The author-speaker relation in Cummings is also influenced by his carefully fostered cult of the poet and artist. This fact should be taken into account in any reading of his poetry, for he has often been reproached by critics (though never by readers!) for his supposedly superior aristocratic and discriminatory attitude as a human being and as a poet. He toyed with this reproach in various ways, for example in the imaginary interview which introduces *The Enormous Room* [1922] (1949, ix–x): See appendix C.

emphasising individuality – all these are features which never fail to establish contact with the reader. Critical response, however, is a more complex issue, requiring a deeper, more detailed insight into the fundamental characteristics of the poet's aesthetics and beliefs.

Although Cummings had written poetry ever since his childhood, his first published book (1922) was not a collection of poems but a prose work, a novel/memoir entitled *The Enormous Room*. It describes a segment of his World War I experience as an American volunteer in France, three months spent in the internment camp at La Ferté-Macé with his friend and comrade Brown. He had been arrested and incarcerated under a mistaken suspicion of espionage, the French counter-intelligence having allegedly intercepted a suspicious letter of Brown's to the US. At first Cummings had no intention of making his diary notes public, but he finally decided on publication at the constant promptings of his father, an eminent Boston intellectual, university professor and humanist, who had made use of all his contacts in government to secure his son's release (his letter to the White House, together with the reply, was included by Cummings in the book's preface). In contrast to many literary autobiographies dealing with similar themes, Cummings' evocation of his mental and physical torments contains no bitterness, let alone self-pity. His writing is surprisingly lighthearted, full of humour, satire, and, above all, a sense of distance which helps him to preserve his human dignity in a demeaning environment. Even at this early stage, the young Cummings seems to have perfected his basic anti-authoritarian, anti-institutional, and generally rebellious attitude, to which he would remain faithful all his life.⁶

A closer examination of his attitude to politics and society reveals a surprising lack of commitment, as if, for him, the so-called real world had never existed. Many poets and writers in the interbellum period, including famous names such as Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden, Archibald MacLeish, Steven Spender, or John Dos Passos, felt that their mission involved active public criticism of the socio-political constellations,⁷ even if "poetry makes nothing happen" (Auden [1940] 1973, 2105). Cummings, by contrast, displays a sometimes puzzling ambivalence: he rejects or is even indifferent to such crucial developments as Roosevelt's introduction of the *New Deal* programme or the fast-emerging fascism, socialism, and communism, while expressing distress about relatively trivial events. An example is his indignation on learning about the

6 Cummings' social and political stance and activity have always been deemed controversial by modernist criticism: in contrast to other modernists, the poet appeared largely uninterested in the universal community and a just society, while his momentary flashes of interest seemingly revealed simplified, well-nigh naive views. The truth, however, was that Cummings rejected any official version of history or society, perceiving institutions as abstract and therefore unreal.

7 The issue of the modernists' social commitment still appears to be one of the central critical nodes. The fundamental question is whether – and to what degree – modernist poetics reflects the world as it is or creates a new world of its own. There have been claims that "modernist literature does not permit social and political commitment" because "the world of poetry always appears different from external reality" (Kos 1995, 56). Such statements, based on tying up the modernist processing of the world with the radical construction of reality in the author's mind, must appear inadequate because they ignore the fact that many leading modernist writers did take a stand on the contemporary social events both during the interbellum period and in World War II. They expressed it either through their works (Eliot's *The Waste Land* reflects on the material, emotional, and spiritual devastation in the aftermath of World War I, suggesting a possible way of salvation for humanity; the same applies to Auden's famous socio-political poem "September 1, 1939") or in public (Pound's speeches on the Roman radio in support of Mussolini's Fascism). It is true, on the other hand, that Eliot himself, in his well-known essay on Joyce's 'mythical method', argued for the creation of a world tailored to art (Brooker 1993, 6). The answer thus seems to lie at the intersection of the documentary and visionary in modernist literary discourse. Interestingly, one of the reproaches most frequently levelled at postmodernists is precisely their socio-political indifference (cf. e.g. Krivak 2002, 218–9 et passim).

manufacture of billiard balls from ivory, given voice in his collection *W [ViVa]* (1931):

Space being(don't forget to remember)Curved

...

LONG LIVE that Upwardlooking

Serene Illustrious and Beatific

Lord of Creation,MAN:

at a least crooking

of Whose compassionate digit,earth's most terrific

quadruped swoons into billiardBalls! (Cummings 1972, 315)

Cummings' political scepticism was probably reinforced by his visit to Russia in 1931, when her communism was still seen in the West as a potential hope for humanity. What Cummings encountered in Russia, however, was extreme poverty, oppression, and death – a far cry from a new Arcadia. On his return, he is reputed to have all but gone down on his knees and kissed his “bourgeois” home soil. While his satire does include a political edge, it is true that the relatively vigorous anti-imperialist criticism of his youth weakened over the years, gradually seguing into the conservatism of his family tradition.

Lacking reference to external, abstract entities such as history, government, or the socio-political system, Cummings' understanding of the true reality could only exist in relation to a pure transcendence, as the result of his contact with the seamless unity of existence as such. And the key to such contact, as he was to discover, lay in an annihilation of the dichotomy between matter and spirit, temporality and timelessness.

The narrative style of *The Enormous Room* was steeped in French avant-garde art, especially dadaism and surrealism but also cubism, which had aroused Cummings' enthusiasm when he studied Picasso's sketches during his first visit to Paris in 1917. It launched him among the contemporary “pioneers” of the rising modernism,⁸ even more so because the seminal works of Anglo-American modernism, *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot and *Ulysses* by James Joyce, were published in the same year (1922). Although some critics (such as the writer John Dos Passos) admired Cummings' spiritual fervour, his views and humanist vision in this book are not as clear-cut yet as they appear in his later works. Nevertheless, the language and style of *The Enormous Room* show a degree of inventiveness and experimentation perfectly suited to the modernist demand for the articulation of fragmented, hollowed-out, or even emptied experience – an articulation which would invest this experience with a new meaning and restore the quality of immanence. This may be achieved by saying something new against a familiar background – or, as in the case of Cummings, by saying the familiar in a novel way.

8 Critics and theorists still differ widely on the so-called official beginning of modernism. While the movement loosely spans the period between 1880 and 1950, the year 1922 may be arguably considered at least a watershed of its development, if not its outright peak. Cf. e.g. Brooker (1993).

Since an idea is inseparable from its form of expression, it must be expressed so as to appear in the most original and striking light possible. A poet, in other words, needs the kind of language which will not intrude between the subject and object of perception but accurately represent the true, objective reality which it aims to encompass poetically. And this is where we encounter the first difficulty, for, according to Cummings, the greater part of our perception has become blurred by habit and our vision reduced to mere outlines of objects, with a correspondingly blurred language to describe them. A poet, however, must find a language which will derail the accustomed, norm-bound, stereotyped way of looking, thus shedding light on the objects from a new, ever-changing perspective. Indeed, Cummings sees it as a mission of art to encapsulate in a single moment all the complexity of the dynamics of observation, and consequently of reflection.

Cummings' thoughts on the task of the poet (artist) are not entirely original, for identical or at least very similar premises appear almost simultaneously in the art theory of the Russian formalist school, especially in the writings of Viktor Shklovsky. In his view, art should be capable of tapping into the linguistic potential to find ways of *defamiliarising* perception: "...[art] exists to help or recover the sensation of life, it exists to enable us to feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to give a sensation of the object as something seen, not something recognised. The technique of art is to make things unfamiliar" (Gray 1990, 22–3). This view harmonises perfectly with Cummings' understanding of artistic creativity as the interaction of two processes: the concentration on the "moment", on the act in the process of changing, as well as the representation, not of the object itself, but of the way in which it is perceived by the artist.

A key to this *defamiliarisation* effect is found by Cummings in radical experimentation with language and style, which he elaborates to a perfection and distinctiveness hardly paralleled in Anglo-American literature. What, then, are the basic characteristics of his poetic diction? There would be little point in attempting to impose a hierarchical order on his various techniques, for they are mutually dependent and supportive to such a degree that the least tampering with their internal structure would result in the total collapse of the text. His idiosyncrasies of style and language include drastic changes of the syntactic English word order, shifts at the morphology and word-formation levels (the nominalisation of verbs, pronouns, adverbs, and conjunctions), unorthodox use of punctuation (especially of parentheses) and of uppercase/lowercase letters, extravagant typography and spacing (or arrangement of space) between the lines, a diversity of metres and rhymes, seemingly eccentric imagery, and other rhetorical and visual devices. While astonishing and delightful, these techniques also tend to hamper unaccustomed readers, confronting them with the extremes of linguistic potential. This is why the opinion expressed by Richard D. Cureton⁹ in his detailed analysis of Cummings' visual prosodies has particular significance. According to Cureton, the poet's visual experiments paradoxically often seem more important for their failure than for their success, but, "[s]ucceed or fail, Cummings puts us to school about our language, and we should be grateful for the education" (1986, 277). His most effective experiments, on the other hand, are paragons of superb typographical poem structure

9 Focusing on the structural properties of the collection *No Thanks* (1933), Cureton concludes that Cummings' techniques are productive only when his visual forms are clearly subordinate to, or completely independent of, a phonological prosody, while the poems which rely exclusively on the visually symmetrical poetic line are rather less satisfying (1986, 277).

(dubbed *poempicture* by the poet himself), as is revealed by probably the most popular and most frequently analysed piece from his collection *95 Poems* (1958):¹⁰

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iness (Cummings 1972, 673)

The effect of Cummings' verbal "pyrotechnics" was graphically expressed by the American poet Randall Jarrell: "Cummings is a very great expert in all these, so to speak, illegal syntactical devices: his misuse of parts of speech, his use of negative prefixes, his word-coining, his systematic relation of words that grammar and syntax don't permit us to relate – all this makes him a magical bootlegger or moonshiner of language, one who intoxicates us on a clear liquor no government has legalized with its stamp" (qtd. in Schafer 2002).

It must be noted, however, that this technical artistry is more prominent in the poet's earlier and middle phases, while the final part of his oeuvre shifts to an increased use of symbolism, allegory, and paradox, limiting the rhetorical idiosyncrasies to word-coining and some typographical techniques. Cummings' love of linguistic and stylistic innovation thus grows less rampant over the years, being replaced by a metaphysical content – one that reaches such maturity towards the close of his life that its message no longer depends on formal eccentricity.

(To be continued.)

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¹⁰ According to Martland (1985, 272 et passim), this poem in fact relates two different principles – the principle of representation and the principle of presentation. Directing the reader to the extratextual perception of a falling leaf as a metaphor for loneliness, it also draws attention to its own verbal constellation.

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Appendix A

Why do you paint?
For exactly the same reason I breathe.
That's not an answer.
There isn't any answer.
How long hasn't there been any answer?
As long as I can remember.
And how long have you written?
As long as I can remember.
I mean poetry.
So do I.
Tell me, doesn't your painting interfere with your writing?
Quite the contrary: they love each other dearly.
They're very different.
Very: one is painting and one is writing.
But your poems are rather hard to understand, whereas your paintings are so easy.
Easy?
Of course – you paint flowers and girls and sunsets; things that everybody understands.
I never met him.
Who?
Everybody.
Did you ever hear of nonrepresentational painting?

I am.

Pardon me?

I am a painter, and painting is nonrepresentational.

Not all painting.

No: housepainting is representational.

And what does a housepainter represent?

Ten dollars an hour.

In other words, you don't want to be serious –

It takes two to be serious.

Well let me see ... oh yes, one more question: where will you live after this war is over?

In China; as usual.

China?

Of course.

Whereabouts in China?

Where a painter is a poet. (Firmage 1965, 316–7)

Appendix B

*i like my body when it is with your
body. It is so quite new a thing.*

Muscles better and nerves more.

i like your body. i like what it does,

i like its hows. i like to feel the spine

of your body and its bones, and the trembling

-firm-smooth ness and which i will

again and again and again

kiss, i like kissing this and that of you,

i like, slowly stroking the, shocking fuzz

of your electric fur, and what-is-it comes

over parting flesh And eyes big love-crumbs,

and possibly i like the thrill

of under me you so quite new (Cummings 1972, 175)

Appendix C

...

...

And aren't you supposed to be ultramodernistic?

- I dare say.

- But I dare say you don't dare say precisely why you consider your art of vital consequence –

- *Thanks to I dare say my art I am able to become myself.*
- *Well well! Doesn't that sound as if people who weren't artists couldn't become themselves?*
- *Does it?*
- *What do you think people who aren't artists become?*
- *I feel they don't become. I feel nothing happens to them. I feel negation becomes of them.*
- *Negation?*
- *You paraphrased it a few moments ago.*
- *How?*
- *"This so called world of yours" ...*