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the Life of Moses (120) confuses me, as Philo attributes many political functions to Moses in this text.

Nevertheless, Niehoff has produced an engaging and highly readable biography that provides a plausible new interpretive framework for approaching Philo's body of work in a holistic manner. This volume would serve well as an introduction to Philo for advanced students of second-temple Judaism, ancient philosophy, and early Christianity, while also providing fresh insights for seasoned readers of his works.

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J. Alison Rosenblitt,
E. E. Cummings' Modernism and the Classics: Each Imperishable Stanza.

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In this book, Alison Rosenblitt argues that Cummings' time at Harvard as a Classics student had a profound influence on his poetry. Building upon the earlier work of critics such as Malcolm Cowley and Guy Davenport, she both summarizes former research and adds in new information concerning his views on sexuality from previously unpublished poems of Cummings, which appear in the Appendix. As she states: "[T]his book argues that, by restoring and examining a forgotten classical context, we can fundamentally refocus our current sense of Cummings' work" (4).

The book is divided into five sections: E. E. Cummings as a Classical Poet (Chapters 1-3); Childhood, Harvard and Paganism (Chapters 4-5); The Great War and Beyond (Chapters 6-8); Cummings, Classics and Modernism (Chapters 9-10); and Translations, Further Verse and Prose by E. E. Cummings. Each section is further divided into chapters. All the poems are referred to by their first lines, as Cummings didn't use titles.

In the Foreword, Rosenblitt attributes Cummings' poor spelling, "especially letter reversals and trouble with doubled consonants" (xxii) to dyslexia; this is certainly a new theory to explain the structure of his poems.

Rosenblitt remarks in the Preface that Cummings himself “emphasized the influence of classical authors on his poetic development” (3-4). He especially admired Sappho, as did other Modernists of his time such as the Lowells. Modernists such as Ezra Pound, Debussy, Freud, and Cezanne also influenced him. However, Rosenblitt believes that “[H]e has been relegated out of the mainstream study of modernism simply because he is not considered to be a serious poet in many scholarly circles” (4). She considers Cummings to be a Modernist and also a poet of World War I (especially in his use of the epic journey to the underworld [the *katabasis*]); this book, therefore, is her attempt to bring Cummings back to the ‘canon’ of important poets.

In Chapter 2 Rosenblitt discusses Cummings’ schooling, concentrating on his studies at Harvard. To show his classical influences, as his contemporaries saw but critics now do not, Rosenblitt concentrates on his early and late poems, where Cummings’ knowledge of the Classics is most obvious. She quotes Guy Davenport, who saw the similarities between ancient Greek texts, with their “frail scatter of *lacunae*, conjectures, brackets, and parentheses” and the placement of words in an E. E. Cummings poem (25). Rosenblitt shows how Cummings used the Greek middle voice and the influences of other Greek authors such as Sappho and Plato. While arguing that he is a Hellenist, not a Latinist, she does discuss how he also was greatly influenced by Horace and Catullus.

Chapter 3 begins with a discussion of Cummings as a translator. Rosenblitt believes that his translations were not literal but figurative; he would emphasize those parts of a poem that seemed important to him. He used Sapphic and Alcaic meters, emphasizing stress on a word. In addition, he often used rhyming Shakespearean couplets to end his poems.

Chapter 4 deals with the “Pan/satyr/faun motif... ubiquitous in nineteenth century art and literature” (64). This motif was part of the “paganism” of his circle at Harvard, as was the joining of Bacchus and Pan as springtime. Rosenblitt discusses the sexual nature of “innocence, voyeurism, eroticism and transgression” in these poems in light of the evidence she has presented that Cummings was sexually repressed in his youth. With “In Just” (written in 1916 and published in 1920 and 1923) as her exemplar, she views the faun as innocence and the satyr as aggression. The idea of a satyr among children has led to differing interpretations of innocence versus experience; however, since Cummings was a follower of Freud and underwent analysis later in life, one can see the influence of Freud’s vision of sexuality in children in these earlier poems.

A significant point in this chapter is the poems shouldn’t be read in isolation, but in the context of which poems are around it and when it was written and pub-

lished. This is the opposite of the New Criticism so popular in the mid-twentieth century.

Chapter 5 deals with the poems at the end of Cummings' life (1952-63), which show a return to paganism and the influence of the poetry of Milton, Blake and early Pound (91). Cummings followed the Freudian view "that everything is intrinsically bound up with its opposite... His own work freely reworks, distorts, and plays with classical texts and classical ideas" (93). Rosenblitt states that his interest in incest/sex abuse is related to the Freudian idea of dualism. She argues that this use of Freud is more "postmodern" (109).

The next section deals with World War I. In Chapter 6 we learn that Cummings and a friend were jailed in France during the war on suspicions of espionage (the charges were later dropped). Rosenblitt shows how his experiences in the war, especially his visits to prostitutes in France, had a great influence on his poems in this period. In his poems, he "puts sex, gender, and sexual violence at the centre of the links he forges between the Classics and the Great War" (114).

Chapter 7 deals with the poems of *Songs* I and II. Rosenblitt argues that "[A]gainst the backdrop of the Great War Cummings forged a poetry of death and decadence, of erotic love and fantasies annihilation... [his] fantasies of annihilation have earlier roots in his classical engagements at Harvard and also in his Harvard exposure to the poetry of the Decadents." (133). While various poems remind us of Sappho or Horace (especially *carpe diem*) and the pastoral setting, not to mention that the "attainment of love is death" (135; could this be a reference to Catullus 5?), Rosenblitt believes that, in addition to Horace's *Odes*, especially 1.24, "[t]he classical text which lies most directly behind *Songs* I is Virgil's retelling, in the *Georgics*, of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice" (141).

Chapter 8 discusses Cummings' use of the idea of "war as love"; Rosenblitt calls this "seduction as a response to war" (166). She notes that the structure of classical poetry with its free placement of words, especially in Horace, gives a framework to the instabilities of modernist poetry. For example, Cummings placed adjectives so that they could be used with two different nouns, as if he were writing in Greek.

Chapter 9 discusses Cumming's antithetical ideas of κίνεσις as movement and life versus στάσις as position and death; Cummings strove for movement. He preferred the Greek friezes to statues, as they seemed more able to move and express motion, while the statues were static.

Finally, Chapter 10 uses as its theme the idea that "[t]he modernist world shaped Cummings' work as well as his life. His earliest poetry was influenced by Imagism" (224). In addition, he had strong Romantic sympathies at the end of his life.

This led to his “persona as the quintessential romantic poet-lover” (225). Rosenblitt’s view is that Cummings used the “classical canon” in topic and meter to “outflank high modernism (239).”

The last section has translations of Greek and Latin that Cummings did in college.

This is a book that is best for finding information about a specific topic (the war, translations) or a specific poem, not for reading all at once. It lends itself to this very well because of the fine indices of poems and topics. The extent of the bibliography is really impressive. Rosenblitt offers a rich discussion of Cummings and his poetry, and the influence of Classics on both. Overall, it is a fine and interesting book.

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