

"Marriage"  
By Marianne  
Moore

Marriage

This institution,  
perhaps one should say enterprise  
out of respect for which  
one says one need not change one's mind  
about a thing one has believed in,  
requiring public promises  
of one's intention  
to fulfil a private obligation:  
I wonder what Adam and Eve  
think of it by this time,  
this fire-gilt steel  
alive with goldenness;  
how bright it shows--  
"of circular traditions and impostures  
committing many soils,"  
requiring all one's criminal ingenuity  
to avoid!  
Psychology which explains everything  
explains nothing,  
and we are still in doubt.  
Eve: beautiful woman--  
I have seen her when she was so handsome  
she gave me a start,  
able to write simultaneously  
in three languages--  
English, German and French--  
and talk in the meantime;  
equally positive in demanding a commotion  
and in stipulating quiet:  
"I should like to be alone";  
to which the visitor replies,  
"I should like to be alone;  
why not be alone together?"  
Below the incandescent stars  
below the incandescent fruit,  
the strange experience of beauty;  
its existence is too much;  
it tears one to pieces  
and each fresh wave of consciousness  
is poison.  
"See her, see her in this common world,"  
the central flaw  
in that first crystal-fine experiment,  
this amalgamation which can never be more

than an interesting impossibility,  
describing it  
as "that strange paradise  
unlike flesh, stones,  
gold or stately buildings,  
the choicest piece of my life:  
the heart rising  
in its estate of peace  
as a boat rises  
with the rising of the water";  
constrained in speaking of the serpent--  
shed snakeskin in the history of politeness  
not to be returned to again--  
that invaluable accident  
exonerating Adam.  
And he has beauty also;  
it's distressing--the O thou  
to whom from whom,  
without whom nothing--Adam;  
"something feline,  
something colubrine"--how true!  
a crouching mythological monster  
in that Persian miniature of emerald mines,  
raw silk--ivory white, snow white,  
oyster white and six others--  
that paddock full of leopards and giraffes--  
long lemon-yellow bodies  
sown with trapezoids of blue.  
Alive with words,  
vibrating like a cymbal  
touched before it has been struck,  
he has prophesied correctly--  
this industrious waterfall,  
"the speedy stream  
which violently bears all before it,  
at one time silent as the air  
and now as powerful as the wind."  
"Treading chasms  
on the uncertain footing of a spear,"  
forgetting that there is in woman  
a quality of mind  
which as an instinctive manifestation  
is unsafe,  
he goes on speaking  
in a formal customary strain,

of "past states, the present state,  
seals, promises,  
the evil one suffered,  
the good one enjoys,  
hell, heaven,  
everything convenient  
to promote one's joy."  
In him a state of mind  
perceives what it was not  
intended that he should;  
"he experiences a solemn joy  
in seeing that he has become an idol."  
Plagued by the nightingale  
in the new leaves,  
with its silence--  
not its silence but its silences,  
he says of it:  
"It clothes me with a shirt of fire."  
"He dares not clap his hands  
to make it go on  
lest it should fly off;  
if he does nothing, it will sleep;  
if he cries out, it will not understand."  
Unnerved by the nightingale  
and dazzled by the apple,  
impelled by "the illusion of a fire  
effectual to extinguish fire,"  
compared with which  
the shining of the earth  
is but deformity--a fire  
"as high as deep  
as bright as broad  
as long as life itself,"  
he stumbles over marriage,  
"a very trivial object indeed"  
to have destroyed the attitude  
in which he stood--  
the ease of the philosopher  
unfattered by a woman.  
Unhelpful Hymen!  
a kind of overgrown cupid  
reduced to insignificance  
by the mechanical advertising  
parading as involuntary comment,  
by that experiment of Adam's

with ways out but no way in--  
the ritual of marriage,  
augmenting all its lavishness;  
its fiddle-head ferns,  
lotus flowers, opuntias, white dromedaries,  
its hippopotamus--  
nose and mouth combined  
in one magnificent hopper--  
its snake and the potent apple.  
He tells us  
that "for love that will  
gaze an eagle blind,  
that is with Hercules  
climbing the trees  
in the garden of the Hesperides,  
from forty-five to seventy  
is the best age,"  
commending it  
as a fine art, as an experiment,  
a duty or as merely recreation.  
One must not call him ruffian  
nor friction a calamity--  
the fight to be affectionate:  
"no truth can be fully known  
until it has been tried  
by the tooth of disputation."  
The blue panther with black eyes,  
the basalt panther with blue eyes,  
entirely graceful--  
one must give them the path--  
the black obsidian Diana  
who "darkeneth her countenance  
as a bear doth,"  
the spiked hand  
that has an affection for one  
and proves it to the bone,  
impatient to assure you  
that impatience is the mark of independence,  
not of bondage.  
"Married people often look that way"--  
"seldom and cold, up and down,  
mixed and malarial  
with a good day and a bad."  
We Occidentals are so unemotional,  
self lost, the irony preserved

in "the Ahasuerus tête-a-tête banquet"  
with its small orchids like snakes' tongues,  
with its "good monster, lead the way,"  
with little laughter  
and munificence of humor  
in that quixotic atmosphere of frankness  
in which "four o'clock does not exist,  
but at five o'clock  
the ladies in their imperious humility  
are ready to receive you";  
in which experience attests  
that men have power  
and sometimes one is made to feel it.  
He says, "What monarch would not blush  
to have a wife  
with hair like a shaving-brush?  
The fact of woman  
is "not the sound of the flute  
but very poison." She says, "Men are monopolists  
of 'stars, garters, buttons  
and other shining baubles'--  
unfit to be guardians  
of another person's happiness."  
He says, "These mummies  
must be handled carefully--  
'the crumbs from a lion's meal,  
a couple of shins and the bit of an ear';  
turn to the letter M  
and you will find  
that 'a wife is a coffin,'  
that severe object  
with the pleasing geometry  
stipulating space not people,  
refusing to be buried  
and uniquely disappointing,  
revengefully wrought in the attitude  
of an adoring child  
to a distinguished parent."  
She says, "This butterfly,  
this waterfly, this nomad  
that has 'proposed  
to settle on my hand for life'--  
What can one do with it?  
There must have been more time  
in Shakespeare's day

to sit and watch a play.  
You know so many artists who are fools".  
He says, "You know so many fools  
who are not artists."  
The fact forgot  
that "some have merely rights  
while some have obligations,"  
he loves himself so much,  
he can permit himself  
no rival in that loge.  
She loves herself so much,  
she cannot see herself enough--  
a statuette of ivory on ivory,  
the logical last touch  
to an expansive splendor  
earned as wages for work done:  
one is not rich but poor  
when one can always seem so right.  
What can one do for them--  
these savages  
condemned to disaffect  
all those who are not visionaries  
alert to undertake the silly task  
of making people noble?  
This model of petrine fidelity  
who "leaves her peaceful husband  
only because she has seen enough of him"--  
that orator reminding you,  
"I am yours to command."  
"Everything to do with love is mystery;  
it is more than a day's work  
to investigate this science."  
One sees that it is rare--  
that striking grasp of opposites  
opposed each to the other, not to unity,  
which in cycloid inclusiveness  
has dwarfed the demonstration  
of Columbus with the egg--  
a triumph of simplicity  
that charitive Euroclydon  
of frightening disinterestedness  
which the world hates,  
admitting:  
"I am such a cow,  
it I had a sorrow

I should feel it a long time;  
I am not one of those  
who have a great sorrow  
in the morning  
and a great joy at noon";  
which says: "I have encountered it  
among those unpretentious  
protégés of wisdom,  
where seeming to parade  
as the debater and the Roman,  
the statesmanship  
of an archaic Daniel Webster  
persists to their simplicity of temper  
as the essence of the matter:  
'Liberty and union  
now and forever';  
the Book on the writing-table;  
the hand in the breast-pocket."

Published as *Manikin*, No. 3, 1923

"Poetry"

First Presentation: *Others* 5.6 (July 1919): 5 [*Oths*]

OTHERS

Marianne Moore

Page 5

POETRY

I too, dislike it: there are things that are important  
 beyond all this fiddle.  
 Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it,  
 one discovers that there is in  
 it after all, a place for the genuine.  
 Hands that can grasp, eyes  
 that can dilate, hair that can rise  
 if it must, these things are important not because a

high sounding interpretation can be put upon them  
 but because they are  
 useful; when they become so derivative as to  
 become unintelligible, the  
 same thing may be said for all of us—that we  
 do not admire what  
 we cannot understand. The bat,  
 holding on upside down or in quest of something to

eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking a roll,  
 a tireless wolf under  
 a tree, the immovable critic twinkling his skin like a  
 horse that feels a flea, the base-  
 ball fan, the statistician—case after case  
 could be cited did  
 one wish it; nor it is valid  
 to discriminate against "business documents and

school-books"; all these phenomena are important.  
 One must make a distinction  
 however: when dragged into prominence by half poets,  
 the result is not poetry,  
 nor till the autocrats among us can be  
 "literalists of  
 the imagination"—above  
 insolence and triviality and can present

for inspection, imaginary gardens with real toads  
 in them, shall we have  
 it. In the meantime, if you demand on one hand,  
 in defiance of their opinion—  
 the raw material of poetry in  
 all its rawness and  
 that which is on the other hand,  
 genuine then you are interested in poetry.



1924

## POETRY

I TOO, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond all this fiddle.  
 Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers that there is in it after all, a place for the genuine.  
 Hands that can grasp, eyes that can dilate, hair that can rise if it must, these things are important not because a high sounding interpretation can be put upon them but because they are useful; when they become so derivative as to become unintelligible, the same thing may be said for all of us, that we do not admire what we cannot understand: the bat, holding on upside down or in quest of something to eat, elephants pushing, a wild horse taking a roll, a tireless wolf under a tree, the immovable critic twitching his skin like a horse that feels a flea, the baseball fan, the statistician—nor is it valid to discriminate against "business documents and school-books"; all these phenomena are important. One must make a distinction however: when dragged into prominence by half poets, the result is not poetry, nor till the poets among us can be "literalists of the imagination"—above insolence and triviality and can present

POETRY

for inspection, imaginary gardens with real toads in them,  
 shall we have  
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 the raw material of poetry in  
 all its rawness and  
 that which is on the other hand  
 genuine, then you are interested in poetry.

Special note on *Observations* (1925):

Moore's revision of "Poetry" between the two editions of *Observations* certainly stands as one of the most striking alterations of her literary career. In *Observations* (1925), Moore's "Poetry" constitutes a brief, single-stanza affair of 13 lines that bears little resemblance to the poem's earlier versions. To quote the 1925 version in full:

Poetry

1925

I too, dislike it:  
there are things that are important beyond all this fiddle.  
The bat, upside down; the elephant pushing,  
a tireless wolf under a tree,  
the base-ball fan, the statistician--  
"business documents and schoolbooks"--  
these phenomena are pleasing,  
but when they have been fashioned  
into that which is unknowable,  
we are not entertained.  
It may be said of all of us  
that we do not admire what we cannot understand;  
enigmas are not poetry.

POETRY

I, too, dislike it.

Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers in it, after all, a place for the genuine.

1967

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# PAIDEUMA

STUDIES IN AMERICAN AND BRITISH  
MODERNIST POETRY

VOLUME 32, NUMBERS 1, 2, AND 3  
SPRING, FALL, AND WINTER 2003

THE NATIONAL POETRY FOUNDATION  
ORONO, MAINE

PATRICIA C. WILLIS

A MODERNIST EPITHALAMIUM:  
MARIANNE MOORE'S "MARRIAGE"

Just before five o'clock on February 14, 1921, Hilda Doolittle and Winifred "Bryher" Ellerman arrived for tea at the home of Marianne Moore, 14 St. Luke's Place, Greenwich Village. Hilda managed to convey to Marianne, probably out of the hearing of her mother, Mary Warner Moore, that Bryher had married Robert McAlmon a few hours earlier at City Hall. The women had been invited to tea to meet Scofield Thayer and James Sibley Watson, the owners of *The Dial* magazine, who knew the work of both writers. McAlmon had not been invited.<sup>1</sup>

This bombshell echoed in the lives of everyone involved for many years, at least until the pair divorced in 1927. Moore's responses took many forms and culminated in the publication of her poem "Marriage" in late 1923.<sup>2</sup> This essay will trace the course of that response by examining Moore's relationship to the event, her ideas and Bryher's about the rights of women and marriage, and her poem, a Modernist's epithalamium for Bryher and McAlmon.

I. INSTITUTION OR ENTERPRISE

Moore met Bryher through H.D., whom she had known at Bryn Mawr. At Bryher's request, she wrote out her first impression of Hilda:

I remember her seeming to lean forward as if resisting a high wind and have the impression of the toe of one foot turning in a little and giving an effect of positiveness and willfulness. (SL 165)

Although the two poets had not been close at college, they came together again through the pages of *The Egoist*, where Hilda had

taken up editorial duties and recognized Moore as a contributor. Hilda, in turn, first saw Bryher in Cornwall in 1919, an oft-told story that need not be repeated here. It is enough to say that Bryher urged her friend to travel to America with her in the fall of 1920.<sup>3</sup>

Bryher had several reasons for the trip. She sought El Dorado in America. Haunted by the dreadful experiences of wartime London and the smell of death in Europe, she expected to find here the exuberant revolutionary spirit she admired in the poetry in *Others* and *The Egoist* by Pound, Williams, H.D., and Moore. The confinement of her life as a young woman in England distressed her to the point of eruption. Adults told the child "Dotty," as her family called her, that she had a brilliant mind, but she lacked formal education except for a stultifying experience at fifteen. Her father owned fleets of ocean liners and Bryher had traveled in her youth more than most people do in a lifetime, but custom required her never to travel alone as a single woman. In her autobiographical novel *Two Selves*, she touchingly recounts the dilemma of wounding those who loved her by desiring the freedom to be herself and to go about as she wished:

If people got between one and one's vision one had to cut them out. . . .

"I want to be free." Nancy had pictured the conversation over and over again. "I want to be free. It's not that I'm not grateful for all you've done for me but I can't help wanting to use my brain. If I don't go away I can't develop. I don't want to hurt your feelings. Surely you must see that I don't want to hurt your feelings. But I want to live by myself."

"But how are you not free?" She knew that would be the astonished answer. "What have you ever been forbidden to do?"

"It's the thousand things too unimportant to mention. But that make a barrier. . . . Not cutting my hair short. . . ."

"But Mr. Brown said he would take you on his committee for furthering Red Cross work."

"But I can't do work I don't believe in. I want to write. I have never been my real self to you. I have been silent about the things I care about. Because I knew you hated me to be rough and independent. . . ."

She could not say this. Could not hurt people's feelings. Things had gone on too long. She who had loved action was losing the will for it.<sup>4</sup>

Bryher's way of taking action was to sail for New York, taking Hilda as a companion, along with Hilda's toddler, Perdita, and the child's nurse—chaperones aplenty.

When the travelers arrived in the States, Amy Lowell, down from Boston, met them at the boat, installed them at The Belmont, New York's most fashionable hotel, and took Bryher sightseeing.<sup>5</sup> Lowell seemed captivated by Bryher. She was not alone. Hilda had invited William Carlos Williams, her old friend from college days in Philadelphia, to tea at the hotel and Williams brought along Robert McAlmon:

"Wanna see the old gal?" I asked Bob.

"Sure. Why not?"

So one afternoon we decided to take in the show. Same old Hilda, all over the place looking as tall and as skinny as usual. But she had with her a small, dark English girl with piercing, intense eyes, whom I noticed and that was about all.

"Well, how did you like her?" I asked Bob when we came away.

"Oh, she's all right, I guess," said Bob. "But that other one, Bryher, as she was introduced to us—she's something."<sup>6</sup>

Another spark of friendship glowed when Bryher and Moore met during those October days. Bryher describes the moment in thinly veiled fiction:

"Did you like [her]? She's quaint but has a quality behind her."

"I shall call her the Dactyl, I think. She is so like a prehistoric creature, half bird, half dinosaur with her stiff head and penetrating eyes."<sup>7</sup>

Bryher's new friends continued their conversations by letter when the travelers boarded a train for California, the "real" El Dorado of their trip. Nothing Hilda, who had relatives there, nor McAlmon, who had just fled Los Angeles, nor Moore, who knew southern California and had contacts in Carmel, could say dissuaded Bryher from insisting that she would find there the freedom of life style she sought. In California, she was sure, she could wear trousers and do as she pleased in exquisite settings. Of these elements, only the last prevailed.



Bryher narrates her experience as both fact and fiction. For *The Sphere*, she writes of her adventure for British readers:

Some years ago, I am told, Santa Barbara was a quiet Californian town that straggled down from the mountains to the sea. Then the resemblance to the Riviera was discovered; they began to build; everything was done, and done successfully, to turn it into a "winter resort." It is beloved of foreigners; half the successful mediocrities of England are expected out for the winter, and Americans come here who want Spanish names and Peruvian "adobe" without the discomforts of a scarcely civilized region.

The residents are very proud of their city, and, indeed, the mountains are beautiful. Only it is everything to me that I am trying to escape from—a civilisation without life, when I want America, the America that had the energy to lay the miles of railroad we came across, the America that planted the corn, the America that built New York.<sup>8</sup>

In her *roman à clef*, *West*, she writes the story as she would have her friends understand it:

"It must be quite a day since you told me that America is the future and that the only hope of the human race lies in the West. What has happened?" [asks the Hilda character]

"It's the ice water," Nancy gasped faintly. . . . I feel as if I had swallowed a bucket of fire."

. . . . "Don't think I don't like America, but it has nothing in common with its poetry."

"Will you never realize that American poetry is a protest against conditions here? A young American has to fight for every opinion he holds that is not accepted by the masses; a young Englishman sits at a tea party and gets petted."

"But I thought America was going to be new, different. And it's like Victorian England grafted on to the cheap end of Nice. Dust, formality, and no end to spending money. . . . Greece was cheap and you had Hymettus. New York was New York, arrogant and barbaric. But here you weighted out gold and silver for suburbia gone reckless, for the grind of wheels and an indefinable sense of restraint." (Bryher, *West* 50–52)

Disappointed to learn that in California gold was a commodity one spent heavily rather than one signifying a new world, Bryher returned

to New York with H.D. sooner than she had planned. She never in print, in fact or fiction, alluded to the plot she was hatching while in the West, namely of proposing to McAlmon, her way out of her circumstances. Instead, she ends *West* with Magnus Western, as she calls him, simply accompanying Nancy and Helga to Europe at the end of their American tour. It is from McAlmon's correspondence that we learn of mutual freedom-seekers, one rich and disappointed in the oppressive Victorianness of American, one poor and eager to join the flow of American expatriate writers to Europe, who set their marriage of convenience for St. Valentine's Day.

There were some warnings of an attraction, if not of a plot. Moore reported to her brother that after the women returned, McAlmon was displaying a kind of puppy love around Bryher and spending a good deal of time at her hotel (*SL* 144).<sup>9</sup> While Bryher was in California, McAlmon wrote her heady, intellectual letters that nonetheless reveal aspects of his personality and his concern for her. His tone is not romantic but he expresses admiration for her mind and spirit. He feels let down by New York's literati: only Williams and Moore are worthwhile, but he finds the former very married and the latter restrained by a mother "too humble, and too good, and moral, and righteous."<sup>10</sup> We can only speculate that Bryher wrote of her idea to McAlmon or spoke with him about it in New York; no confirming letters survive.

In any case, the wedding and the tea at the Moores took place on Monday. On Thursday, a select group gathered for dinner at the Brevoort Hotel for the departing trio (H.D. was returning to London). Among the guests were Grace McAlmon, Robert's sister, Marsden Hartley, Rolfe Humphrey, Marianne Moore, Mrs. Moore, Gwen Richards, Lola Ridge, Evelyn Scott, Scofield Thayer, and Florence and William Carlos Williams.<sup>11</sup> The last tells of securing a box of freshly cut exotic orchids from a local grower and of the delight that the guests took in this unusual gift:

As we oh'd and ah'd over them, it was Marsden who spoke the perfect comment—for imagine what some smart reporter, English or American, would not have given for the chance to exploit the secret wedding of the daughter of Sir John Ellerman to an impecunious young American, no matter how talented.



We had been passing the box around the table in the small room when Marsden sat back laughing as only he could at such a time, "Imagine," he said, "what it would look like in the papers tomorrow, the headline: POETS PAWING ORCHIDS!" (*Autobiography* 177)

The dinner ended about nine o'clock. Mrs. Moore said her farewell to McAlmon, the "scoundrel bridegroom," in a cloud of scolding. Apparently she found the speed of the marriage contemptible and felt that McAlmon had dishonored Bryher. McAlmon's sister stood by, nonplussed, as Mrs. Moore continued by elevating the disaster to the level of an American offense against Britain. Perhaps worse, McAlmon did not even know the significance of the "Mayfair" from which he had so rudely stolen Bryher.<sup>12</sup> Implied in her harangue is Mrs. Moore's concern for Bryher's parents. Indeed, several cables to the Ellermans during the week went unanswered until at last Sir John wrote for the couple to come over. The newlyweds, H.D., Perdita, and nurse sailed for England on Sunday on *The Celtic*. That afternoon, Marianne and her mother walked over to Pier 43 at the end of their street to catch a glimpse of the ship but they were a few minutes too late.<sup>13</sup>

Hartley's humorous remark about orchids, poets, and the press fell near the mark. It took the press several weeks to scent the story. The *New York Times* article appeared on March 12 with a four-level headline:

"Heiress" Writer Weds Village Poet  
Greenwich Circles Stirred by the Romance of Robert Menzies  
McAlmon  
Girl Proposed, Is Report  
Bride Exploited as Daughter of Sir John Ellerman, to Whom  
Burke's Peerage Credits only a Son<sup>14</sup>

The reporter had done his homework. He found the marriage license accorded Winifred Ellerman and checked in Burke's where Sir John's marriage was dated 1908 and his son's age given as eleven. What Burke's failed to reflect was that Sir John and Lady Ellerman had not been married when Winifred was born in 1894 and so, Bryher, illegitimate, was not listed and was not, technically, an

heiress. The long article went on to describe the gossip among the Villagers that McAlmon "whispered a line or two of poetry and there was nothing to do but call a minister." Three days later, the *Times* followed up with a report from London: "Reticent on Romance: Ellerman Family Won't Admit or Deny Mrs. McAlmon Is Related."

The most searing public notice from the point of view of the principals came from none other than Scofield Thayer who devoted *The Dial's* editor's "Comment" in July to the marriage.<sup>15</sup> Intended as satire, the piece makes the following points in Thayer's overwrought prose: Bryher met McAlmon at the Moores's home (the "Rabbit's Conservatorium"); the marriage saved McAlmon from the homosexual dangers inherent in his work as an artists' model ("one recalls, readily, the affair of Ganymede, a mere country-boy, and that awful Sir Jove"); and McAlmon remained ignorant of Bryher's wealth and position until after the marriage. When the satire became pure invention, it turned sour. Thayer concocted the notion that *Contact*, Williams's and McAlmon's little magazine, would be funded by Ellerman money. He parlayed a rumor that McAlmon would work for Lloyds of London into an international incident reflecting an American takeover. And at the end, he took on Williams, the "scamed and tragic figure" whose loss of a boon companion marred this "great historic event." He calls Williams the "debonair young Jersey lady-doctor," "the bouncing apple of how many satined boudoirs." And finally:

Robert McAlmon has gone to London; *Contact* is going to London; "Local conditions" have gone to pot; and there is no joy in Jersey.

Reviewing with a sympathetic young poetess, the whole rendering affair, Dr. Williams is reported quite suddenly to have broken off (and to have plunged into the night) with words which seem to indicate better than any I could use what a cut-up man the Editor of *Contact* now is: "There doesn't seem to be much honey left in life, and that's a fact." We do not even know whether he caught the last train.

Moore had apparently helped Thayer to tone down his piece; he omitted quotations from letters that he had intended to use. He called his article "risky"<sup>16</sup> and Moore saw the printed piece with "dismay."<sup>17</sup>

McAlmon's reaction was predictably stronger. He wrote to Williams that Thayer had sent a draft of the article to Bryher for her to approve or kill but that they had preferred to take a "silence means contempt' attitude."<sup>18</sup> He calls the article "so amazingly abstruse, obtuse, pettily venomous, and ineffective" that it was neither believable nor harmful. In the same letter, he described a full-page write-up in a Los Angeles paper that had gone so far as to pose a stand-in couple for its illustration.

The press coverage died down but private exchanges about the marriage continued for years. They are part of the history of the Moore-Bryher relationship as it developed over the two years between the writers' first meeting in the fall of 1921 and the publication of "Marriage" in 1923. To the surprise of everyone, the Ellermans welcomed McAlmon with warmth. "[They] (having recovered from the shock) were very, very pleased with 'Dotty's' choice and rather overdid things," H.D. wrote to Amy Lowell.<sup>19\*</sup> They forced upon the couple a whirl of parties and a cascade of gifts and other unimaginable "bridal atrocities."

## II. LIBERTY

Paradoxically, Bryher married McAlmon to secure her liberty—her freedom to live away from her family, to travel alone if she wished, to be a "modern woman" (HA 201). In her memoir, Bryher wrote that she was born into "a second Puritan age" in England in 1894. Her middle class Protestant family adhered to the late Victorian codes for women. The strategies that enforced a young woman's isolation involved parent-child relationships, social interaction outside the home, and propriety, especially in dress. These were the codes Bryher tried to escape. She writes that 1900 in England

was an incredibly restricted time. . . . It was easier to alter the laws of the land than to miss a dinner party to which an invitation had been accepted. The degree that conventionality was itself godliness left no room for vision. Many of the ordinary sensations of atmosphere were unknown because the air had to reach us through mufflers and veils. It was not fashion but the

taboo of exposure of the skin. Our symbol of freedom was Nature, we were the last descendants of Rousseau (though we were unable to read his books) and as movement was difficult because even a man's clothes hampered his agility, we tried to have a unity with the landscape. [Walks in the countryside were] the only permitted form of self-expression. (HA 26)

I shall consider the steps Bryher took to get away from that time, her relationship with Moore, and the actions she took in trying to solve what she thought was Moore's dilemma, restrictions imposed by her familial situation. It is their interactions, and those of McAlmon and H.D. to an extent, that lay the groundwork for "Marriage."

Bryher had an unconventional upbringing by any standard. The child of loving parents who doted on her, she spent most of her youth abroad with them in Egypt, North Africa, Italy, Spain, and France, summering in the Alps and returning infrequently to England. She refers to her father's work as "investments" and to her mother as something of "an anarchist." Chief among the investments were shipping lines that produced great wealth; the anarchistic streak clearly passed on to Bryher her encouragement to rebel against the social order.

By 1910, Bryher found herself suddenly sent to boarding school. That experience, a two-year boot camp of frozen pedagogy and cast-in-stone rules of comportment, contoured a girl of marriageable age to wear a new set of shackles. At nineteen or twenty, she must not attend public lectures, lunch in restaurants, or write a business letter to a publisher. Occasionally allowed about the neighborhood, to take a message to her mother's friend, "I had the humiliation of waiting while they telephoned to inquire if it was really true that I was permitted to take walks unescorted" (HA 145). Arabic lessons at the Professor's home passed muster; to attend classes with other students might give her "ideas." When a professor of hieroglyphics suggested that Bryher enroll at the University of London to study archaeology, the family responded: you are too young; classes would put ideas in your head (HA 150). Finally, Bryher reports this dialogue that resulted from wishing aloud to go alone to America:

"Girls can't travel about alone."

"Yes, they can. Why shouldn't they?"

"Never mind why they shouldn't." (D 255)<sup>20</sup>

Bryher saw the adult women in her world as determined to "squash" the young and as no longer "interested in freedom or development" (*TS* 247). She presents this point of view in a passage where "Mrs. Hearth" is speaking with Nancy's (Bryher's) mother:

"This generation," sighed Mrs. Hearth. "You should be thankful Nancy does not want to rush about much. All they care about is pleasure. Their own pleasure. If I had my way I should make them stop at school until they learned their duty to the home where they belong. These pernicious screeching women with their reforms and their ideas are ruining family life." She leaned back happily in her chair and helped herself a second time to the pudding. (*TS* 213)

"To rush about," to leave the confines of the home—the hearth, to pursue higher education, these were the actions from which young unmarried women were being protected. Bryher cites parental complicity in enforcing the rules:

Our rebellions took place in our thoughts, it was only after 1920 that they passed into deeds. I was a dutiful daughter . . . and renounced . . . all that made life endurable only to hear after each submission, "Why can't you be like other girls?" These wanted less than I did . . . ; besides, how was it possible to change a cheerful and obstinate hippopotamus (my totem animal) into an Edwardian miss? (*HA* 145)

The "Edwardian miss" chafed under her school uniform and resented having to don a hat and gloves to mail a letter at the corner. Her account of the clothing she had to wear as a child is even more appalling:

Clothes were a nightmare. I wore a thick vest, a bodice, woolen knickers, one flannel and one white petticoat, long black stockings, high black button boots and a serge dress. Over this I had a white pinafore indoors and when I went out a triangular piece of cloth round my neck to keep the air from my throat, . . . a large hat, . . . a heavy coat, gloves, and sometimes a muff. (*HA* 5–6)

Add to this hair in long braids that "caught in the bushes and fell forward into the ink," but hair that was curled every night. Impatient

with this coiffure, she begs her mother: "Couldn't I have my hair cut short?" "How can you say such a wicked thing?"

Her personal appearance bored her. . . . She had always wanted short hair like a boy's. Quite short hair. That one shoved in a basin, shook and forgot about. . . . It gave more force to any head. (*TS* 209)

Bryher could not have known in 1910 that in a few years young women of her group would have short hair and wear "pyjamas" or trousers if they wished. But at twenty-four, her cherished escape was to go to America. Her family said that she would get over this imaginary love affair with the New World, but Bryher "knew better; miracles happened in America. *Girls had jobs*" (*HA* 155). In America you "do what you like, go around in riding breeches, have a magnificent climate, and it is right out of the environment where one has lived" (*West* 38). When she reached New York in 1920, she counted on finding England's opposite, the enlightened land.

Bryher said: "The reward of my first visit [to America] was meeting Marianne Moore. We liked each other from the beginning" (*HA* 199). The two had grown up in similar worlds but with pronounced differences. Moore, the daughter of a teacher and an engineer, was raised without her father in a household that included only her mother and brother. She attended a school for girls and college at Bryn Mawr; she knew best a female-dominated society. The restrictions that Bryher so hated did not mark Moore's experience. She traveled freely from Bryn Mawr to Philadelphia to visit art galleries and bookstores. She went alone to New York, accompanied only to evening events. Moore cared about her appearance. She wore her red hair in braids circling her head. She acquired her first tricornered hat in college, a style that became her trademark. Bryher nonetheless saw an "austere boyish head," a woman with "her hands folded on her lap, like some heraldic version of a pterodactyl stiffly watching from some Jurassic rock, sea anemones open and close to the rhythm of the tides" (*West* 35, 39). Not only does that description echo Moore's poem "The Fish," it also signals the nickname Bryher gave Moore, shortened usually to "Dactyl." Each woman would have seen in the other a lively intelligence, a profound enthusiasm for literature, and a love of the exotic.

It is likely that Bryher and Moore mirrored each other's opposite sides. While Bryher had progressed from the stultifying rules of English propriety to an adventure in America, Moore, at thirty-four, had moved to New York only to live with her mother in a tiny apartment, work in a library, and join literary gatherings as an oddly temperate and proper lady. Perhaps unconsciously, Bryher feared Moore was suffering the fate she had tried to avoid while Moore felt alarm at Bryher's adventures to which she might have succumbed had her circumstances been different. These concerns appear in the gestures of friendship between the two women. They flow from Moore's discussions, in print and in private, of Bryher's writing and from Bryher's attempts to set Moore free of any obligations that diminished her opportunity to write.

The first of these gestures concerns Bryher's first novel, which Moore received in November, 1920, just after Bryher and H.D. had departed for California. "I have your *Development* at last and hardly know what to say of the pleasure it has given me."<sup>21</sup> Moore's praise continued in a review for *The Dial*: "The study of a mind in the formative process—perhaps one should say of a scholarly mind."<sup>22</sup> Thinly veiled autobiography, *Development* charts Bryher's life from childhood memories until a few years after leaving school, about 1913. We read of the early travels, the hated boarding school, and her attempt to come to grips with the lack of freedom of an unmarried woman.

Moore's review of *Development* deals with dress and the status of women. She takes issue with a point she suggests is perhaps "immature":

... possibly in her protest against woman's rôle as a wearer of skirts—in her envying a boy his freedom and his clothes—her view is somewhat curtailed. One's dress is more a matter of one's choice than appears; if there be any advantage, it is on the side of woman; woman is more nearly at liberty to assume man's dress than man is able to avail himself of the opportunities for self-expression afforded by the variations in color and fabric which a woman may use. Moreover, women are no longer debarred from professions that are open to men, and if one cares to be femininely lazy, traditions of the past still afford shelter. (CP 61)

Not everyone would agree that women could join men in any profession in 1921 but Moore makes the statement assuredly. At the time, she was the breadwinner of her family of two (her married brother was in the Navy). She asserts that women are freer than men in matters of dress. Over the next months, she would send Bryher details about clothing she had seen displayed in New York, beg Bryher to share with her a scrap from a new dress being made, and express pleasure in sketches of a dress Bryher had sent to her with words which made their way into "Marriage": the delightful sketches have the effect of "the ladies in their imperious humility / are ready to receive you" (197-98).<sup>23</sup>

Dress, among the fashion conscious, leads to hair. We have observed Bryher's longing for short hair, a state she achieved by 1920 before she came to New York. From a photograph taken at Carmel, we see Bryher with hair cut about chin length, not the mannish short cut she later affected, but definitely in the domain of a "bob." Bryher tells us in *West*:

"I should like to cut her [Anne's, the Moore figure's] hair short, her wonderful hair. Break her from everything to which she is accustomed and plunge her into a new world."

"Too late now. She would only run back to her rock the moment your back was turned, but I wish you could try the experiment." (102)

Bryher must have addressed this topic in a letter to Moore from California because Moore writes in January, 1921: "The pterodactyl has often thought of shortening its hair. (I will send or read you 'The Rape of the Lock,' a friend's burlesque dealing with this very subject)" (SL 142). Barbara Guest remarks that "cutting one's hair symbolically cut one off from the family ties and mores just as formerly 'putting up her hair' had indicated that the girl had become old enough to be 'put' into the marriage market" (Guest 129). Moore never did cut her hair, although McAlmon said she sent a lock to Bryher (Guest 133). Nor did she sever family ties or set aside the mores with which she had been raised.

During the same period, Moore received from Bryher a copy of her article "The Girl-Page in Elizabethan Literature," published in



the winter of 1921.<sup>24</sup> In *Philaster* by Beaumont and Fletcher, Bryher relishes the character Bellario, a courtier's daughter disguised as Philaster's page. Not knowing that the page has fallen in love with him, Philaster reassigns Bellario to his inamorata. Bryher writes:

Allegiance may be transferred at an express command, but only a young boldness could imply so well absolute denial of all save outward surrender, as she enters Arethusa's room: "I wait on you, to do him service." Yet this root of childishness which sets her apart from the others in the play has scarcely the depth of a leaf. ("Girl-Page" 450)

Moore commented at length on her delight in the article, her interest in the plays, and her special pleasure in the "depth of a leaf" (SL 156).

Bryher assumed that Moore felt the restrictions of a girl who would be a page, who would escape if she could. Bryher tried repeatedly to make Moore agree to come abroad so that she would have an opportunity to write. The campaign begins while Bryher and H.D. are in the West. McAlmon writes to Bryher: "We'll all try and do something for Marianne—perhaps give her mother some—O wait—." And: Marianne "will matter as a piquant idea—a closeted intellect I think. Don't say this to her but as long as Mere Moore is around . . . I can't know whether people like that have any urgent life stream in them, or not."<sup>25</sup> Moore responded to Bryher's first overture that she was honored by Bryher's offer but that she was not ready to follow Bryher's lead as a novelist: "But I am telling the truth when I say that if I had all the time in the world, I should not write anything for some years" (SL 141–42). She signs herself "Your trusting but disobedient pterodactyl."

Moore is of two minds about Bryher's invitation, wanting to go but fearing the effect on her mother (who would make the trip with her). In February she accepts from Bryher a check to be spent on travel.<sup>26</sup> Bryher's last salvo came in May when she offered Moore a chance to work—typing—for her and McAlmon, presumably, perhaps as a way to legitimize the trip. Moore explains that she hesitates to give up her library work and has "enough freedom" at home (SL 157–58). While her friends assume that she is or should be struggling to free herself of her job, her surroundings, or the exacting attention of and to her

mother, Moore repeatedly expresses her contentment. She seems to have chosen, outright, her position as her mother's companion. Moore never directly opposed marriage for herself but she did not seek it.<sup>27</sup>

In *West*, Moore is given some of her own words:

Your kindness is gratifying that you wish me to be with you. But if I am to write a novel it will not be for some years. I know I am not ready. You see . . . I feel if I am to create anything I would do it when I am, say, forty-five. (148)

In the novel, it is "Anne Trollope" speaking. Bryher has given the Moores the novelist's name, teasing them about their view of England as something realized in such fiction as *Barchester Towers*. The names were settled upon in mid-1921; Moore had the manuscript of *West* in hand by July and she offered Bryher a long critique of her characterization of Mrs. Trollope. The next year, after she had begun "Marriage," she quotes to Bryher a passage from *Barchester Towers*. In the novel, the narrator addresses the issue of the best age for marriage:

But for real true love—love at first sight, love to devotion, love that robs a man of his sleep, love that "will gaze an eagle blind"; . . . love that is "like a Hercules, still climbing trees in the Hesperides"—we believe the best age is from forty-five to seventy; up to that, men are generally given to mere flirting.<sup>28</sup>

Moore associates this passage with Havelock Ellis's *On Life and Sex: Essays of Love and Virtue*, his insistence on finding ways to keep a marriage alive, and with her own notion that marriage is never easy but a "crusade." In other words, a hasty marriage does not bode well.

Moore's view of marriage must owe something to her experience in her family. It appears that John and Mary Warner Moore separated but perhaps never divorced.<sup>29</sup> That possibility may account for her fervent remarks to Bryher on the importance of a true marriage which goes far beyond the marriage contract. Calling her attitude a "Baucis-Philemon" one,<sup>30</sup> she says that she disapproves of divorce and feels that if a couple has "made a mistake, or if one of them is not on a marriage level, there may have to be a separation"; the problem arises because people who have no respect for marriage insist on the respectability of the marriage contract (SL 177–78).

This letter was written in August, 1921; Moore learned from McAlmon in July that without any doubt, his and Bryher's was a marriage of convenience: "it's an unromantic arrangement between us."<sup>31</sup> The great burden of Moore's remarks to both Bryher and McAlmon is that a "hasty" or "unromantic" marriage signifies a failure to honor true marriage, as distinct from the civil contract. She cites Freud as a source of understanding why it is difficult to determine one's best direction in life (*SL* 155); she advances to McAlmon Havelock Ellis's ideas on the necessity of monogamy.<sup>32</sup> In short, she takes her stand but does not withdraw her friendship, expressing content in knowing that the situation is not bad for Bryher. Eventually, the conversation dies down as the poem begins to take on a life of its own.

### III. UNION

If we consider "Marriage" as a Modernist epithalamium, we find coherence in the poem that is otherwise not easy to see. An epithalamium, or poem to be read outside the nuptial chamber, conforms to certain characteristics rather than to rules. Among the segments available for selection by Spenser and his predecessors are the mutual desire of the couple to be together, their intellectual pursuits and physical beauty, the use of playfulness while treating the maid with decorum, the making of vows and prophecies, an exhortation on sleep or wakefulness, the use of legends or natural history to exemplify nuptial rites, and an address to Hymen. All of these elements are present in "Marriage." Subsequent practitioners of the form allow for comparison of the couple to Adam and Eve, the addition of dialogue, a description of the night, and anti-epithalamium elements such as passages in *The Duchess of Malfi*.<sup>33</sup> These elements, too, characterize Moore's poem.<sup>34</sup>

How Moore conceived the idea for her genre is suggested by the appearance of E. E. Cummings's "Puella Mea" in *The Dial* in January 1921.<sup>35</sup> She remarked to Thayer, who very much wanted her to like the poem, that it reminded her of Spenser's "Epithalamium."<sup>36</sup> In "Puella Mea" the narrator describes his beloved by comparing her to famous brides through the ages, Salome, Isoud, Gunever, Grania, and others. The appearance of the poem coincided neatly with the timing of the Bryher-McAlmon

union. Moore's "Marriage," however, owes nothing to Cummings's poem with its lush imagery and sensuousness (the bride's "lascivious arms," for example). Neither does it compare to H.D.'s "Hymen," the title poem of her book published by Bryher as a twin to Moore's *Poems* in the summer of 1921. Still less does it take Catullus's marriage poems as models. Spenser's "Epithalamium" bears consulting but beyond its treatment of the genre's traditional subjects, it has no similarity to Moore's Modernist poem.

As a Modernist epithalamium, "Marriage" finds its word and phrase building blocks in the seeming rag-bag fashion of a "Waste Land" or a "Canto." Moore's reading spread over a vast library of texts and she drew her language from such disparate writers as William Godwin and Robert of Sorbonne. Her 1924 endnotes reveal this breadth and incline us to believe her when she dubbed her poem an "anthology" (*CP* 551). Other sources pressure the poem as well, particularly the texts of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, several Shakespeare plays (*Love's Labors Lost*, *The Tempest*, and *Henry IV, Part I*) and the Bible. These texts do not have endnotes; Moore would have expected her readers to recognize such classic works. Of course there are no notes to her correspondence with Bryher, perhaps something of a tit-for-tat arrangement since Moore saw herself quoted verbatim repeatedly in *West*.

In approaching the text of the poem, we can assume a firm if not all-encompassing identification of Eve with Bryher and Adam with McAlmon. Moore, aware of the intentional fallacy, informed Bryher that in her review of *Development*, she had tried to maintain a "distinction" between Bryher and Nancy; "It may not be very apparent, however" (*SL* 159). She maintains this distinction in the poem, turning to satire to create the slight distance between identities.

"Marriage" opens with a preamble (1-20) that sets forth the argument: marriage is an institution requiring public promises of private fidelity; divorce is not an option because one has agreed "one need not change one's mind / about a thing one has believed in." Adam and Eve perhaps have an opinion about marriage "by this time." The institution or "enterprise" displays "fire-gilt steel;" it takes "criminal ingenuity" to avoid marriage and its traditions, impostures, and spoils. When we appeal to psychology to explain this drive toward marriage, we find no answers.

"Fire-gilt steel / alive with goldenness" suggests the "flaming sword which turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life," and which, in *Genesis*, barred the gate to the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were expelled.<sup>17</sup> The phrase "alive with goldenness" favors Milton's version of the expulsion where "a flaming sword, / In signal of remove, waves fiercely round" while Adam and Eve "will not be loth / to leave [this paradise but shall]. . . . possess / A paradise within thee, happier far."<sup>18</sup>

The rest of "Marriage" comprises seven sections: a description of Eve (21-62); a description of Adam (63-132); an address to Hymen (123-66); the wedding (167-202); a dialogue between Adam and Eve (203-39); the characteristics of a bad marriage (240-64); and an exhortation on good marriage (265-98). We find in the descriptions of Eve and Adam the first three elements common to epithalamiums: desire, pursuits and beauty, and playfulness.

Eve has not only beauty but also brains. Her beauty startles an onlooker. Her intelligence—playfully described—exceeds the norm: she can write in English, German and French (Bryher's languages) simultaneously, and talk in the meantime. Her desire for her mate has playful overtones:

"I should like to be alone;  
to which the visitor replies,  
"I should like to be alone;  
why not be alone together?" (30-34)

Just as Adam and Eve were alone together in paradise, so too were Bryher and McAlmon oddly alone together in their odd marriage. In Milton, Eve suggests to Adam that they work alone (IX, 214); Satan takes advantage of Eve's moment without Adam's protection. Bryher, with the theoretical protection of marriage, is nonetheless in these terms of Moore's at risk in her relationship.

The rest of this section is a contemplation of Eve in the garden. In the first of two long sentences, Eve is positioned below "incandescent" stars and fruit, the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil where, awakened to a "strange experience of beauty," every moment of awareness of what she has done "is poison." She is "the central flaw / in that first crystal-fine experiment," that "interesting impossibility"

in which she says "I am not grown up now; / I am as a little leaf" (51-53), the last a phrase from Bellario's speech Moore admired in Bryher's "Girl-Page" article. As this section comes to an end, this sentence, describing "the choicest piece of my life" in the garden, ushers in Moore's excuse for Eve's behavior. She was merely a child; the affair with the snake was an "invaluable accident / exonerating Adam." Eve, with her limited culpability, took the blame for the destruction of paradise, for the first sin, and, if Adam is thereby exonerated, she took the blame alone. The implications for the position of women in the post-lapsarian world are obvious. The description of Eve has moved from playful to solemn albeit with a measure of wit: the serpent becomes merely the "shed snakeskin in the history of politeness / not to be returned to again."

The description of Adam, including a prophecy common to the epithalamium, follows: "And he has beauty also" but of a different kind, "distressing." The passage beginning "the O thou to / whom" draws directly on Milton:

To whom thus Eve replied: "O thou for whom  
And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh  
And without whom am to no end, my guide  
And head, what thou hast said is just and right. (IV, 440-43)

Moore shows an Adam reflected in Eve's absolute dependence on him. Next he is a beautiful, "mythological monster" surrounded by exquisite silks and exotic pet leopards and giraffes whose "long lemon-yellow bodies" are "sown with trapezoids of blue," an Argyle pattern Moore recommended to Bryher from a display of men's haberdashery.<sup>19</sup>

Adam's accomplishment is the use of words tightly strung, "vibrating," like an "industrious waterfall." Adam's model, McAlmon, was of course a writer, and one whose work Moore regularly criticized for such qualities. She advised him against "throwing off the brakes and letting everything take its own course" (SL 168). Adam has "prophe-sied correctly" that the waterfall will become a "speedy stream / which violently bears all before it." This action probably refers again to McAlmon's writing, especially the stories in *A Hasty Bunch* which he had been sending Moore during 1921. She thought his writing rough and unpolished.



The next section about Adam begins:

"Treading chasms  
on the uncertain footing of a spear,"  
forgetting that there is in woman a quality of mind  
which as an instinctive manifestation  
is unsafe,  
he goes on speaking  
in a formal customary strain  
.....  
of everything to promote one's joy.

The quotation comes from *Henry IV, Part 1*,<sup>10</sup> where Northumberland chides Hotspur for his failure to listen to serious business; in the preceding scene, Hotspur has refused to listen to Kate when she complains to him. The image of a waterfall reappears while the refusal to heed complaints about words continues. Adam is further rebuked for mistaking certain kinds of attention so that "he experiences a solemn joy / in seeing that he has become an idol." Moore documents this quotation from Anatole France after she has offered it directly to McAlmon in a letter of June 18, 1921. McAlmon sent her a tiny ceramic elephant (Moore's totem animal) of bright blue. She set it on her mantelpiece and named it "Jean" for the boy in France's story. What McAlmon probably did not realize was the satire that scene embodied in the story. In short, Jean's sister has decided to crown him with flowers as a little king. "He is an idol. He alone is great, he alone is handsome." But suddenly his sister laughed: "Oh, you are so cute!" Jean did not laugh. He was bitterly disappointed to return to his ordinary self.<sup>11</sup>

The twin characteristics, Adam's forgetting to heed Eve's "quality of mind / which as an instinctive manifestation / is unsafe" and his satisfaction in having "become an idol," support Milton's Adam who tongue-lashes Eve for listening to the serpent, ignoring her remorse (IX, 1067 ff.) and at the same time finds himself far from his pedestal when Eve rebukes him for his harangue (IX, 1143 ff.). They also mirror Moore's complaints throughout her correspondence with Bryher and McAlmon after their marriage: did Robert not understand Bryher's mind and sensitivity and that he was harming her by marrying her? Did he not assign Bryher all the blame for the plan? Was he, in effect, worshipping himself? Has he failed to treat her with respect?

The poem turns next to Adam's own difficulties in a passage concerning sleep and wakefulness, another epithalamium feature. Twelve lines address the nightingale that plagues and unnerves Adam. The bird will not sing; he is afraid to startle it lest it fly away: "If he does nothing, it will sleep; / if he cries out, it will not understand." He says, "It clothes me with a shirt of fire." The nightingale "in the new leaves" suggests the new-made Eden of *Paradise Lost*. As Adam and Eve moved toward their nuptial bower, evening came on, quieting the birds and beasts, "all but the wakeful nightingale; / She all night long her amorous descant sung; Silence was pleased" (IV, 602-04). There follows Eve's hymn of love, praising the "Silent night / With this her solemn bird" which, like the "glittering starlight" without Adam, is "never sweet" (648-49, 656). Her solemn bird, the nightingale, and all the other delights of paradise, depend on her unity with Adam. But in the last two lines of her song, Eve shows a dawning curiosity: "But where fore all night long shine these, for whom / This glorious sight when sleep has shut all eyes?" (657-58). It is Adam the philosopher who answers Eve's question: spirits praise God for having created the stars, and the stars themselves honor their creator (IV 660-88). Then, "[t]hus talking, hand in hand alone they passed / On to their blissful bower," their nuptial bed.

Moore's Adam never arrives at the nuptial bed. He is "[u]nnerved by the nightingale / and dazzled by the apple;" driven by a fire so vast that in comparison "The shining of the earth / is but a deformity,"

he stumbles over marriage,  
"a very trivial object indeed"  
to have destroyed the attitude  
in which he stood—  
the ease of the philosopher  
unfathered by a woman.

Moore next describes the fire that pushed her Adam toward marriage. Although she quotes Richard Baxter in describing the fire itself; the referent for it is either the fiery lake to which Satan was chained in *Paradise Lost* (I, 210) or the fire of lust that Adam and Eve experience after eating the forbidden fruit:



But that false fruit  
 far other operation first displayed,  
 Carnal desire inflaming: he on Eve  
 Began to cast lascivious eyes, she him  
 As wantonly repaid: in lust they burn,  
 Till Adam thus 'gan Eve to dalliance move[.] (IX, 1011-15)

Moore's fire inclines to that of the fiery lake:

a fire  
 "as high as deep  
 as bright as broad  
 as long as life itself[.]"

Her Adam, considered as everyman, fears the fires of hell, perhaps, and marriage is his way around them, his way to avoid sin. But better in keeping with Adam as McAlmon is a fire of compulsion. He is "impelled by 'the illusion of a fire / effectual to extinguish fire'"—the burning desire to become a Modern Writer—to go abroad where the really literary Americans are at work. Marriage to Bryher is the means to this end. He has trivialized marriage by his action, by signing the marriage contract without making a true marriage.

Adam and Eve will return to the poem after certain rituals have been performed. First, the narrator, still following the dictates of the epithalamium, addresses Hymen:

Unhelpful Hymen!  
 a kind of overgrown cupid  
 reduced to insignificance  
 by the mechanical advertising  
 parading as involuntary comment,  
 by that experiment of Adam's  
 with ways out but no way in—  
 the ritual of marriage,  
 augmenting all its lavishness[.]

Hymen himself appears as a creature of Madison Avenue. Rather than bless Adam's experiment, he simply comments on it:

"for love  
 that will gaze an eagle blind,

that is with Hercules  
 climbing the trees  
 in the garden of the Hesperides,  
 from forty-five to seventy  
 is the best age."

We have seen this passage from Trollope before, in Moore's comment to Bryher on the ripeness of age needed for marriage. Trollope borrowed part of his passage from *Love's Labors Lost* where Berowne tries to define true love:

A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind.  
 . . . . .  
 For valor, is not Love a Hercules  
 Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?  
 (IV, iii, 308, 314-15)

These references point to the three sisters who guarded Hera's golden apples, her marriage gift. It was Hercules's eleventh labor to retrieve these apples.<sup>42</sup> They will be alluded to in the next section of "Marriage" where, during the wedding meal, the narrator says that in such an unromantic nuptial climate as she has been recounting, we have "one's self love's labors lost." Hymen has been simply

commending [marriage]  
 as a fine art, as an experiment,  
 a duty or as merely recreation.

The "ritual of marriage" in Hymen's passage has additional properties of note:

augmenting all its lavishness;  
 its fiddle-head ferns,  
 lotus flowers, opuntias, white dromedaries,  
 its hippopotamus—  
 nose and mouth combined  
 in one magnificent hopper—  
 its crested screamer—  
 that huge bird almost a lizard,  
 its snake and the potent apple.

The images from "ferns" to "screamer" all point to the largest, or nearly so, genus in its species, either living in water or preserving water in the desert. Together with the snake, they are a Garden of Eden both wondrous and dangerous. Inasmuch as they correlate with Bryher's experience of exotic climes and her totem animal, they comment on her marriage.<sup>43</sup> As figures from natural history in service of a description of the marriage rites, they center the epithalamium, falling at the midpoint of the poem.

Hymen's passage foretells the presentation of the wedding itself. First, the wedding procession, led by two panthers representing the couple: "entirely graceful—one must give them the path[.]" The woman is a black Diana who "darkeneth her countenance as a bear doth" and the man has a

spiked hand  
that has an affection for one  
and proves it to the bone,  
impatient to assure you  
that impatience is the mark of independence,  
not of bondage.

Diana, here, is Artemis, to whom Bryher considered herself avowed (*HA* 145). She is strangely linked to the wicked wife depicted in Ecclesiasticus 25:24: "The wickedness of a woman changeth her face; and she darkeneth her countenance as a bear, and showeth it like sackcloth." The biblical passage continues in this vein until it recommends getting rid of such a woman.<sup>44</sup> The husband affectionately shakes hands with someone, his spikes piercing to the bone, insisting on the rightness of his relationship with his wife. McAlmon tried to reassure Moore of exactly that in a letter, his first to her after the wedding. He declares that they thought about their haste but decided that if they waited, Bryher would return to the bondage of her family and its duties.<sup>45</sup>

The wedding banquet begins with the curious question "When do we feed?" This somewhat rural expression and its fellow, "We quarrel as we feed," support the presence of Hymen at the scene. We are instructed not to "call him a ruffian / nor friction a calamity" in the Hymen section. In her notebook that includes a draft of this poem,

"ruffian" was a word repeatedly associated with Adam.<sup>46</sup> In transposing the adjective to Hymen, Moore sets up an association between Hymen, the perhaps ruffian, and Adam, a little rough around the edges, one whom the Moores called "Piggy," if not to his face.

The wedding meal itself follows:

... "the Ahasuerus tête à tête banquet"  
with its small orchids like snakes' tongues,  
with its "good monster, lead the way,"  
with little laughter  
and munificence of humor  
in that quixotic atmosphere of frankness  
in which, "Four o'clock does not exist  
but at five o'clock  
the ladies in their imperious humility  
are ready to receive you";  
in which experience attests  
that men have power  
and sometimes one is made to feel it  
—to make a baby scholar, not a wife.

While Moore footnotes the banquet of Ahasuerus as derived from a book of biblical exegesis, she surely recalled the story of Esther, a Jew married to the king of Persia, who won the freedom of her people. Her ruse was to invite the king and his closest but evil minister, Aman, to dinner. When the king, "warm with wine" asked Esther to request whatever she wanted, she named Aman as the Jews' enemy. Ahasuerus granted her wish and had Aman slain.<sup>47</sup>

No doubt, Bryher underwrote the actual banquet; it is unlikely that any of the guests could have afforded the bill. She acted like Esther, hosting the very meal intended to set her free. Further, that this banquet stands for the one at the Brevoort in February, 1921, becomes obvious when its chief feature is orchids, when the hostess speaks a line from Bryher's favored *The Tempest*, when someone, no doubt the bride, wears clothing described in the words Moore used for sketches of Bryher's dresses, and when, in a frank atmosphere, we learn that male power can "make a baby scholar" but "not a wife".<sup>48</sup>

The last line reflects Bryher's interest in literary and historical scholarship that she revealed in her autobiographical novels and in

her essay on the "Girl-Page." Moore drops the line the very next year, eliminating the result of men's power, and burying the reference to Bryher, a scholar, and young, but a wife only in name. No correspondence about this line survives; it is probably the most blatant reference to Bryher in the poem.

The poem moves on to a dialogue between Adam and Eve. Adam speaks first, decrying short hair (if Esther had cut her hair, what chance would she have had with the king?) and the "very poison" that is "the fact of woman." Moore's Bryn Mawr satire on "The Rape of the Lock" plays a role here. Transformed into the words of Adam, Moore's and Pope's Belinda's loss of hair results in the query:

"What monarch would not blush  
to have a wife  
with hair like a shaving-brush?" (203-05)

This bit of dialogue bears a footnote "From *The Rape of the Lock*, a parody by Mary Frances Nearing, with suggestions by M. Moore."<sup>49</sup> Surely Moore was teasing Bryher by garnishing her poem with that quotation.

For the purposes of the argument of "Marriage," we can see the strictures surrounding women—chiefly women caught between school years and marriage—as Eve's rightful inheritance. Eve, through whom man was banished from paradise, Eve, the temptress, lurks as an anti-model, prompting ritualized behaviors for young women to keep them from "falling," from being tempted by, or from tempting, the opposite sex. Hand in hand with those rituals is prevention against "commonness," as was particularly well expressed by Abraham Rihbany in a popular book, *The Syrian Christ*, early in the twentieth century. Rihbany says that the eastern understanding of St. Paul's dictum "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience" serves to "honor woman by not making her common." Thus, St. Paul's words "[t]o Oriental ears, or perhaps to Puritan ears of the good old type, . . . are poetry set to music."<sup>50</sup> Moore wove both points of view into her poem, giving Adam and Eve the speaking roles, including Adam's pronouncement, from Rihbany, "The fact of woman / is 'not the sound of the flute / but very

poison" (206-08). The suitability of Moore's choice of an "eastern" Christian's explanation of St. Paul's words lies in Bryher's considering herself somewhat eastern because of her childhood experiences in Egypt and North Africa; she said that Egypt was the locale of her first religious experiences (IIA 64).

Eve follows:

"Men are monopolists  
of 'stars, garters, buttons  
and other shining baubles'—  
unfit to be guardians  
of another person's happiness."

While Moore ascribes this quotation to M. Carey Thomas, president of Bryn Mawr during her years there (1905-1909), like the hair reference, it derives from "The Rape of The Lock." In Pope's poem, a Sylph whispers in Belinda's ear at dawn (cf. Milton's Satan as a toad at Eve's ear):

"Some nymphs there are, too conscious in their face,  
For life predestined to the gnomes' embrace.  
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,  
When offers are disdained and love denied:  
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brow,  
While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,  
And garters, stars, and coronets appear,  
And I soft sounds 'Your Grace' salute the ear.  
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,  
Instruct the eyes of your coquettes to toll,  
Teach infant cheeks a better blush to know,  
And little hearts to flutter at a beau" (ll. 79-90)<sup>51</sup>

In ongoing correspondence, Moore and Bryher confer about Elizabethan drama, with Moore's interest piqued enough to read the plays she does not know. One of the plays Bryher mentions in her article, *The Duchess of Malfi* by John Webster, informs part of "Marriage" at its darkest moment. In the play, the Duchess marries secretly against the wishes of her evil brothers. When the marriage is discovered, the Duchess is tortured, a coffin is brought into her room, and she is strangled. She remains unquiet in her grave, dead

but speaking to warn her husband of his impending murder. Ultimately, her surviving son becomes the heir to several kingdoms. Moore reworks this tale into a passage spoken by Adam, as we shall see below. She ends the passage noting an analogy to the restrictions Bryher faced at home.

To Eve, men in their affectations are as unfit to be women's guardians as to Adam, women are "poison."

Adam's next lines derive from *The Duchess of Malfi*.

"[T]urn to the letter M  
and you will find  
that 'a wife is a coffin,'  
that severe object  
with the pleasing geometry  
stipulating space not people,  
refusing to be buried  
and uniquely disappointing,  
revengefully wrought in the attitude  
of an adoring child  
to a distinguished parent." (218–28)

The Duchess was a woman of amazing courage, utterly innocent of any wrongdoing, not "disappointing" or revengeful, but secretly married. But if we factor in Bryher's situation as secretly married, and one by whose marriage there was great risk of alienating a "distinguished parent," we can read the passage as saying that the coffin-wife has been "revengefully wrought"—revenge prompted not so much by the parent himself as by the rules and regulations he felt called upon to promote. Then Eve:

"This butterfly, this waterfly, this nomad  
that has 'proposed  
to settle on my hand for life'—  
What can one do with it?  
There must have been more time  
in Shakespeare's day  
to sit and watch a play.  
You know so many artists who are fools."

Then Adam:

"You know so many fools  
who are not artists."

The first quotation, from a novel set in Scotland, finds Christie Johnston receiving a proposal from her distant cousin, a Lord. She thinks him tiresome, brushes him off, and marries an artist—presumably not a fool.<sup>32</sup> Adam would excuse one's being a fool, if an artist. The reference to Shakespeare sets up the next section, the characteristics of a bad marriage.

The dialogue ended, the narrator takes over. Adam's pride obscures his obligations:

[H]e loves himself so much  
he can permit himself  
no rival in that love.  
She loves herself so much,  
she cannot see herself enough—  
.....  
[or know that] one is not rich but poor  
when one can always seem so right.

Milton's Eve tells Adam how she bent down to see herself mirrored in a lake. Finally made aware that it was herself she saw, she turned to see Adam

"fair indeed and tall,  
... yet methought less fair,  
Less winning soft, less amiably mild,  
Than that smooth wat'ry image; back I turned [.]  
(IV, 457–80)

It is hard not to see our modern couple here, the groom avoiding the obligation to consider the bride's best interests, according to Moore's correspondence, and the bride righteous about her action, now seeming poor as to choices. The narrator seeks a way to help "these savages," the one a "model of petrine fidelity / who 'leaves her husband / only because she has seen enough of him,'" the other like a politician whose campaign rhetoric says "I am yours to command."

Moore's way to help "these savages" becomes the exhortation on a good marriage that concludes "Marriage." Its opening premise states:



love is a mystery and a science requiring hard work to investigate it. True marriage is rare; it unifies opposites, a task only possible if one has the innovation and the wisdom to perform it.<sup>54</sup> Like a beneficent gale,<sup>55</sup> real love blows where it will, and those whom it reaches are subject to lasting and deep emotions.<sup>56</sup> True marriage does not require intellectual advancement, cultural opportunities, or riches. Even very ordinary, simple people can know

the essence of the matter:  
 "Liberty and union  
 now and forever[.]"

Mary Warner Moore provides a gloss to these lines in a letter to Bryher. She tells how Marianne noticed the legend on the statue of Daniel Webster in Central Park, and thought that the famous phrase applied to the family as well as to the state.<sup>57</sup> The last two lines of the poem, "the book on the writing-table; / the hand in the breast-pocket[.]" confirm that the statue of Daniel Webster inspired the lines by their telling detail.

There is no sense of irony or sarcasm in this exhortation. Moore emphasizes the rarity and difficulty of a true and lasting marriage, a far cry from the "institution" or "enterprise" at the beginning of the poem. By summing up with "liberty *and* union" (emphasis mine), she acknowledges the two vital components that make a marriage. Throughout her correspondence with Bryher and McAlmon, Moore moves toward this statement. She recognizes that Bryher desires, in fact needs, her liberty from family and societal restraints. But she consistently reiterates her position that the marriage contract and real marriage are not the same, that one can be wed and not be "on a marriage level."

Moore's statement in the "Foreword" to *A Marianne Moore Reader* put scholars on a false scent concerning "Marriage." There she writes: "The thing (I would hardly call it a poem) is not philosophic precipitate; nor does it veil anything personal in the way of triumphs, entanglements, or dangerous colloquies. It is a little anthology of statements that took my fancy—phrasings that I liked" (CP 551). In contrast, "Marriage" is a highly developed, complex poem with a unifying structure. Its structure is unique to Moore, but its genre is

borrowed from topics common to epithalamiums across centuries. As a celebration of a marriage, the poem might well be considered entirely an anti-epithalamium. While there are lines of great lyric beauty, the thrust of the poem concentrates on the flaws Moore associates with the institution of marriage. But arguably "Marriage" is a Modernist epithalamium and a satire: Modernist because Moore composed it of the bits and pieces, the intellectual found objects so beloved of the period; an epithalamium because it uses so many devices of the genre; and a satire in its critical attitude towards human foibles rendered with wit and humor.

The poem emerged from Moore's response to Bryher's marriage to McAlmon. No letters survive from Bryher or McAlmon that express in their own words their reactions to the poem. What does come through is that they did not object to it; they did not see it as a vicious performance like Thayer's in *The Dial*. Thus, we may ask, "Marriage," this poem: I wonder what McAlmon and Bryher thought of it at the time.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Marianne Moore, *Selected Letters of Marianne Moore*, ed. Bonnie Costello et al. (New York: Knopf, 1997) 144-45. Unless otherwise stated, all letters from Moore and Mary Warner Moore, are written from 14 St. Luke's Place, New York. New York. This edition will be noted subsequently in the text as SL.
2. Published by Monroe Wheeler in his *Manikin* series as Number 3, New York, 1923. Line numbers from this edition will appear in the text. This edition includes significant lines which are dropped in the poem's next appearance in *Observations*, 1924. They occur after "the choicest piece of my life":

I am not grown up now;  
 I am as little as a leaf,

and, after "sometimes one is made to feel it" followed by a dash, not a period:

to make a baby scholar, not a wife.

Other lines dropped before *Complete Poems* are given in italics below:

In him a state of mind  
 by force of which  
 perceiving what it was not

in one magnificent hopper—  
the crested screamer—  
that huge bird almost a lizard

When do we feed?

We occidentals are so unemotional,  
We quarrel as we feed;  
one's self love's labor lost,  
the irony preserved

3. Bryher, *The Heart to Artemis* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960) 195. Bryher's autobiography is to date the best source for her early experiences.
4. Bryher, *Two Novels: Development and Two Selves*, ed. Joanne Winning (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 2000) 272–73. Bryher's second novel was published in 1923 by Contact Editions, Paris. In future citations, the novels will be referred to separately (D and TS) although the pagination follows that of the combined book.
5. Lowell had involved herself among the Imagists, publishing in the 1914 *Des Imagistes* anthology and later taking over editorship. She and H.D. had corresponded beginning in 1914. Bryher reports how Lowell dragooned her, hoping for her company when Bryher would rather have joined people her own age.
6. William Carlos Williams, *The Autobiography of William Carlos Williams* (New York: New Directions, 1951) 176.
7. Bryher, *West* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1925) 40.
8. "An Impression of America (III)," *The Sphere* [Fall, 1920 and Winter, 1921]. Bryher contributed a four-part travel essay on California to this British publication of which she kept undated clippings among her papers (Yale). Moore refers, in a letter to her of January 10, 1921, to having received all four parts (Yale).
9. Marianne Moore to John Warner Moore, February 13, 1921. For the date of their return, see Moore's letter to John Warner Moore of February 5, 1921, Rosenbach Museum & Library, (RML) which confirms February 1, 1921, as the day they unexpectedly appeared at the Moores' apartment (which had no telephone) and Monday, February 14, as the date set then for the tea with Thayer and Watson.
10. Robert McAlmon, TLS to Bryher, New York, n.d. There are two undated letters, one bearing in McAlmon's hand "about 1921." The other letter is on the same kind of paper typed on the same typewriter. Both give his address as 351 W. 15th Street, New York.
11. Barbara Guest, *Herself Defined: The Poet H.D. and Her World* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984) 138.
12. Mary Warner Moore, ALS to John Warner Moore, February 20, 1921. RML.
13. Marianne Moore to Bryher, TLS, March 3, 1921. Yale.
14. This quotation and the next are from two clippings found in the papers of Scofield Thayer. Yale.
15. *The Dial*, 70 (July 1921): 123–26.
16. Scofield Thayer to Marianne Moore, TLC, July 11, 1921, aboard the S.S. Aquitania. Yale.

17. Marianne Moore, TLS to Thayer, July 27, 1921. Yale.
18. Robert McAlmon to William Carlos Williams, TLS, London, n.d. [Summer, 1921]. Yale.
19. Undated transcript written from 131 Priest's House, London, circa March 1921. H.D. papers, Yale.
20. "Nancy," the Bryher character, has this discussion with her father.
21. *SL*, 136.
22. "Development," *The Dial* 70 (May 1921): 588. See Patricia C. Willis, ed., *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore* (New York: Viking, 1986) 62. (CP)
23. Marianne Moore to Bryher, TLS, March 20, 1922. Yale.
24. Only Bryher's tearsheets of this article are available in her papers. The verso of the last page reads "N. S. 70" but the source appears not to be *The New Statesman* but rather the new series of a journal; the pages are numbered 442–52.
25. TLS, undated, written from New York in late 1920 or early 1921. Yale.
26. Moore to John Warner Moore, TLS, February 28, 1921. RML; Moore to Bryher, TLS, March 3, 1921. RML.
27. In a letter to the stonemason chosen to carve a marker for her mother, Moore instructs him to place beneath her mother's name and dates her own, leaving an extra line "were a line ever to be inserted there, designating marriage." Her reasons are aesthetic, to maintain an unmarred stone. Moore was about to turn 60. After her death, the extra line was carved away (*SL*, 467).
28. Anthony Trollope, *Barchester Towers* (New York: New American Library, 1963) 377. See Moore to Bryher, TLS, March 20, 1922. Yale.
29. The United States Census for 1900 gives the following information. In the town of Portsmouth, Scioto County, Ohio, Sheet No. 9, John M. Moore is living at 98 West 6th Street with his parents, William and Elizabeth, and his sister Mary E. His year of birth is 1858, in Mississippi, and his status is given as "M" or married. His employment is as "Engineer mechanical" and he has not been unemployed any months during the previous year. In the same census, for Carlisle, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, Mary W. Moore, is found living at 343 North Hanover Street, born in 1862, is listed as unmarried for ten years, while her children, John W. and Marianne C. are fifteen and thirteen respectively. As an indication that censuses can be flawed, both Marianne's and her brother's birthplaces are given as Pennsylvania whereas they are supposed to have been Kirkwood, Missouri and Newton, Massachusetts.
- John Milton Moore is listed in the Portsmouth City Directory for 1908/09 as living at the same address but with the occupation "bookkeeper." He seems to disappear from the record after that date.
30. From Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book VIII: the long-wedded, still-in-love couple who were rewarded for service to the gods by turning into entwined trees rather than see each other die.
31. TLS, dated in Moore's hand July 15, 1921. RML.
32. TLC, July 19, 1921. RML.
33. Virginia Tuft, *The Poetry of Marriage: The Epithalamium in Europe and its*

*Development in England* (Los Angeles: Timmon-Brown, 1970). For the reference to *The Duchess of Malfi*, see 247.

34. See Heather Debrow, *A Happier Eden: The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990) for an extensive discussion of the genre.

35. 70 (January 1921): 48–54.

36. Mary Warner Moore to John Warner Moore, ALS, February 1, 1921. RML. No doubt Moore knew of Cummings's having written a long poem entitled "Epithalamium" upon the occasion of Thayer's marriage to Elaine Orr in 1915.

37. *Genesis* 3:24 and see also *Paradise Lost* XII, 632–44.

38. *The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. Douglas Bush (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965) XII, 585–93.

39. Moore to Bryher, TLS, September 2, 1921. Yale.

40. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington (New York: Bantam Books, 1988) 1.3.192–93. "As to o'er-walk a current roaring loud / On the unsteadfast footing of a spear."

41. *Filles et Garçons* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, [1900]) 7.

42. To compound the reference, Milton uses "Hesperian fables" to describe delicious fruit in the Garden (IV, 250).

43. When Moore began to draft her poem, she entitled it "O Faience Hippopotamus," a reference to Bryher and to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's "William," the beloved blue-green hippopotamus which had been a gift to the museum in 1917. Diminutive and sturdy, it must have reminded Moore of Bryher, who had likely seen it during her 1921 trip.

44. Moore's note to this reference is to "Women Bad and Good" an essay in *The Modern Reader's Bible*. It is possible that she took the biblical reference out of its original context and forgot the negative connotation. But given what she says next about McAlmon/Adam, it would appear that she intended such harshness—about her Eve, at least.

45. TLS, April 12, 1921. RML.

46. 1251/17, *passim*.

47. *Esther*, 5–7.

48. *The Tempest*, 3.2.152. Stephano addresses Caliban: "Lead, monster; we'll follow."

49. The note appears first in *Observations* (New York: Dial Press, 1924) 104.

50. Abraham Mitrie Rihbany, *The Syrian Christ* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1916) 333. Rihbany quotes *St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians* 14:3.

51. *The Complete Poetical Works of Alexander Pope* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1903).

52. Moore footnotes "Charles Reade, *Christie Johnston*."

53. See *The First Epistle of St. Peter*, 3:1, where wives are exhorted to be subject to their husbands.

54. The "demonstration of Columbus with the egg," an easy task to stand an egg on end if one first bumps it to flatten it a little.

55. The "charitive Euroclydon" is the harsh wind that shipwrecked St. Paul, a prisoner, and bought him time to preach widely before being returned to Rome and house arrest (*Acts of the Apostles*, 27:14).

56. The passage "I am such a cow . . . great joy at noon" appears in Moore's conversation notebook for 1920. The phrases appear to be those of Mary Warner Moore responding to some discussion of the work or life of Edna St. Vincent Millay.

57. ALS, Bremerton, Washington, October 16, 1923. The Moores had just received a printed copy of the poem. Mrs. Moore notes that Bryher has liked the poem. She explains the importance to Americans of Webster's statement. While Moore may not have consulted Webster's original speech, it is likely that she did. The speech in the United States Senate, January 26–27, 1830, begins with the passage, "When the mariner has been tossed for many days in thick weather, . . . he naturally avails himself of the first pause in the storm, . . . to take his latitude, and ascertain how far the elements have driven him from his true course." The developing question of states' rights (liberty) versus Constitutional provisions (union) informs the speech. "Second Reply to Hayne," *Shewmaker* 113–21. <http://dartmouth.edu/~dwebster/speeches/hayne-speech.html>.