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The Sea and Water in Marianne Moore's Work

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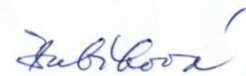
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Prohlašuji:

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Annotation

This bachelor thesis focuses on the selected works of an American poet Marianne Moore. The aim of the paper is to show how the poet approaches to the literary motif of the sea and water. The motif of the sea and water is very common in her poetry. The paper also deals with the comparison between Marianne Moore and another American poet Elizabeth Bishop. It is in terms of similarities and differences between the two poems of the same title.

Keywords:

sea, water, Moore, Marianne, Bishop, Elizabeth

Anotace

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vybranými díly americké básníčky Marianne Moore. V jejích básních se velmi často objevuje motiv moře a vody. Cílem této práce je ukázat, jakým způsobem tato básníčka k motivu moře a vody přistupuje. Část práce se také zabývá srovnáním Marianne Moore s jinou americkou básníčkou Elizabeth Bishop. Tato část se zabývá podobnostmi a odlišnostmi mezi dvěma básněmi se stejným názvem.

Klíčová slova:

moře, voda, Moore, Marianne, Bishop, Elizabeth

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Introduction

Marianne Craig Moore was an early American modernist poet.¹ She dedicated her life to “writing, contributing poetry and criticism to many journals in the United States and England.”² In 1915, she achieved notable success in her poetic career when a few journals, including *The Egoist*, *Other* and *Poetry* accepted her poems. She formed a close friendship with other writers, such as T.S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound and Wallace Stevens. 1921 was also an important year for Moore because her poetic career began to flourish. H.D., an early Modernist and Imagiste, together with Winifred Ellerman, also known as Bryther, collected and published her poems in England in a book entitled *Poems*.³ Her works contain “distilled moral and intellectual insights from the close and accurate observation of objective detail.”⁴

In 1925, Moore worked as an editor in *The Dial*, but it was only a temporary position. While she was working there, she did not compose any poetry; after leaving *The Dial*, she returned to composing and got the Helen Haire Levinson Prize for *Poetry*. In 1937, Moore’s *Selected Poems* were published. *Selected Poems* received “... a largely positive critical reception with particular admiration of her use of syllabic lines, subtle rhyme, careful observation, and moral force. Coupled with the Levinson award, she was becoming a national figure, although the book did not sell particularly well.”⁵ In 1936, Moore published *The Pangolin and Other Verse*; in 1941, she published *What Are Years*; in 1944, *Nevertheless* as well as Adalbert Stifler’s work entitled *Rock Crystal: A Christmas Tale*, which was translated by Moore and Elizabeth Mayer.⁶

Moore translated the *Fables Choiesies, mises en vers*, which won Frances Croix de Chevalier des Arts et Lettres prize in 1954. She also became famous for wearing the tricorner

1 Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Marianne Moore,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed March 12, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/391558/Marianne-Moore>.

Harold Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore (Bloom’s Major Poets)*, ed. Harold Bloom (Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004), 21.

2 Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Marianne Moore,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed March 12, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/391558/Marianne-Moore>.

3 Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 21-2.

4 Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Marianne Moore,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed March 12, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/391558/Marianne-Moore>.

5 Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 22.

6 Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 22-3.

hat and cape. In 1951, Moore's *Collected Poems* were released, for which she got the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award and the Bollingen Prize. Harold Bloom asserts that "the book would bring to light one of Moore's alternately most fascinating and frustration idiosyncracies as a writer—her revising. Poems would take drastically altered states throughout her career, ..."7 In 1955, she published *Predilections*; in 1956, *Like a Bulwark*; in 1959, *O To Be a Dragon*; retold *Puss in Boots, Cinderella, and Sleeping Beauty* in 1963; in 1964, *The Arctic Fox*; in 1965, *A Talisman, Idiosyncrasy and Technique*, and *Poetry and Criticism; Tell Me, Tell Me* in 1966; and in 1967, *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore*. Moore also featured in *The New Yorker, Esquire, The New York Times*, and *Life* magazine.8

At the end of the sixties and the early seventies, her health began to deteriorate. Moore died on the fifth of February 1972. In Bloom's view, she left the enduring legacy. "She served as a friend and critic to many of the modernists, friend and mentor to the next generation of poets, Elizabeth Bishop among them, poetry's grande dame to the general public, and a ground-breaking modernist for generations to come."9

The theoretical part of this bachelor thesis consists of one chapter that is divided into three subchapters. Each subchapter deals with the images of the sea and water from different perspective. The first subchapter focuses on the general understanding of the sea and water; the second subchapter deals with the images of the sea and water as archetypes and the third subchapter deals with Gaston Bachelard's research on water.

The second chapter is the analytical part. It is aimed at the selected poems of Marianne Moore. In this chapter, the poems are discussed from Moore's point of view; how she perceives the sea and water. The third chapter of the analytical part examines the two poems of the same title Moore's "The Fish" and Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish." This chapter discusses similarities and differences between the two poets and their poems. The final chapter summarizes the findings from the previous chapters.

7 Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 23.

8 Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 23.

9 Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 24.

1. The Sea and Water

1.1 The Sea and Water: The General Point of View

“Our earth is the sea planet.”¹⁰

Human beings have been interested in sailing the sea due to food, profits, or conquests for thousands of centuries.¹¹ “But century after century the sea exacted its toll on human life;”¹² sailing the sea was life-threatening as well as extremely dangerous. Thus, as time went by, it was inevitable that “the storm at sea and the shipwreck”¹³ became archetypes of the hazard life. The ship as a symbol is connected with the individual or community in struggle for survival in a world full of perils. Over the centuries, images of the sea in the imagination of human beings became parts of the most cultural heritage, both in art and in literature.¹⁴

Water occurs powerfully and pervasively not only in Western philosophy, literature and geography, but also in Eastern philosophy, literature and geography.¹⁵ According to Mircea Eliade, “the waters existed before the earth ...”¹⁶ Thales, the Presocratic Greek philosopher, was of the opinion that “water is, in some sense, the source of all things. [...] he judged it to be an abiding, albeit often hidden, constituent of the plethora of sensible phenomena.”¹⁷ Around 600 B.C.E., water prevailed in Taoism, the Eastern philosophy, as well as in its most important text, the *Tao Te Ching*, as “an image and metaphor.”¹⁸ Just as water, the best interpretation of the Tao is “in terms of fluidity, movement, process, and *rhythm*—a word related to ‘flow.’”¹⁹ Water serves as a connection between life and death “especially in

10 Howard Isham, *Image of the Sea: Oceanic Consciousness in the Romantic Century* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), xix.

11 Isham, *Image of the Sea*, xix.

12 Isham, *Image of the Sea*, xix.

13 Isham, *Image of the Sea*, xix.

14 Isham, *Image of the Sea*, xix.

15 David Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy: Earth, Air, Fire and Water as Environmental Ideas* (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 2010), 43, accessed April 18, 2014, http://books.google.cz/books?id=vP5W2bBAaOQC&printsec=frontcover&hl=cs&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

16 Mircea Eliade, “The Sacredness of Nature and Cosmic Religion,” in *The Sacred and The Profane: The Nature of Religion*, trans. Willard R. Trask (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1959), 129.

17 Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy*, 43.

18 Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy*, 43.

19 Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy*, 43.

deserts,” and between light and darkness “e.g. rainbows,” just as the Tao.²⁰

Water has had an unusual place in the lives of human beings, who constitute a huge variety of cultures and civilizations, both spiritually and physically. Whereas there existed great differences in rituals, languages, or beliefs among cultures of ancient civilization, water usually functioned as a symbol of many places or events. For instance, in Mesopotamia, the element of heaven, earth, air and water each represented one god in the Sumerian pantheon.²¹ Ea, or Sumerian Enki, was the main water god and “the god of ritual purification: ritual cleansing waters were called ‘Ea’s water.’”²² Ea ruled the watery underworld, and was a symbol for the primordial waters; the primordial waters were “associated with the ‘chaos’ that existed before creation.”²³

People in Egypt, like the Sumerians and Babylonians, had a belief that the primordial or celestial waters created the heavens and the Earth with all the inhabitants. In D.L. Marrin’s view, the primeval waters and the seas frequently represented “the formless chaos and undifferentiated matter of the underworld waters that comprised the cosmos before its division into realms.”²⁴ Thus, water has been associated with the emergence of all life, earth, and the heavens. Concerning Oceania, the ancient Maori people of New Zealand had a special word for water, and that word was *wai*. In the Maori culture, likewise in other ancient and native cultures, the memory of water serves as “the spark of life,” and is closely linked to “the process of creation.”²⁵ In ancient Greece, Gaia, the Greek goddess, was born from the primeval chaos; she was also the earth goddess. Gaia gave birth to the god known as Oceanus; in most cases, he personifies water. The ancient Greeks took the view that water was in all places, and comprised everything. Marrin expresses the opinion that “... the ancient Greeks were one of the first cultures to begin incorporating their intuitive or mythical views of water into a more philosophical and, from a modern perspective, comprehensible format.”²⁶

20 Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy*, 44.

21 D.L. Marrin, “Water Symbolism,” Water Sciences & Insights, accessed April 20, 2014, <http://www.watersciences.org/documents/Symbolism-Marrin.pdf>.

22 Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Ea,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed April 19, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/175484/Ea>.

23 D.L. Marrin, “Water Symbolism,” Water Sciences & Insights, accessed April 20, 2014, <http://www.watersciences.org/documents/Symbolism-Marrin.pdf>.

24 D.L. Marrin, “Water Symbolism,” Water Sciences & Insights, accessed April 20, 2014, <http://www.watersciences.org/documents/Symbolism-Marrin.pdf>.

25 D.L. Marrin, “Water Symbolism,” Water Sciences & Insights, accessed April 20, 2014, <http://www.watersciences.org/documents/Symbolism-Marrin.pdf>.

26 D.L. Marrin, “Water Symbolism,” Water Sciences & Insights, accessed April 20, 2014, <http://www.watersciences.org/documents/Symbolism-Marrin.pdf>.

From the religious point of view, the Bible contains frequent references to water in various contexts to spread different types of messages. Biblical scholars are of the opinion that the importance of water intensified in a desert where there was a scarcity of water, and life was in a constant threat due to drought. The Bible also contains various types of water. Cosmic water, for example, symbolizes a primeval force that nobody except God might rule. Living water represents the source of all living things, the attributes of wisdom and knowledge as well; it is considered as God's gift. Furthermore, it is pondered to be distinctly different from ordinary water. Ceremonial water serves either to remove or to dissipate impurities. As mentioned above in different context, these waters are not only a symbol of purification, but also "the passage between life and death."²⁷

Water is characteristically a colourless and odourless liquid which has neither flavour nor form. However, it has fertilizing power.²⁸ Perhaps water is not alive, but in fact, "it is in many ways the primordial stuff of life, ..."²⁹ Mythically and meteorologically, water has both destructive power and creative power. It might be illustrated, for instance, by the motif of flood in the *Gilgamesh Epic*, in the Bible or by natural catastrophes, such as Hurricane Katrina or the South Asian Tsunami. There naturally exists a link between water and other elements, such as water and earth, water and fire, or water and air.³⁰ Symbolically, primeval waters might be "*fons et origo*" which means "spring and origin."³¹ They are followed by every being, and keep nourishing it. It has been suggested that water stands for both "disintegration, hence death, as well as its counterpart regeneration and rebirth."³² Water ceaselessly exists in the language as well as in our mental thinking when speaking about "*streams* of consciousness; *currents* of thought; *floods* of insight; *flowing* words, ideas, and time; *watershed* events; *well-springs* and *pools* of information; *waves* of success; *turning* tides; and so on."³³

Yi-Fu Tuan believes that "... certain substances have meanings of wide currency—for

27 D.L. Marrin, "Water Symbolism," Water Sciences & Insights, accessed April 20, 2014, <http://www.watersciences.org/documents/Symbolism-Marrin.pdf>.

28 Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy*, 44.

Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New York: Columbia University, 1974), 23.

29 Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy*, 45.

30 Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy*, 45-6.

31 Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy*, 45-6.

32 Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy*, 46.

33 Macauley, *Elemental Philosophy*, 60-1.

instance, fire and water.”³⁴ In accordance with Chinese culture, *yang* symbolizes fire; fire plays a male role; it is “joyful, directed upwards, and phallic.”³⁵ *Yin*, on the other hand, symbolizes water; water plays a female role, and is passive. Due to the feminine role, water serves as a source of wisdom and regeneration.³⁶ It is “an image of the unconscious” as well as a place with possible power.³⁷ Tuan uses the term “immersion in water” to refer to “the extinction of fire and of consciousness” which is death.³⁸ Therefore, in Tuan’s view, it might lead to an explanation why Chinese people associate water with a feeling of fear.³⁹

1.2 The Sea / Water as an Archetype

The motif of the sea is extensively used and diffused in literature. Poetry is possibly the richest source which employs an oceanic image, for instance as a metaphor. Music has been also inspired by the sounds of the sea, but “its specifically ‘sea’ character was usually expressed in the text or program, not in the music itself.”⁴⁰ Wystan Hugh Auden in his work entitled *The Enchafèd Flood: Or, the Romantic Iconography of the Sea* notes that the sea and the great waters symbolize “the primordial undifferentiated flux, the substance which became created nature only by having form imposed upon or wedded to it.”⁴¹ But the fact remains that the sea is a place of “barbaric vagueness and disorder out of which civilization has emerged and into which, unless saved by the effort of gods and men, it is always liable to relapse.”⁴²

According to Auden, sailing across sea in classical texts is “a necessary evil, a crossing of that which separates or estranges.”⁴³ The sea, fertile land, or islands were important features of the imagination of ancient Greece. It stems from the fact that the ancient Greeks relied on the sea and on the small areas of fertile land as sources of living.⁴⁴ Howard Isham’s book titled *Image of the Sea: Oceanic Consciousness in the Romantic Century* states that “a

34 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 23.

35 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 23.

36 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 24.

37 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 23.

38 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 23.

39 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 23-4.

40 Isham, *Image of the Sea*, xxii.

41 W. H. Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood: Or, the Romantic Iconography of the Sea* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf and Random House, 1967), 6.

42 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 6.

43 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 7.

44 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 120.

sea tale was one of the canonical sources for the language and culture of Greece.”⁴⁵ For Yi-Fu Tuan, “the sea had beauty and use but it was also a dark, threatening force.”⁴⁶ When the sea was calm, it revealed “a wine-dark beauty,” if angry the sea “swallowed ships and sailors.”⁴⁷ When the sea showed its dark side, it demonstrated nature’s merciless behaviour towards humans. This is why mixed feelings accompanied the sea.⁴⁸ The sea was a frequent motif in the Homeric epics, and it was often referred to as “a highway.”⁴⁹ Good examples of such sailings may be: Homer’s *Odyssey*, Jason’s voyage, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, or Horace’s work *To the Ship of State*. Homer in his *Odyssey* vividly describes Odysseus’ struggles for survival at sea when he wants to get home; Jason’s voyage is about gaining the Golden Fleece and taking it home; Virgil’s *Aeneid* depicts Aeneas’ rough passages on the sea; *To the Ship of State* by Horace employs a metaphor of the political chaos of his era which portrays a sea tempest.⁵⁰ Thus, if a human being tries to sail the sea, it can mean a rash action which borders on conceit because the sea is uninhabitable, and people should be aware of it.⁵¹

Shakespeare in most of his plays deals with the motifs of the sea, as well as the storm; the reason why Auden uses Shakespeare, as an example, is that there is a “bridge”⁵² between what may be described as the classical and the romantic attitude. Auden demonstrates this transition through Mr. Wilson Knight’s study, which shows that Shakespeare employs two opposite clusters of ideas.⁵³ “On the one hand tempests, rough beasts, comets, diseases, malice domestic and private vice, that is, the world of conflict and disorder; on the other hand music, flowers, birds, precious stones and marriage, the world of reconciliation and order.”⁵⁴ The earlier plays depict the tempest sea, the evil sea, which can be understood as “a reflection of human conflict or the fatal mischance which provides evil with its opportunity (e.g. Othello).”⁵⁵ In the plays like *Pericles*, *The Tempest*, or *The Winter’s Tale*, the sea, together with sailing perform a much more important and different function; in this context, the sea becomes “the place of purgatorial suffering: through separation and apparent loss, the characters disordered by passion are brought to their senses and the world of music and

45 Isham, *Image of the Sea*, 2.

46 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 120.

47 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 120.

48 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 120-21.

49 Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia*, 120.

50 Isham, *Image of the Sea*, 2. Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 7.

51 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 9.

52 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 10.

53 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 10-1.

54 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 11.

55 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 11.

marriage is made possible.”⁵⁶ An important point to remember is that setting sail or the roving is never voluntary and pleasurable. It represents suffering that must be accepted as a remedy, the death representing rebirth, so that “the abiding city may be built.”⁵⁷

For the Romantics, the sea is the place “where the decisive events, the moments of eternal choice, of temptation, fall, and redemption occur.”⁵⁸ Auden provides the comparison of resemblances and differences between the Romantic sea and the Romantic desert. The wilderness is their common feature. They are both uninhabitable spaces signifying the area with no community, justice or injustice, or the area with no change for better or for worse. Hence, the individual is freed from not only the evils, but also from the responsibilities of living in the community.⁵⁹ The author borrows a quotation from George Gordon Byron’s work *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* to prove his point about the sea. “Man marks the earth with ruin—his control / Stops with the shore.”⁶⁰ Both the sea and the desert have features of limitlessness.⁶¹ As Auden points out, “but precisely because they are free places, they are also lonely places of alienation, and the individual who finds himself there, whether by choice or fate, must from time to time, rightly or wrongly, be visited by desperate longings for home and company.”⁶² When dealing with the sea or the desert as places where there is freedom and solitude, they symbolize the same.

Despite these resemblances, they differ from each other in other aspects. The desert symbolizes the arid area, where there is no life and no moves.⁶³ Auden calls the desert as “the Omega of temporal existence.”⁶⁴ Another aspect is that everything is on the surface and exposed. In contrast to the desert, the sea is “the Alpha of existence, the symbol of potentiality.”⁶⁵ It is characteristic of its continuous motion; Auden is of the opinion that the power of the sea might be destructive, but positive, compared to the power of the desert. Another characteristic of the sea is that the sea is full of life, but this life is hidden, below the

56 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 11.

57 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 11.

58 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 13.

59 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 15.

60 George Gordon Byron, “Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage [There Is a Pleasure in the Pathless Woods],” accessed April 26, 2014, <http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/childe-harolds-pilgrimage-there-pleasure-pathless-woods>.

61 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 16.

62 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 17.

63 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 18-9.

64 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 19.

65 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 19.

surface. Moreover, the visible life, as Auden calls it, is smaller than the hidden.⁶⁶ He also adds that “what lies hidden in the water is the unknown powers of nature.”⁶⁷ So the sea represents “primitive potential power as contrasted with the desert of actualised triviality, of living barbarism versus lifeless decadence.”⁶⁸

When mariners put themselves to the sea, they immediately find out that the sea is the place with no bonds of home and sex; it is the place where the changing seasons have no effect and the place with no visible life. Land, on the other hand, signifies the world in which humans live; it is the place in which exists a variety of duties as well as emotions when the seasons change.⁶⁹ Therefore, to set sail and leave land might represent “the freeing of the spirit from finite nature, its ascetic denial of the flesh, the determination to live in one-directional historical time rather than in cyclical natural time.”⁷⁰ The poets of the Romantic age yearned for immersion in “the sea of Nature,” they wanted to get pleasure from “its endless mystery and novelty, ...”⁷¹

1.3 Gaston Bachelard’s Research

Gaston Bachelard’s research focuses mostly upon four basic elements—water, air, earth and fire.⁷² Bachelard in his book entitled *Water and Dreams: An Essay on the Imagination of Matter* examines these elements both in the terms of “formal imagination,” and “material imagination.”⁷³ Nevertheless, the chapter is focused on just one element—on water. Bachelard contrasts water with a mirror. For this comparison, he used the image of Narcissus. The image of Narcissus symbolizes a human being who loves himself / herself, who loves his / her own image reflected in still water.⁷⁴ Water enables human beings to adapt their own image; it provides “open imagination,” as well as an idealized view.⁷⁵ Thus, Narcissus might adapt his

66 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 19.

67 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 72.

68 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 19

69 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 68.

70 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 68.

71 Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood*, 82.

72 Edward K. Kaplan, “Gaston Bachelard’s Philosophy of Imagination: An Introduction,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, no. 1 (1972): 6, accessed April 27, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2106717>.

73 Gaston Bachelard, *Voda a sny: esej o obraznosti hmoty*, trans. Jitka Hamzová, Jiří Pelán (Praha: Mladá fronta, 1997), 7-12, my translation.

74 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 29-57, my translation.

75 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 32, my translation.

/ her image; water allows him / her to do it. Moreover, s/he loves his / her image which is reflected in still water. On the other hand, according to Bachelard, the mirror is a symbol of artificiality; it is an object which provides a static image.⁷⁶

Bachelard makes a connection between sleeping water and the idea of death. Stationary waters represent the dead and dead waters represent sleeping waters.⁷⁷ Water becomes “the material basis of death;”⁷⁸ it acts as a mediator between life and death.⁷⁹ Bachelard takes the view that water assimilates huge quantities of substances. It is connected with earth, which is a real combination in accordance with material imagination; another connection is between water and fire; water connects earth with fire, and it is sometimes connected with air. But, a connection of three elements—water, earth, fire, or a connection of four elements is not possible.⁸⁰ The connection of two elements always means “marriage,”⁸¹ as Bachelard calls it. He adds that each connection in material imagination is marriage, but there does not exist marriage among three elements.⁸²

Bachelard also notes that material imagination might see water as “a symbol of purity” and he takes the view that clear water is a symbol of purity.⁸³ Pure water symbolizes good, but this pure, limpid liquid becomes a place which may be easily polluted. The author provides an example of such pollution a well in the country. Water is an inexhaustible natural resource as well as God’s gift. It has the power to purify, for example, in liturgies, to rejuvenate in the Fountain of Youth, or to heal.⁸⁴ The author believes that water is considered as “the heroine of leniency and purity” in dreams.⁸⁵ Regarding freshwater, it has ascendancy over seawater in all mythologies; freshwater functions as “real mythological water.”⁸⁶ Bachelard refers to seawater as “inhuman water” because it “does not perform the first duty of every revered element that is to serve man directly.”⁸⁷

The sea is seen as violent water in Bachelard’s work. “Violent water is a schema for

76 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 29-57, my translation.

77 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 80, my translation.

78 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 80, my translation.

79 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 20, my translation.

80 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 21, 112-14, my translation.

81 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 115, my translation.

82 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 115, my translation.

83 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 157, my translation.

84 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 157-75, my translation.

85 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 176, my translation.

86 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 22, 177, my translation.

87 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 177, my translation.

courage.”⁸⁸ He illustrates it on a human, a swimmer, who swims in the rough sea. The sea is an unpredictable place, which may easily feel anger. Thus, swimming in the stormy sea requires courage which the swimmer has, and therefore, s/he feels proud of himself / herself. Bachelard asserts that the same courage, which is required in the rough sea, is needed in life as life is full of situations which require that courage.⁸⁹ Bachelard also explores water’s voice. For him, water is a symbol of fluency. Water’s voice occurs in poetry; a vowel ‘a’ is a water vowel, for instance. He holds the view that water’s voice and human speech are interrelated; humans learn to sing, speak or repeat sounds from water’s sounds. Water has a body, soul and voice because it has features of wholeness. It seems that material imagination is not satisfied without this particular liquid; formal imagination fails to unite features that differ if water is not present.⁹⁰ When “a work lacks life,” it lacks “a substance.”⁹¹

88 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 194, my translation.

89 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 184-213, my translation.

90 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 24, 214-16, my translation.

91 Bachelard, *Voda a sny*, 24, my translation.

2. Marianne Moore's Sea and Water

Marianne Moore employed images of nature in her poetry. She had a fondness for animals, which she very often used when composing poems, but she was also fascinated by water or by the sea, particularly by their power which they endowed with. This chapter is dealing with the selected poems of this author, and how she approaches to the two motifs.

2.1 "A Grave"

Miss Moore's poem "A Grave" begins with "Man looking into the sea, / taking the view from those who have as much right to it as / you have to it yourself,"⁹² A man, who is looking into the sea, is dazzled by the beauty of the sea so he usurps the view only for himself. Nevertheless, the second line of the poem clearly states that every living creature has the same right to the same view as the man. The poem continues: "it is human nature to stand in the middle of a thing, / but you cannot stand in the middle of this,"⁹³ this statement indicates that humans are of the opinion that they are the most powerful creatures in the world. They also believe that they can seize control of the sea. To seize control of the sea is caused by the fact that people are interested in the sea for thousands of centuries. They make countless voyages, or sail across sea due to conquering, profits, which may result from conquering, or due to food as the ancient Greeks did, for example. The sea appears to be both harmless and beautiful. However, as the above mentioned citation shows, people cannot stand in the middle of the sea which means that they cannot walk along the surface of it; they cannot live there; they cannot build anything there. The sea is a place which cannot be conquered; it is the place with no feelings for human beings. Therefore, crossing the sea may be extremely dangerous. It is illustrated, for example, on Greek tales, including Odysseus's struggles for his life, Jason's pursuit of the Golden Fleece, or Aeneas' voyage full of perils.

Moore writes that "repression, however, is not the most obvious characteristic of / the sea,"⁹⁴ on the one hand, she acknowledges that repression is not so typical feature of the sea,

92 Marianne Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, ed. Grace Schulman (London: Viking Penguin, 2003), 145.

93 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 145.

94 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 145.

however, on the other hand, it may have this feature. It uses its force against human beings, for instance, when the sea is stormy, it is capable of sinking a ship which signify its destructive power, or even to take life. As the poem progresses, Moore compares the sea to “a collector” which is able to “... to return a rapacious look.”⁹⁵ Moreover, “the sea has nothing to give but a well excavated grave.”⁹⁶ As can be seen from above, she likens the sea not only to the greedy collector that does not want to return anything back but also to the grave, which is, in fact, the title of the poem. According to this comparison, the sea has selfish motives; it only takes. It swallows things, ships, or humans, and when it does, all becomes its property. The sea becomes the grave for everything which swallows. Jeanne Heuving expresses the opinion that Moore’s sea “is not a mirroring surface, but an actual grave.”⁹⁷

The next lines narrate about fishermen who are unconscious of the fact that the sea — the place where they lower their nets and probably catch fish — is the grave which is desecrated by their activity. Their behaviour borders on conceit.

men lower nets, unconscious of the fact that they are
desecrating a grave,
and row quickly away—the blades of the oars
moving together like the feet of water spiders as if there were
no such thing as death.⁹⁸

Although men are unconscious of desecrating the grave, they try to row quickly away as soon as they lower their fishing nets. Boats in which fishermen travel, or, more precisely, the oars of boats are related to water spiders’ feet. In contrast to them, humans do not have the ability to walk along the surface of the sea. Fishermen take no notice of what the sea is capable of. In the next lines, the sea changes:

The wrinkles progress among themselves in a phalanx—
beautiful under networks of foam,
and fade breathlessly while the sea rustles in and out of the

95 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 145.

96 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 145.

97 Jeanne Heuving, “On “A Grave,” Modern American Poetry, accessed April 30, 2014, [http:// www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/moore/grave.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/moore/grave.htm).

98 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 145.

seaweed;

The birds swim through the air at top speed, emitting catcalls
as heretofore—⁹⁹

In these lines, the sea changes and behaves friendly and innocuous. What is more, the flying birds in the sky strengthen the friendly image of the sea. This is the reason why fishermen are fascinated by it, its beauty and calmness. Its friendly and innocuous behaviour is only on the surface, but below the surface, the tortoise shell is whipped by waves against the cliffs. It is the barbaric place. “The tortoise shell scourges about the feet of the cliffs, in motion / beneath them;”¹⁰⁰ The sea has a tendency to show many faces as it is visible in the lines above, and in the next line “advances as usual, looking if it were not that ocean in which dropped things are bound to sink— ...”¹⁰¹ It acts differently than in the beginning of the poem. In the beginning, Marianne Moore describes the sea both as the grave and as the rapacious collector, which only takes; which has destructive power. Then, the sea changes its mood and becomes the symbol of beauty. Bernard F. Engel expresses the opinion that “Moore has the sea function as a deceptive peril to man.”¹⁰² On the one hand, the sea may appear as the place of great beauty, and most people think so. On the other hand, the sea may act destructively; it may show people that they have no power over it, and that the sea may easily swallow them.

2.2 “Dock Rats”

The first stanza of the poem entitled “Dock Rats” introduces its theme with: “THERE are human beings who seem to regard the place / as craftily as we do— / who seem to feel that it is a good place to come home to.”¹⁰³ The first part of this sentence is in contrast to the second part of it. In the first part, the place—it is not particularized which place, but it may be a dock, where people work, or a home, where they live—is described as crafty as humans. On the other hand, the second part claims that the place is the place of acceptable quality for living.

99 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 145.

100 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 145.

101 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 145.

102 Bernard F. Engel on “Confusion” quoted in Harold Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore (Bloom’s Major Poets)*, ed. Harold Bloom (Broomall, PA: Chelsea House Publishers, 2004, 38.

103 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 137.

The stanza also makes a comparison between the river and the sea. “On what a river; / wide—twinkling like a chopped sea under some / of the finest shipping in the / world: ...”¹⁰⁴ The river is as wide and glittering as the changing sea. It shows its beauty when glittering. In addition, the sea changes due to shipping; it may indicate that the place is the largest dock due to “the liner, / the battleship, [...], the tug [...]; the steam yacht, [...]; the ferry-boat.”¹⁰⁵ Because it is the largest dock, consequently it is full of life, and it may explain why the place is called crafty. It either stems from the fact that the place is overcrowded so people may swindle each other and many fraud cases may arise; or it is because of the constantly changing sea.

The sea has two faces in this poem. It is portrayed as wide and glittering, which changes its colours; again, the place that is beautiful and impressive. In contrast to it, the sea can change quickly and unexpectedly. The glittering sea may be the reason why some people find the place to be good enough for living; the sea attracts their attention. Furthermore, the place seems good on account of the wind which smells “of apples; of hay, [...]; of rope, of mountain leaves ...”¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, there is another option why people want to live there. In spite of the fact that the sea is impressive, it could also be cunning as well as rough; these features could influence people’s decision on living in the dock.

But this unexpectedly changing sea may be the reason why some people do not find the place to be good enough because they never know how the sea will react. “There is the sea, moving the bulk- / head with its horse strength; ...”¹⁰⁷ The previous citation proves that the sea sometimes behaves with great unexpectedness and people need courage to sail across it. The calmly behaving sea becomes the roughly behaving sea, which uses its force against people. The poem concludes by saying that “One does / not live in such a place from motives of expediency / but because to one who has been accustomed to it, ...”¹⁰⁸ The citation says that human beings become used to the living conditions of the dock, even though in the beginning, they could have lived there because of a financial profit.

104 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 137.

105 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 137.

106 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 137.

107 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 137.

108 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 137.

2.3 “Ennui”

He often expressed
A curious wish,
To be interchangeably
Man and fish;
To nibble the bait
Off the hook,
Said he,
And then slip away
Like a ghost
In the sea.¹⁰⁹

The central theme of this poem titled “Ennui” is a man who is curious to find out what it is like to be a fish in the sea. But why does the man want to become the fish? It seems that the man is a fisherman catching fish at sea. When he realizes that he fails to catch any fish, he gets bored and begins reflecting upon his unusual wish—to become the fish; or the man is successful in his activity and due to being successful and being able to see the fish, which he caught, he yearns for becoming it; or the man sets sail as a result of his fascination with the sea—with its natural beauty, its underwater creatures, or its force; or the man’s desire may join everything that is stated above.

He sails the sea for having a fascination for it and for fishing; either bored or not; either successful or not, he ruminates over this sea creature and its life underwater. He appears that his desire is to experience the life of the fish and everything that is connected with it, for example, free swimming in the sea or nibbling something in this case the bait. The man is also fascinated by the ability of the fish to vanish without trace. The fish can do it because the life in the sea is hidden, therefore, it may provide an explanation why the fish vanishes and is not seen. It disappears as a ghost in the sea.

109 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 12.

2.4 “He Made This Screen”

not of silver nor of coral,
but of weatherbeaten laurel.

Here, he introduced a sea
uniform like tapestry;

here, a fig-tree; there, a face;
there, a dragon circling space—

designating here, a bower;
there, a pointed passion-flower.¹¹⁰

It is interesting to note that this piece of work does not open with the first line not of silver nor of coral, but it begins with its title “He Made This Screen.” This is not the only poem whose title is simultaneously the beginning. For instance, the poem entitled “The Fish” is the same case. Moore became known for it.

The poem “He Made This Screen” narrates a story about making a screen likened to a tapestry. A narrator of the poem begins by telling that a man or an artist—he—does not work with bright or colourful pieces of material, including coral or silver. Conversely, he rather uses weatherbeaten laurel as the piece of material. In the second stanza, the man introduces a work where the sea is the main motif. In addition to the motif of the work, he compares it to the tapestry; it is, as the narrator notes, uniformed. In accordance with Encyclopaedia Britannica, “tapestries are usually designed as single panels or sets.”¹¹¹ Thus, the man creates a picture of the sea in the form of the tapestry. Because one tapestry is formed from one piece and it is compact, it may represent the compactness of the sea or the story of the sea as tapestries do.

The man possibly plans to show the true face of the sea in his picture. As suggested above, the artist does not use shiny silver or coral that can have various colours. When the artist creates his work from shiny silver or coral, it could indicate that the sea is an area of

¹¹⁰Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 11.

¹¹¹Encyclopaedia Britannica, “tapestry,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed May 9, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/583114/tapestry>.

outstanding natural beauty; and that the sea may be full of colours as tapestries. It is true that the sea is the area of great beauty, but it is equally true that the sea can be the area of terror and danger; it is endowed with dark and threatening power. So it is probably the reason why the man uses the unattractive piece of material. He wants to point to the darker side of the sea or to the uglier side of the sea—the sea swallows sailors and ships when angry.

In the remaining two stanzas, the narrator of the poem refers to the “dragon” which is circling in the sky, and to the “passion-flower.”¹¹² The passion-flower is here to symbolize an act of torture.¹¹³ The sea tortures its victims, for example, when it is violent, ships cannot sail safely into a port, or when a thing falls into the sea, the sea plays with it and swallows it in the end. Then, there is the dragon. It either symbolizes a lighthouse that warns and guides ocean-going vessels and their crew members, or it symbolizes a beast which is very aggressive and barbaric as the sea. Taking into account the latter point, the circling dragon is as aggressive as the sea itself, it may be supposed that the dragon seeks for its victim as the sea seeks for its victim. When the sea finds a victim, it does not release it, just as the dragon.

2.5 “In Distrust of Merits”

“In Distrust of Merits” is perhaps the poem about war and its aftermath. The poem opens its scene with:

Strengthened to live, strengthened to die for
medals and positioned victories?
They're fighting, fighting, fighting the blind
man who thinks he sees—
who cannot see that the enslaver is
enslaved; the hater, harmed. O shining O
firm star, O tumultuous
ocean lashed till small things go
as they will, the mountainous

¹¹²Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 11.

¹¹³Encyclopaedia Britannica, “passion-flower,” accessed May 10, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/445782/passion-flower>.

wave makes us who look, know

depth. Lost at sea before they fought! ...¹¹⁴

The stanza relates that human beings have resolve to fight for “medals” or “poisoned victories”¹¹⁵ which are not worth it because a fight causes only suffering. The poem continues with the unspecified word—they—but it can stand for, for example, troops. They oppose “the blind man”¹¹⁶ who believes that he knows what others do not know. The man thinks he knows that “the enslaver is enslaved.”¹¹⁷ The previous statement might indicate that the enslaver feels enslaved because he is expected to superintend slaves. The man also refers to “the hater”¹¹⁸ that is harmed. It may represent that the harmed hater is either harmed because of fighting or because s/he is enslaved and s/he has no freedom of choice.

The poem progresses by addressing the tumultuous sea as well as a star, which looks firmly. The tumultuous sea is depicted as a tyrant that wants to have power over everything. In the poem, there are mentioned “small things”¹¹⁹ which probably rebel against the tyranny of the sea, nevertheless these things are described as small so there seems to be a very small probability of winning. Thus, the tyrant sea decides to lash them so that they begin to obey rules of the sea again. It uses its huge wave against rebellious things to prove its destructive power, and if they do not plan to obey, it swallows them. The sea is depicted as a barbaric place which uses its devastating power. The tumultuous sea can be also compared to wartime because a war conflict is also tumultuous. Moreover, soldiers also fight until things go as they did; by the huge wave the poet may think a large group of marching soldiers who probably reflect on their lives and their mission; however, as they march, they get lost in the thoughts about which they reflect. The rest of the poem describes how soldiers fight, or how humans behave to each other.

114Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 250-2.

115Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 250-2.

116Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 250-2.

117Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 250-2.

118Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 250-2.

119Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 250-2.

2.6 “Rosemary”

The first two lines of the first stanza of the poem titled “Rosemary” introduce the ancient Roman goddess of beauty and love—Venus:¹²⁰ “Beauty and Beauty’s son and rosemary— / Venus and Love, ...”¹²¹ Venus was identified as the Roman equivalent of the ancient Greek goddess of beauty and love—Aphrodite.¹²² As the poem continues: “... , her son, to speak plainly— / born of the sea supposedly,”¹²³ it is clear that Venus’ son infers his mother’s birth from the sea, and according to Hesiod,¹²⁴ her Greek equivalent Aphrodite was born from the sea foam.¹²⁵ Consequently, the sea is a place which fulfils a creative function despite its destructive function. Furthermore, it may be perceived as the source of all life; as the place from which life emerges.

Apart from the sea depicted as the place of birth, the poem “Rosemary” is about a bush of the same name as the title of the poem. Rosemary is not only related to Christmas but also to Christianity and its traditions. Margaret Holley asserts that “only one line of this whole poem is devoted to [the] description of the physical appearance of the plant itself, [...] though reference is made to its ‘blue’ flowers.”¹²⁶ This one line is: “With lancelike leaf, green but silver underneath, ...”¹²⁷ But there are other two lines that describe the plant: “... its flowers—white originally— / turned blue.”¹²⁸ In addition to the colour blue, rosemary imitates “the blue robe of Mary.”¹²⁹ The line from the final stanza: “Springing from stones beside the sea, ...”¹³⁰ deals with the origin of rosemary. In accordance with The American Heritage Dictionary,

120Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Venus,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed May 11, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/625655/Venus>.

121Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 286.

122Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Aphrodite,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed May 11, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/29573/Aphrodite>.

123Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 286.

124He was “one of the earliest Greek poets, [...] Two of his complete epics have survived, the *Theogony*, relating the myths of the gods, and the *Works and Days*, describing peasant life.” Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Hesiod,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed May 11, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/264059/Hesiod>.

125Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Aphrodite,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed May 11, 2014, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/29573/Aphrodite>.

126Margaret Holley, *The Poetry of Marianne Moore: A Study in Voice and Value*, ed. Albert Gelpi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 141.

127Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 286.

128Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 286.

129Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 286.

130Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 286.

from Latin rosemary is *ros marinus* which means “dew of the sea.”¹³¹ Hence, if it is sea-dew, it could easily be associated with the creative power of the sea because sea-dew is created by the sea. Another example that the sea functions as the source of life: “... it [rosemary] feeds on dew ...”¹³² This line shows that rosemary feeds on dew; basically, it feeds on water from the sea that springs next to it.

2.7 “Sojourn in the Whale”

“Sojourn in the Whale” is probably the most feminist poem by Marianne Moore. It is the poem that was written during Moore’s trip to New York City.¹³³ It is dedicated to Ireland when it was in rebellion called the Easter Uprising.¹³⁴ Some writers, such as Jeanne Heuving, Margaret Holley or Charles Molesworth share the same view that the poem depicts Ireland because Moore had Irish ancestors, and there is the possibility that she could portray herself in the poem.¹³⁵ Moore opens the poem with:

Trying to open locked doors with a sword, threading
the point of needles, planting shade trees
upside down; swallowed by the opaqueness of one whom the
seas
love better than they love you, Ireland—¹³⁶

The very first line of the poem suggests seemingly an impossible action. For Holley, it

131The American Heritage Dictionary, “rosemary,” The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, accessed May 12, 2014, <http://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=rosemary&submit.x=0&submit.y=0>.

132Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 286.

133Margaret Holley, “On “Sojourn in the Whale,” Modern American Poetry, accessed May 13, 2014, http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/moore/sojourn.htm.

134Holley, *The Poetry of Marianne Moore*, 40.

135Jeanne Heuving, “On “Sojourn in the Whale,” Modern American Poetry, accessed May 13, 2014, http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/moore/sojourn.htm.

Holley, *The Poetry of Marianne Moore*, 40.

Charles Molesworth, “On “Sojourn in the Whale,” Modern American Poetry, accessed May 13, 2014, http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/moore/sojourn.htm.

136Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 119.

may indicate a young poet who tries to enter the world of literature.¹³⁷ If it is the poem about the young poet who tries to achieve fame in the literary world, s/he makes attempts to write and publish poems which enable him / her to be known among other poets. As the poet composes poems, s/he gains self-confidence and desired fame, but the sudden fame and self-love cloud the poet's mind. The poet's self-love is compared to the sea's self-love. Here the sea, this huge body of water, is described as a creature that loves only itself and nobody else. The next two stanzas tell a story about "a feminine temperament"¹³⁸ and about men opinion on a female artist.

Heaving take the view that "the poem concludes with a wonderful image of rising water."¹³⁹

water seeks its own level":

and you have smiled. "Water in motion is far
from level." You have seen it, when obstacles happened to bar
the path, rise automatically.¹⁴⁰

This rising water could be taken as violent water or rough water; water which plans to destroy everything. It is full of rage. It could also be taken as the poet's anger due to not being able to cope with the fame and strains which a poetic career brings.

2.8 "The Fish"

"The Fish" is the other poem whose title is the beginning or the first line of the whole poem. Harold Bloom asserts that Marianne Moore's blending of titles of her poems offers "a kind of instant submersion, a directness that creates a tension with some of the more opaque elements of the poem."¹⁴¹ Critic John M. Slatin believes that it is a war poem.¹⁴² The poem begins its

137Margaret Holley, "On "Sojourn in the Whale," Modern American Poetry, accessed May 13, 2014, http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/moore/sojourn.htm.

138Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 119.

139Jeanne Heuving, "On "Sojourn in the Whale," Modern American Poetry, accessed May 14, 2014, http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/moore/sojourn.htm.

140Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 119.

141Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 47.

142John M. Slatin on "The Fish" as a War Poem quoted in Harold Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study*

image with the fish which move through water with a great effort. As Pamela White Hadas has noted, “it is not an easy, fishlike movement, but laborious.”¹⁴³ “The Fish / wade / through black jade.”¹⁴⁴ From this excerpt, it is apparent that the fish swim in the darkness of the sea; moreover, water in the sea is depicted as dark, stone liquid through which it is difficult to see and move. The dark liquid that is hostile. Moore resumes:

Of the crow-blue mussel shells, one keeps
adjusting the ash heaps;
opening and shutting itself like

an
injured fan.¹⁴⁵

In Bloom’s view, the mussel shells are portrayed as the ash heaps and as an injured fan; he also adds that such description shows that there is something wrong because of “the remnants of a destroyed item” and “a fan somehow broken.”¹⁴⁶ But in the lines above, there is only one mussel-shell which adjusts itself to the ash heaps and which is probably somehow injured because it opens and shuts itself like an injured fan.

The barnacles are normally attached to rocks, seaweed or driftwood.¹⁴⁷ However, in the next three stanzas, everything is different. They “entrust the side of the wave.”¹⁴⁸ They seek refuge in the waves, but the sun’s rays shine into the darkness of the sea.

... the submerged shafts of the

sun,
split like spun
glass, move themselves with spotlight swiftness

Guide: Marianne Moore, 57.

143Pamela White Hadas, “On “The Fish,” Modern American Poetry, accessed May 14, 2014, [http:// www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/moore/fish.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/moore/fish.htm).

144Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

145Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

146Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 48.

147Encyclopaedia Britannica, “barnacle,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed May 14, 2014, [http:// www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/53588/barnacle](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/53588/barnacle).

148Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

into the crevices—
in and out, illuminating

the
turquoise sea
of bodies.¹⁴⁹

It might seem as captivating that the sun shines into water, but nevertheless the sunlight splits into narrow strips of light in seawater. Splitting the sunlight into narrow strips may indicate that water is solid and unpleasant. These narrow strips of light move themselves with spotlight swiftness, shine through the crevices, and illuminate bodies that are hidden under water. So the sunlight clears the darkness of the sea and reveals all bodies lying on the seabed. Slatin states that even though the scene appears peaceful, it is filled with danger. According to him, the barnacles try to find a place where they can hide, but they do not find any place. “The sun’s rays, refracted and ‘split like spun / glass’ as they pass through the hard surface of the water, are themselves solidified: they become ‘submerged shafts,’ stabbing into the sea ‘with spotlight swift- / ness,’ probing [...] ‘into the crevices.’”¹⁵⁰ As stated above, “The Fish” is the poem depicting war, and so Bloom argues that critic John M. Slatin “suggests that this is the telling moment of the poem, where the writhing sea of bodies become those of World War I soldiers after a torpedo attack.”¹⁵¹

In the next line, water is described as angry liquid whose plan is to destroy everything. “The water drives a wedge / of iron through the iron edge / of the cliff;”¹⁵² in this line, water behaves as an enemy of the cliff. It seems as if water intended to destroy the cliff because the iron wedge may be considered as a weapon. Bloom expresses the opinion that “the cliff might also be the sight of human destruction, [...] it may be the remnant of war, a battered reminder of things which can be both damaged and ultimately destroyed.”¹⁵³ In this unfriendly almost war atmosphere, which water creates, “... the stars, / / pink / rice-grains, ink- / bespattered

149Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

150John M. Slatin on “The Fish” as a War Poem quoted in Harold Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 58-9.

151Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 49.

152Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

153Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 50.

jellyfish, crabs like green / lilies, and submarine / toadstools, slide each on the other.”¹⁵⁴

The sixth and seventh stanzas tell a story about the destroyed cliff:

All
external
marks of abuse are present on this
defiant edifice—
all the physical features of

ac-
cident—lack
of cornice, dynamite grooves, burns, and
hatchet strokes, these things stand
out on it;¹⁵⁵

The two stanzas illustrate that the body of the cliff shows signs of damage, including dynamite grooves, burns, and / hatchet strokes which were caused by man and war. In addition, the destruction of the cliff is clearly noticeable. Taffy Martin is of the opinion that “lack of cornice,” if it symbolizes “a natural curve to the edge of the cliff,” is definitely considered “a physical feature of accident;” while dynamite grooves, burns, or strokes are not considered accidental.¹⁵⁶ The scene of destruction ends with “the chasm side is / / dead.”¹⁵⁷ It signifies that all life on the damaged cliff is dead.

Whereas the previous sentence suggests that all undersea life is dead, the next sentence suggests that there exists some undersea life. Although the sea has destructive power, it has also creative power. “Repeated / evidence has proved that it can live / on what can not revive / its youth. The sea grows old in it.”¹⁵⁸ This repeated evidence may represent the ability of water to create new life. This new undersea life begins to live on something that cannot revive its youth, but what is it? It might include, for example, those bodies, which are seen after the

154Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

155Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

156Taffy Martin on Moore’s Radical View of Language quoted in Harold Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 56.

157Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

158Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

sunlight clears the sea, or various human objects from war time. These bodies along with objects cannot be revived, and as they become older the sea becomes older as well.

2.9 “The Sentimentalist”

This poem employs a style of verse in which Moore appeared to be attracted.¹⁵⁹ This style is called the Kiplingesque seaman’s chantey, also spelled shanty or chanty. The Kiplingesque seaman’s chantey is “English-language sailor’s work song dating from the days of sailing ships, when manipulating heavy sails, by means of ropes, [...] Shanty texts reflect the realities of the sailors’ lives, from bad food to captains’ virtues and flaws and stories of easy women. The tunes were drawn from ballads and other familiar melodies.”¹⁶⁰ The poem begins:

Sometimes in a rough beam sea,
When the waves are running high,
I gaze about for a sight of the land,
Then sing, glancing up at the sky,
Here’s to the girl I love,
And I wish that she were nigh,
If drinking beer would bring her here
I’d drink the ship’s hold dry.¹⁶¹

The poem is focused on two main characters: the sea and a man, who is on a sea voyage in the open sea. The poem begins by a description of the turbulent sea, whose waves are running high. They are so large and violent that the man, who is probably a sailor, becomes afraid; he is the only human presence on the deck of the ship. However, the poem does not mention any ship or boat. Because this man is the only one on deck, and because he is frightened of the sea and its power, he begins to gaze anxiously for a sight of the land. Unfortunately for the man, there is no land or people who could save his life, so he begins to

159Holley, *The Poetry of Marianne Moore*, 4.

160Encyclopaedia Britannica, “shanty,” Encyclopaedia Britannica, accessed May 15, 2014, [http:// www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538633/shanty](http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538633/shanty).

161Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 10.

sing a song and simultaneously glancing up at the sky. His singing is a direct reference to the Kiplingesque seaman's chantey. The song he sings is about the girl he loves and about the desire to bring that girl to him over the turbulent sea. The man believes that when he drinks all beer, which is on the deck of the ship, the girl comes to him, but his desire for bringing her cannot be materialized. For the man, crossing the sea symbolizes estrangement from his girl.

However, there exists another explanation why the man sings the song. He may sing his song not because he loves that girl so much and not because he wants to bring her to him, but as a result of being afraid of being all alone in a violent, dangerous place and which is endowed with destructive force. Hence, his only way of dealing with his hopeless situation is to get drunk, wait and hope that he either forgets all his perils on the rough sea or the sea shows its mercy and becomes calm. As suggested above, the ship is a symbol of individuals who struggle for survival in the world full of perils. For this man, his voyage is neither voluntary nor enjoyable. He must suffer and if he survives, it will be a new beginning for him.

"The Sentimentalist" is one of Marianne Moore's poems where she employs the first person "I." Margaret Holley asserts that the poet "was never loath to use the 'I' form explicitly—it appears in over half of all her poems. But she was wary of the self-absorption that is one of the dangers of the lyric mode."¹⁶²

2.10 "The Steeple-Jack"

The poem entitled "The Steeple-Jack" was originally introduced to the reading public as "part of a triptych"¹⁶³ called "Part of a Novel, Part of a Poem," and "Part of a Play." Miss Moore later divided the triptych into three poems: "The Steeple-Jack," "The Student" and "The Hero," as she intended to revise them. Moore immediately mentions a German artist Albrecht Dürer in the beginning of "The Steeple-Jack."¹⁶⁴ The poet makes a mention of him as a result of her interest. According to Bloom, she "must have been attracted to this [Dürer made an attempt to see a whale near his home] spirit of wanting to see and to know."¹⁶⁵ The poem begins its scene with:

162Holley, *The Poetry of Marianne Moore*, 25.

163Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 25.

164Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 25.

165Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 25.

Dürer would have seen a reason for living
in a town like this, with eight stranded whales
to look at; with the sweet sea air coming into your house
on a fine day, from water etched
with waves as formal as the scales
on a fish.¹⁶⁶

The first stanza explains a reason why Dürer would like to live in a town like this. The town, perhaps the seaside town, seems to be a calm place. Bloom believes that this work is a pleasant embodiment of the seaside town on the east coast, but only on the surface.¹⁶⁷ This image of the pleasant, calm town is amplified by the sea breeze that comes into humans houses through windows. However, “at the heart of the image, eight dying or perhaps dead whales remain, who will in their slow decay begin to taint that ‘sweet sea air’ with the smell of death.”¹⁶⁸ These “eight stranded whales”¹⁶⁹ are unable to return to the sea, and if they are dead, it spoils the pleasant atmosphere of the seaside town. But why does the sea wash ashore these whales? Perhaps because the sea wants to show its power; or it wants to prove that it is an unpleasant place for everyone and everything; or perhaps because the whales have to die and the sea has a function of a mediator between life and death. The stanza ends with water whose waves are arranged in a regular movement. The shape of waves can be likened to “the scales on a fish”¹⁷⁰ because fish scales are also arranged regularly.

In the third stanza, the poet is dealing with the colours that the sea may have.

a sea the purple of the peacock’s neck is
paled to greenish azure as Dürer changed
the pine green of the Tyrol to peacock blue and guinea
gray.¹⁷¹

Moore shows how the sea plays with its colours and how it might be charming. It changes the

166Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 183-4.

167Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 26.

168Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 26.

169Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 183-4.

170Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 183-4.

171Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 183-4.

colours almost as its moods. In this stanza, the sea is calm, charming, fascinating; it has the similar colours as in the above mentioned lines. A. Kingsley Weatherhead comments on the colourfulness in this stanza: “the sea is too richly tinted.”¹⁷² Or Bernard F. Engel notes that “... water changing color in definite bands, ...”¹⁷³ Bloom states that Miss Moore uses both dazzling colours and “the mental images of Dürer’s pictures”¹⁷⁴ to enliven the image of her poem.

The seemingly tranquil town—its placid atmosphere—is disrupted by dying whales, and by a storm which is coming. “The / whirlwind fife-and-drum of the the storm bends the salt / marsh grass, disturbs stars in the sky and the / star on the steeple;”¹⁷⁵ The powerful storm has an impact on the salt marsh grass in the sea, on stars in the sky and on the star on the steeple. Under the surface of the sea, the storm rages. On the surface, the storm certainly creates huge waves. Therefore, the sea is rough and unpredictable. When it has this mood, it may wash ashore eight whales or it may threaten every living creature on the shore.

In the next lines, Moore presents a student named Ambrose:

... The college student
named Ambrose sits on the hillside.
with his non-native books and hat
and see boats
at sea progress white and rigid as if in
a groove. ...¹⁷⁶

The student Ambrose, who is sitting on the side of a hill and reading non-native books, watches the whole scene from a distance. It should be noted that Ambrose, the college student, is the first and only human who is presented in “The Steeple-Jack.” “... he, like the narrator, seems out of place, a distant observer and yet still an integral part of the town ...”¹⁷⁷

The sea suddenly seems to be calm and without huge waves because Ambrose sees

172A. Kingsley Weatherhead on Perspective quoted in Harold Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 30.

173Bernard F. Engel on “Confusion” quoted in Harold Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 38.

174Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 26.

175Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 183-4.

176Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 183-4.

177Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 27.

boats in a groove at the sea. Although it is not particularized which boats, but they can be, for example, sailing boats, rowing boats, or perhaps fishing boats. But if these boats sail the sea in a groove, it may signify that the sea is in his friendly mood. Sailing the unpredictable sea represents conceit and ideas that humans can conquer the sea. There is always possibility that the sea immediately changes its mood and flies into a rage.

The final stanza begins “It could not be dangerous to be living / in a town like this, of simple people, ...”¹⁷⁸ It could be argued if living in the town like this is without danger. In A. Kingsley Weatherhead’s view, “the livelihood of the town, depending as it does on the unpredictable sea, is more precarious ...”¹⁷⁹ Simple people, as Miss Moore calls them, live in the seaside town that is surrounded with the unpredictable sea. So when the storm comes again, people of the town will be in a dangerous situation because of the sea. Bernard F. Engel asserts that people of this town take care of themselves; they are reconciled to danger and hope in their lives.¹⁸⁰

178 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 183-4.

179 A. Kingsley Weatherhead on Perspective quoted in Harold Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 31.

180 Bernard F. Engel on “Confusion” quoted in Harold Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 39.

3. Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop

The chapter is dealing with the two poems of the same title, Marianne Moore's "The Fish" and Elizabeth Bishop's "The Fish." Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop first met in 1934 on account of Bishop's admiration for Moore as a writer.¹⁸¹ Betsy Erkkila notes that "Moore's literary friendship with Elizabeth Bishop was in fact part of an entire network of relationships among women writers that Moore had cultivated in her life."¹⁸² In addition, Bonnie Costello regards their literary friendship as the relationship between "kindred spirits"¹⁸³ Costello along with Erkkila share the same opinion that the bond between the two poets may be understood as the relationship between a mother and daughter. It stems probably from the fact that Bishop was younger than Moore and she was an orphan; Moore was childless and unmarried.¹⁸⁴ Thus, according to Costello, "... Moore may have found in her young friend an object of maternal affection and concern."¹⁸⁵

Miss Moore helped Bishop to publish some of her poems, including "The Reprimand," "Three Valentines" and "The Map." Moore did not only give advice to her, but she also encouraged her in writing poetry. In the very beginning of their friendship, Moore was possibly conscious that she might have had a strong influence on Bishop's literary career.¹⁸⁶ However, as time went by, Moore began to desire to have control over Bishop's composing. Therefore, their friendship changed from "instruction to intervention," and from "mentorship to proprietorship."¹⁸⁷ Although Bishop appreciated Moore's suggestions about writing poetry, she began to feel desire to be different from her literary mentor. Her desire was to become known as well as influential in the world of literature. Bishop made her own attempt to shift herself from her friend's control; she even moved away. Her attempt also signified a shift from literary circles in the United States. But Bishop had to make many efforts to extricate herself from Moore's influence.¹⁸⁸

181Betsy Erkkila, *The Wicked Sisters: Women Poets, Literary History, and Discord* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 101.

182Erkkila, *The Wicked Sisters*, 104.

183Bonnie Costello, "Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop: Friendship and Influence," *Twentieth Century Literature* 30, no. 2/3 (1984): 130, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/441108>.

184Costello, "Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop," 130.

Erkkila, *The Wicked Sisters*, 108.

185Costello, "Marianne Moore and Elizabeth Bishop," 130.

186Erkkila, *The Wicked Sisters*, 112-3, 115.

187Erkkila, *The Wicked Sisters*, 113.

188Erkkila, *The Wicked Sisters*, 112, 114, 118-9.

Erkkilä takes the view that Moore's poetry and Bishop's poetry are obviously different. She argues that

Whereas Moore's use of syllabic verse, hidden rhymes, and intricate stanza design is experimental, Bishop is more conventional [...] in her use of rhyme, meter, and poetic structure, and she makes frequent use of traditional forms such as the ballad, sonnet, villanelle,¹⁸⁹ sestina,¹⁹⁰ and nursery rhyme.¹⁹¹ But [...] her vision is fundamentally postmodern. [...] Moore's poems state, affirm, moralize, and assume all things as part of a spiritual scheme. Bishop's poems question, challenge, doubt, and destabilize [...].¹⁹²

Elizabeth Bishop's poem begins:

I caught a tremendous fish
and held him beside the boat
half out of water, with my hook
fast in a corner of his mouth.¹⁹³

In contrast, Marianne Moore's poem begins:

The Fish
wade
through black jade.
Of the crow-blue mussel shells, one keeps
adjusting the ash heaps;
opening and shutting itself like

an

189 "A poem composed of an uneven number (usually five) of tercets rhyming aba, with a final quatrain rhyming abaa." Chris Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 272.

190 "A verse [...] consisting of six six-line stanzas and a three-line envoy," The American Heritage Dictionary, "sestina." The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, accessed May 16, 2014, <http://ahdictionary.com/word/search.html?q=sestina&submit.x=0&submit.y=0>.

191 "A traditional verse or set of verses chanted to infants by adults as an initiation into rhyme and verbal rhythm." Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 175.

192 Erkkilä, *The Wicked Sisters*, 120.

193 Elizabeth Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop: Poems, Prose and Letters*, ed. Robert Giroux, Lloyd Schwartz (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 2008), 33-4.

injured fan.¹⁹⁴

From the above stated excerpts, it is apparent that Bishop's poem opens its theme with a huge fish that is caught by a narrator himself / herself; she even particularizes the sex of the fish. She calls him he. The narrator of the poem is probably Bishop herself because she uses the personal "I" form and the possessive pronoun. Unlike Moore, she more focuses on objects of the poem because there is no "I" and possessive pronoun. It is perhaps the most noticeable difference between the two poems. Erkkila states that "whereas Moore masks herself behind and within objects, Bishop places herself as a traveler at the perceptual center of her poems."¹⁹⁵ Another difference is that while Moore blends the title of the poem into the first line of the poem, Bishop does not do the same thing as her literary mentor; the title and the first line are clearly separated. The poems also differ in the arrangement of the words. Harold Bloom is of the opinion that "they [the words] undulate as waves might, creating a visual rhythm to enter readers immediately into the watery world of the poem."¹⁹⁶ Whereas Bishop's arrangement of the words is more traditional.

Elizabeth Bishop narrates about the male fish which she holds out of water and which is injured with her hook. She seems to be fascinated by the inactivity of the caught fish: "He didn't fight. / He hadn't fought at all."¹⁹⁷ Bishop is simultaneously fascinated by the body of the fish; she describes his external appearance.

Here and there
his brown skin hung in strips
like ancient wallpaper,
and its pattern of darker brown
was like wallpaper: ...¹⁹⁸

In this citation, Bishop examines that the skin of the fish is brown with darker brown patterns and somehow damaged. Compared to her friend, Miss Moore does not examine her fish; she more focuses on the natural setting. Bishop likens the remains of the skin of the fish to

194 Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

195 Erkkila, *The Wicked Sisters*, 120.

196 Bloom, *Comprehensive Research and Study Guide: Marianne Moore*, 47.

197 Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop*, 33-4.

198 Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop*, 33-4.

“ancient wallpaper”¹⁹⁹ perhaps because the fish has the same colour as ancient wallpaper and they are “... stained and lost through age.”²⁰⁰ Moreover, she contemplates the face of the fish: “I looked into his eyes / which were far larger than mine / but shallower, and yellowed, / the irises backed and packed / with tarnished tinfoil / seen through the lenses / of old scratched isinglass. [...] I admired his sullen face, the mechanism of his jaw, ...”²⁰¹ As Bishop draws her attention to the external appearance, so she draws attention to the inner parts of the fish. “... I thought of the coarse white flesh / packed in like feathers, / the big bones and the little bones, / the dramatic reds and blacks / of his shiny entrails, / and the pink swim-bladder / like a big peony.”²⁰² It is clearly visible that Bishop uses colours in her poem, such as “brown, [...] white, [...] green, [...] pink,” or “orange.”²⁰³ Moore does the same thing. She also employs a wide range of colours in “The Fish,” for example, “black, [...] turquoise, [...] pink,” or “green.”²⁰⁴

Both Moore’s poem and Bishop’s poem include objects which are linked to humans. Bishop refers to “...five old pieces of fish-line, / or four and a wire leader / with the swivel still attached, / with all their five big hooks ...”²⁰⁵ Moore refers to “... dynamite grooves, burn, and / hatchet strokes, ...”²⁰⁶ Bishop ends her poem with describing the scene. It begins:

I stared and stared
and victory filled up
the little rented boat,
from the pool of bilge
where oil had spread a rainbow
around the rusted engine
to the bailer rusted orange,
the sun-cracked thwarts,
the oarlocks on their strings,
the gunnels—until everything

199Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop*, 33-4.

200Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop*, 33-4.

201Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop*, 33-4

202Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop*, 33-4.

203Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop*, 33-4.

204Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

205Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop*, 33-4.

206Moore, *The Poems of Marianne Moore*, 127-8.

was rainbow, rainbow, rainbow!
And I let the fish go.²⁰⁷

The first line of the above quoted excerpt may indicate that Bishop speaks of herself. She expresses satisfaction with her catch. Then, she resumes focusing on the scene around her. In the final line of the poem, Bishop does an unexpected act; she sets the fish free.

Betsy Erkkila believes that Moore's "The Fish" is "emblematic and moves toward 'objective' statement," whereas Bishop's "The Fish" is "symbolistic and moves toward subjective vision."²⁰⁸ Bishop appears that she adjusts the fish for herself. It seems that she might have created her poem on the basis of her personal experience with fishing. Although Bishop had a desire to differ from her friend Moore, she was half successful, when taking into account these two poems. For instance, Bishop borrowed the title from Moore's poem, or her use of colours is similar to Moore's use of colours. However, there are aspects in which these poems are obviously different. The first example may be the arrangement of the words; another example may be the usage of the pronoun "I" and the possessive pronoun. Or both poems emphasize different things. Bishop puts emphasis on the fish itself, particularly on the whole body of the fish, in contrast, Moore emphasizes more nature than a particular animal.

²⁰⁷Bishop, *Elizabeth Bishop*, 33-4.

²⁰⁸Erkkila, *The Wicked Sisters*, 122.

4. Conclusion

This bachelor thesis examines the motif of the sea and water in the selected poems of the American modernist poet Marianne Moore. The analysis is aimed at Moore's approach to the sea as well as water. The conclusion of the analytical part offers the comparison between Marianne Moore and another American poet Elizabeth Bishop. This part is in terms of similarities and differences.

The theoretical part of this bachelor thesis is divided into three subchapters. In the first subchapter, there are offered different points of view on the imagery of the sea and water. This subchapter explains reasons why human beings have been always interested in the sea. The images of the sea and water became part of the cultural heritage in many cultures. There are described some of the cultures in which the sea or water occurs. Each culture had its special belief about these symbols. This subchapter also provides the religious view on them, and that the Bible consists various types of water. Then there are depicted the features of water, which it endowed with, together with its power; there is also noted that water may creates different substances, such as fire and water.

The next subchapter depicts how the imagery of the sea and water is perceived from the classical and romantic point of view. In classical texts, sailing across sea is portrayed as a necessary and evil journey that has to be done; this is illustrated by a few examples of sea tales. There is also explained why ancient Greeks depended on the sea; it is the source of all life. Another point of view is the Romantic point of view. Romantics viewed the sea as the wild place with no limits and as the place of freedom. The poets of the Romantic era took pleasure in sailing across sea; they wanted to immerse into it. They perceived it as the place full of mystery.

The last subchapter of the theoretical part includes Gaston Bachelard's point of view on water and the sea. In Bachelard's research, water is described as a substance which allows human beings to adapt their own image, which is reflected in it. He contrasted water with a mirror which is constant and fixed, and which does not allow humans to adapt their image. Bachelard also connects water with the idea of death; it serves as a mediator between life and death, in his view. This subchapter also deals with the idea that water assimilates a wide variety of substances, including water and earth, water and fire, or water and air. It is also noted that water symbolizes purification, and that freshwater has ascendancy over seawater.

Bachelard's research also shows that he perceives the sea as unpredictable and seawater as violent water.

The second chapter, which is actually the analytical part, is dedicated to the images of the sea and water. The main emphasis was put on Marianne Moore's attitude towards the sea and water. The chapter consists of approximately ten poems. The first poem, which was analysed, is entitled "A Grave." In this poem, Moore depicts the sea as the place which attracts people's attention due to its great beauty. But she also depicts the sea as the dangerous place where nobody is safe and certain what will happen, especially when sailing. The sea in "A Grave" is compared to the greedy collector, which only takes and does not want to return anything back, or to the grave which may indicate that the sea is endowed with destructive power. Then, the sea begins to behave differently. It behaves as if it is not the same sea as in the beginning of the poem; it seems that the sea behaves friendly, but it is not so. The sea has two faces, and this aspect is clearly visible in the other poems.

Another poem, which was examined, is called "Dock Rats." This poem portrays the sea as being magnificent, although it hides its true face. It constantly changes its colours as well as its mood. Again, the sea is unexpected and crafty. It can deceive humans who live in the dock and who want to sail it. The next poem is titled "Ennui." The central theme of the poem is the man ruminating over the sea fish and its life. In this poem, the sea is described as the mysterious place, which attracts human attention with its hidden sea creatures.

"He Made This Screen" is the next poem. In the poem, there is the man who tries to show the true face of the sea in his work. There are a few signs that indicate the darker side of the sea, its true face. First, the unattractive piece of material from which the man's work is made; the material signifies the uglier side of the sea. The next sign is the passion-flower which represents torturing, and which is connected to Jesus. The sea tortures its victims as well. Another sign, which Moore mentions in this poem, is the dragon. It can symbolize either a lighthouse or a beast that can destroy its victims just as the sea. It also destroys its victims.

The poems "In Distrust of Merits" and "The Fish" are perhaps war poems. The beginning of the poem entitled "In Distrust of Merits" refers to humans who are eager to fight and to the blind man who is convinced he knows what others do not know. In this poem, the sea is violent and becomes the place of a tyranny, which may signify its destructive power. It enforces its power over rebelling things and achieves its goal through the tyranny. To prove its power, the sea also uses huge waves against rebellious things; when these things do not want

to obey, it swallows them. The rest of the poem is about how people fight or how they behave to each other.

In “Rosemary,” Moore refers to Venus, who was the ancient Roman goddess of beauty as well as love and to her son who admits that his mother was born from the sea. Her ancient Greek equivalent Aphrodite was also born from the sea. Thus, apart from its destructive power, the sea is depicted as the creator of all living things; it is the place from which life emerges. Barring the creative power, the poem also narrates about a bush called rosemary, which is connected to Christmas and Christianity; nevertheless, there are only few references to this particular bush. The end of the poem returns back to the previously mentioned function of the sea, the creative function. In this time, it is related to the origin of rosemary which springs beside the sea.

The poem called “Sojourn in the Whale” is possibly about the poet who tries to be successful and famous in the world of literature. S/he tries to write and publish poems which enable him / her to achieve fame. As s/he writes poem, s/he gains self-confidence and desired fame. However, his / her self-confidence and self-love cloud his / her mind. This self-love is compared to the self-love of the sea. Moore portrays the sea as being selfish; it loves only itself. She concludes her poem by the raging sea which may be likened to the anger of the poet who was not able to cope with sudden fame and pitfalls that brings a poetic career.

Although this poem is entitled “The Fish,” it is not the poem about any particular animal. It begins with the fish which swim through dark and solid water. Thus, the fish are in difficulties when they have to swim in it. Moore rather highlights objects around than the fish themselves, which may be seen throughout the poem. She describes, for example, barnacles which seek refuge in waves, but they cannot hide because of the sun, more specifically, because of the sun’s rays which shine into water. The sun shines into the darkness of the sea and reveals everything. It is certainly captivating, but when the sunlight passes through seawater, it splits. So it suggests that seawater is solid, unpleasant liquid. Moreover, the sunlight reveals what was hidden in the sea; it reveals that the sea is full of bodies. It reveals its destructive power, and that the sea is barbaric. It was mentioned that this poem is considered to be the war poem and these revealed bodies refer to it. The poem continues by describing water as hard liquid, but it also becomes the hostile place which tries to destroy the cliff. On the one hand, the end of the poem signifies that all life on the cliff is dead, on the other hand, it also signifies that new life emerges from water; and that this new life find

refuge on things which the sea swallow.

Other two poems, which were examined, are “The Sentimentalist” and “The Steeple-Jack.” The former one presents the Kiplingesque seaman’s chantey. It is a song which was sung by sailors when they sailed across sea. The entire plot of the poem takes place at sea. There are two main characters the sea and the man. In this poem, the huge body of water is full of perils; it is dangerous as well as stormy whose waves are both powerful and enormous. The man is the only human on the ship and because he is alone, he begins to sing. His singing is the direct reference to the Kiplingesque chantey. The man must suffer to begin new life.

The latter poem, “The Steeple-Jack,” begins by referring to Albrecht Dürer. In the beginning, the town seems to be peaceful and placid, but a close study reveals that it is not so. This calmness is disrupted by dying whales. The sea is the place with no feelings for anything, in this case, for whales, which displease it. On the other hand, Moore employs colours to make the sea seem beautiful. However, the placid town atmosphere changed on account of the storm. This storm affects the sea and its plants underwater. Again, the sea becomes the place where there is no safety, but only perils. Then, it seems that the sea suddenly calms again because the student Ambrose can see boats sailing the sea. The poem concludes by saying that people in this town are reconciled to danger and hope in their lives.

The final chapter of the analysis discusses the two poems of the same title Marianne Moore’s poem “The Fish” and Elizabeth Bishop’s poem “The Fish.” This chapter begins with a brief outline of the relationship between these two poets. In the brief outline, there is stated that the meeting between them was arranged through Bishop’s admiration for Moore and her poetry; it also outlines the development of their relationship over time. Some of the authors, who study the two poets, believe that their friendship may be interpreted as the mother/daughter relationship. As the chapter progresses, there are analysed these poems in terms of similarities and differences.

As stated above, Bishop wanted to differ from Moore, but from the title of Bishop’s poem, it is visible that she was perhaps inspired by her friend and named her poem after Moore’s poem. Another similarity may be Bishop’s use of colours which is similar to Moore’s use of colours; both poets make use of a wide range of colours. Both poets also employ human objects, such as a fishing line, a fish hook, or a hatchet. These similarities signify that Moore had a profound influence on Bishop’s poetic career. The chapter also examines that there exist also differences between the two poems, although Moore influenced Bishop. The

beginning of Moore's poem and Bishop's shows probably one of the main differences between their works. Bishop is more subjective, while Moore is more objective; Bishop's work begins with the personal "I" and contains the possessive pronoun. She seems to be the one who fishes, in contrast, Moore seems to be only an observer. Both poets focus on different things. Whereas Moore focuses on nature rather than on a particular animal, Bishop does the opposite; she explores one particular fish—both the external and the inner body part of her fish. The poems also differ in the arrangement of the words. Moore's arrangement is irregular, compared to Bishop, her arrangement is regular, more traditional; she does not play with the words. From these facts, it is evident that these poems have both common features and distinctive features.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá motivem moře a vody v dílech americké básnířky Marianne Moore. Analýza je zaměřena na vybrané básně této básnířky s cílem prokázat, jakým způsobem k těmto motivům přistupuje. V závěru této práce je nabídnuto srovnání s jinou americkou básnířkou Elizabeth Bishop.

Teoretická část této práce je rozdělena do tří podkapitol. První podkapitola se zabývá odlišnými názory na zobrazení moře a vody. Tato podkapitola vysvětluje, proč jsou lidé po staletí přitahováni právě k moři nebo k vodě. Tyto dva literární symboly se staly součástí mnoha kultur a každá z nich na ně pohlíží různým způsobem. Je zde rozebráno jak náboženské hledisko, tak to, že Bible obsahuje různé druhy vod. Závěr této podkapitoly se věnuje vlastnostem vody, její síle a také tomu, že voda může vytvořit rozmanité substance, jako je například oheň a voda.

Druhá podkapitola se soustředí na klasicistní a romantické pojetí moře a vody. Tyto dva literární směry pohlíží na tyto motivy zcela odlišným způsobem. Klasicistní pojetí zobrazuje plavbu po moři jako nezbytnou cestu plnou nástrah, kterou je potřeba překonat. Je zde uvedeno pár příkladů ilustrujících právě tyto plavby po moři, které podnikali starověcí Řekové. Tato podkapitola také vysvětluje, proč byli staří Řekové závislí na moři; Důvodem bylo to, že moře bylo jejich zdrojem živobytí. Romantické pojetí zobrazuje moře jako nespoutané místo, kde neexistují hranice a také jako místo, kde je svoboda. Básníci v období Romantismu nacházeli potěšení plavit se po moři. Moře vnímali jako tajemné místo, do kterého se chtěli ponořit.

Třetí a poslední podkapitola teoretické části se věnuje výzkumu Gastona Bachelarda. Jeho výzkum se zabývá vodou a její symbolikou. Bachelard popisuje vodu jako substanci, která nám lidem umožňuje si přizpůsobit náš obraz, který se odráží ve vodní hladině. Tento svůj názor se snaží podpořit tvrzením, že vodu srovnává se zrcadlem, které je pevné a neměnné. Bachelardův výzkum také tvrdí, že voda je symbolem čistoty a také to, že sladkovodní voda má převahu nad mořskou vodu ve všech mytologiích. V této podkapitole je také zmíněno, že voda je spojována se smrtí; slouží jako prostředník mezi životem a smrtí. Jak již bylo uvedeno v předchozí podkapitole, voda má tu moc, že může vytvořit různé substance, jako například voda a země tvoří substanci, voda a oheň či voda a vzduch. Podle Bachelardova názoru je moře nepředvídatelným místem a mořská voda je vnímána jako

prudká nebo také jako násilná voda.

Analytická část začíná druhou kapitolou, která se věnuje obrazům moře a vody ve vybraných básních Marianne Moore. Tato kapitola se skládá z deseti analyzovaných básní této básnířky. První básní, která byla analyzována, se jmenuje *A Grave*. Tato báseň vyobrazuje moře jako místo, které je jakýmsi lákadlem pro nás lidé, protože moře je místem výjimečné přírodní krásy. Nicméně, Moore popisuje moře také jako nebezpečné místo, kde je člověk v neustálém nebezpečí a kde nemá žádnou jistotu, co se může stát. Básnířka přirovnává moře k chamtivému sběrateli, který jenom bere a nic nevrací nebo také k hrobu, což může naznačovat, že moře disponuje ničivou silou. Zmiňuje se také o rybářích, kteří rybaří na otevřeném moři a znesvědcují hrob; tím hrobem básnířka myslí moře, které pohlcuje různé předměty a stává se tak hrobem pro to, co pohltní. V závěru básně Moore vyobrazuje moře v úplně jiném světle. Moře se chová úplně jinak než na začátku básně. Budí dojem přátelského místa. Moře má několik tváří a v průběhu analyzování dalších básní bude tento rys patrný.

Další báseň, která byla analyzována, nese název *Dock Rats*. V této básni je moře opět místem nebývalé krásy, ačkoli schovává svou pravou tvář. Moře je místem neustále se měnícím; mění jak barvy, tak svoje nálady. Je to lstivé a nevypočitatelné místo, které klame lidské jedince žijící na pobřeží a plavící se po něm. V básni nazvané *Ennui* je hlavním tématem muž, který rozjímá nad rybou a jejím životem. Tento muž se pravděpodobně vydal na moře kvůli rybaření a kvůli tomu, že je fascinován krásou moře. Muž je nejspíše tak fascinovaný mořem a jeho živočichy, kteří žijí v jeho hlubinách, že začal rozjímát nad rybou a jejím životem. Přemýšlí nad tím, jaké je to být rybou a volně plavat v temných hlubinách moře. Moře je zde popisováno jako záhadné místo skrývající své obyvatelé ve svých temných hlubinách.

V další básni, kterou Moore nazvala *He Made This Screen* je muž, který se snaží ukázat pravou podstatu moře. Muž vytvoří obraz, jejímž ústředním motivem je moře a poté své dílo přirovnává k tapiserii. V této básni je několik nápověd, které poukazují na pravou tvář moře—na jeho temnou povahu. První nápovědou je například to, že když muž vytvořil svůj obraz z ošklivého až nevzhledého materiálu; z materiálu, který je ošlehaný větrem. Toto může symbolizovat tu ošklivou stránku moře. Další nápovědou může být květina, která se jmenuje mučenka. Pro tuto rostlinu je charakteristické, že je spojována s Ježíšem Kristem a mučením. K této symbolice se dá přirovnat i moře. To také mučí své oběti než je pohltní. Poslední nápovědou je mýtické stvoření drak. Zde to není tak jeznosnačné, protože jsou tu

dva významy spojené s tímto stvořením. Prvním z nich je, že drak zastává úlohu majáku, který navádí lodě do přístavů. Druhým je, že drak je vnímán jako nebezpečného zvířete, které loví svou kořist, stejně jako moře loví svou kořist. Moře je vnímáno jako místo s ničivou silou.

Básně *In Distrust of Merits* a *The Fish* jsou pravděpodobně o válce. Začátek básně s názvem *In Distrust of Merits* se zmiňuje o lidech, kteří jsou dychtiví po boji a o slepém muži, který si myslí, že ví to, co ostatní nevědí. V této básni je moře vyobrazeno jako drsné a nebezpečné místo, kde vládne tyranie. Svou sílu používá proti živým i neživým věcem, které se mu znelíbily. Moře používá obrovské vlny proti rebelujícím věcem, aby dokázalo jakou mocí disponuje.

V básni *Rosemary* má moře zcela odlišnou tvář. Dosud bylo toto místo zobrazeno jako nepřátelské místo s ničivou silou, ale v této básni je moře zdrojem života. Moore se zde zmiňuje o Venuši, bohyni lásky a krásy, a zároveň o jejím synovi, který přiznává, že jeho matka byla zrozena z moře. Jejím protějškem byla řecká bohyně Afrodita, která byla rovněž zrozena z moře. Kromě této tvořivé síly je tato báseň také o rostlině, která se nazývá rozmarýn a který je spojován s Vánocemi a křesťanskými tradicemi. Nicméně, je zde pouze pár zmínek o tom, jak rozmarýn vypadá. V závěru básně se Moore vrací k moři a jeho tvořivé síle. Podle této básně kvete tato rostlina vedle moře a živý se z mořské rosy, což je dalším důkazem, že moře je zdrojem všeho živého.

Báseň *Sojourn in the Whale* je údajně o básníkovi / básnířce, který / á se snaží proniknout do světa literatury a získat slávu. Básník či básnířka se snaží psát a vydávat básně, které mu / jí umožní získat slávu. Jak píše báseň za básní, získává sebedůvěru a slávu. Avšak jeho / její sebedůvěra spolu se sebeláskou mu / jí zatemní mysl. Tuto vlastnost, sebelásku, Moore připisuje i moři. Moře je vyobrazeno jako sobeský tvor, který miluje jen sám sebe. Báseň se uzavírá běsnící vodou, kterou lze přirovnat k hněvu básníka, který nebyl schopen se vypořádat s náhlou slávou a nástrahami, které tato kariéra přináší.

Ačkoliv se zdá, že báseň, kterou Moore pojmenovala *The Fish* je o rybách není tomu tak. Báseň *The Fish* se více zaměřuje na okolí než na ryby samotné. Na začátku básně se ryby snaží proplout skrz vodu, ale musí vynaložit velké úsilí, aby proplavaly, protože voda je temná a tvrdá jako kámen. Je to nehostinné místo. Poté se zaměří na koryšce, kteří se snaží si najít nějaké místo, aby se ukryli. Tito koryškové jsou neúspěšní, protože paprsky slunce svítí do hlubin moře a všechno odkrývají. Zdá se to být jako úchvatný pohled, ale jakmile se

sluneční paprsky dotknout mořské hladiny, roztříští se. To naznačuje, jaká je mořská voda ve skutečnosti, tvrdá a nepříjemná tekutina. Navíc, když sluneční paprsky projdou vodou, odhalí vše, co bylo dříve skryté. Odhalí, že moře je plné těl. Báseň pokračuje tím, že moře je vyobrazeno jako nepřátelské místo, které se snaží zničit útesy svými vlnami. Opět destruktivní rys, kterým moře disponuje. V této básni je také zmínka o předmětech, které jsou spojené s lidmi. Závěr básně je dvojsmyslný, protože jedna věta říká, že voda byla ve svém úmyslu zničit útesy úspěšná, ale následující věta toto tvrzení popírá. Tato věta říká, že voda má schopnost vytvořit nový život a že tento nový život žije na předmětech, které moře pohltilo.

Další dvě básně, které byly analyzovány, se jmenují *The Sentimentalist* a *The Steeple-Jack*. První zmíněná báseň obsahuje odkaz na původně námořnickou píseň, kterou si námořníci zpívali během plavby. Děj básně se odehrává na moři a hlavními postavami jsou moře a muž. Moore popisuje moře jako místo plné nástrah; místo, které je nebezpečné a rozbouřené. Muž, o kterém se Moore zmiňuje, je jedinným člověkem na lodi, a tudíž i na celém moři. Muž si začne zpívat píseň o dívce, kterou zřejmě miluje, protože je sám na lodi; jeho zpívání je přímým odkazem na námořnickou píseň. Muž musí trpět, aby mohl začít nový život.

Druhá jmenovaná báseň, *The Steeple-Jack*, začíná odkazem na německého výtvarníka Albrechta Dürera. Je to proto, že Moore byla fascinována jeho touhou vidět velryby. Přesto, tato báseň není o Dürerovi, ale spíše o přímořském městě, jehož atmosféra se zdá být poklidná, ale pečlivá studie ukáže, že tato poklidná atmosféra je narušena osmi umírajícími velrybami a blížící se bouří. Bouře má vliv na moře i na rostliny pod vodou. Na jednu stranu Moore vyobrazuje moře jako nebezpečné místo, které je plné nástrah, na druhou stranu používá barvy, aby z moře vytvořila místo mimořádné krásy. Poté se zdá, že se moře uklidní, protože student jménem Ambrose, který je opět jedinným člověkem v této básni, vidí loďky, které plují na klidné hladině moře. V této básni má moře opět dvě tváře; na jedné straně je rozbouřené, nepřátelské a plné nástrah, na druhé straně se chová přátelsky k lidem, kteří se po něm plaví.

Třetí kapitola analytické části zkoumá podobnosti a odlišnosti dvou básní, které mají stejný název. Těmito básněmi jsou *The Fish* od Marianne Moore a *The Fish* od Elizabeth Bishop. Začátek kapitoly je věnován vztahu těchto dvou básnířek. Jejich dlouholeté přátelství započalo schůzkou, která byla zorganizována, protože Bishop cítila obdiv k Moore a její

poezii. Úvod se také zabývá tím, jak se jejich vztah vyvíjel v průběhu let. Bylo zde uvedeno, že někteří autoři, kteří studují tyto dvě básnířky, tedy Moore a Bishop, se domnívají, že jejich přátelství se dá interpretovat jako vztah matky a dcery. Nicméně, jak se jejich vztah v průběhu let vyvíjel Bishop začala pociťovat touhu odlišit se od své literární kolegyně a začít být známá ve světě literatury.

Jak již bylo řečeno, Bishop se chtěla lišit od své literární mentorky Marianne Moore, ale při důkladnějším prostudování těchto básní je patrné, že se shodují svým názvem. To naznačuje, že Bishop se zřejmě nechala inspirovat a pojmenovala svou báseň stejně jako Moore, tedy *The Fish*. Další podobností může být, například používání barev. Obě básnířky totiž používají širokou škálu barev ve svých básních. Obě také používají předměty, které jsou nějakým způsobem spojené s lidmi, například vlasec, rybářský háček nebo sekyru. Z tohoto lze vyčíst, že Moore značně ovlivnila literární kariéru své svěřenkyně.

Existují však i odlišnosti, ve kterých se tyto dvě básně liší. Hned první pohled na obě básně odhalí zřejmě největší rozdíl mezi těmito básněmi. Tím rozdílem je to, že obě básně se soustředí na odlišné věci. Moore je ve své básni spíše objektivní, zatímco Bishop je více subjektivní, což je zřetelné hned na začátku její básně, protože začíná osobním zájmenem já. Vypadá to, jako kdyby ona sama chytala ryby. Je také možné, že tuto báseň napsala na základě svých zkušeností s rybařením. Na rozdíl od Bishop, Moore je pouhým pozorovatelem. Je také patrné, že jak Moore, tak Bishop se soustředí na různé věci. Moore se spíše soustředí na přírodu než na jednu konkrétní věc či zvíře, ale Bishop se soustředí na jednu konkrétní rybu, u které popisuje, jak vnější část těla, tak i vnitřní část těla. Básně se také liší svým uspořádáním slov. Pro Moore je typické nepravidelné uspořádání; vypadá to, jako kdyby si hrála se slovy. Zatímco Bishop má pravidelné uspořádání slov; toto uspořádání je více tradičnější. Tyto odlišnosti dokazují, že Bishop se v určitých aspektech lišila od své literární přítelkyně, i když ji Moore značně ovlivnila.

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