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Seminar: Moore and Williams

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Throughout the semester I have read and researched many poems by Marianne Moore and William Carlos Williams. Two poems I have given great consideration to are “No Swan So Fine” and “Silence,” both by Marianne Moore. Although these two poems do not have a great deal in common, they portray many of the ideals and characteristics that Marianne Moore stood for. In the following paper, I am going to give a detailed description of both poems. I am also going to explain how Moore’s life fit in with these poems, and what common characteristics come through in her writing. In the end, I will compare and contrast Marianne Moore and William Carlos Williams’ views towards women. I am going to do this because although the two had a great deal in common, this wa one area where they did not see eye to eye.

“No Swan So Fine”

“No water so still as the
dead fountains of Versailles.” No swan,
with swart blind look askance
and gondoliering legs, so fine
as the chintz china one with fawn-
brown eyes and toothed gold
collar on to show whose bird it was.

Lodged in the Louis Fifteenth
candelabrum-tree of cockscomb-
tinted buttons, dahlias,
sea-urchins, and everlastings,
it perches on the branching foam
of polished sculptured
flowers-at ease and tall. The king is dead.

Marianne Moore had a great interest in writing about different subjects through the use of animals. While reading her beautiful description of the swan, I immediately get a picture in my head of what she is trying to get the reader to visualize. At first I thought this poem explained how there is no swan as beautiful as the artificial one at the Louis the Fifteenth candelabrum. But after she explains the nature of swans who are living, “swart blind look askance and gondoliering legs,” it is hard to tell which one she prefers. Moore also compares the artificial swan to the king which is interesting. I will discuss these things later in further detail along with what I initially thought of this poem compared to what I discovered after doing some research.

Just like many of Moore’s poems, “No Swan So Fine” came from her own personal experience and from a magazine clipping she had saved. She discovered the article around 1931, and a year later she made a poem because of it. However, one might say that in 1930 she first began to think about some of the ideas that appear in “No Swan So Fine.” George Saintsbury’s friend, Lord Balfour, passed away and Moore wrote him her condolences. “The loss of your friend, Lord Balfour, must be a great one to you; for even we who knew him only as a personage, will remember his death with lasting regret. In his relations with American he was so exceedingly kind, chivalrous, and hopeful” (Willis 1).

Later in the year Moore noticed an announcement in *Illustrated London News* for a pair of Louis XV candelabra which was formerly owned by the late Lord Balfour. After seeing the advertisement she sketched a picture of something similar to it and stored it for safe keeping. Then, a year later in the *New York Times Magazine*, she saw another article that inspired her, “Versailles Reborn: A Moonlight Drama” (1). The article was about the restoration of Versailles sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation. She cut out the piece and also wrote down

the caption attached to the picture which stated, “There is no water so still as the dead fountains of Versailles” (1). Finally, in 1932, “No Swan So Fine” was published for the public to enjoy.

The first sentence in “No Swan So Fine” is in quotations because it is the exact same quote Percy Philip said in his *New York Times Magazine* article. I agree with Percy when he said, “...the Versailles grounds seemed to be protesting their surroundings without the courts of the King Louis” (Martin, 30). This first sentence simply states there is nothing as still and dead-like as these fountains ever since the king passed.

Then Moore describes a swan that is the exact opposite as the one placed in the Louis Fifteenth candelabrum who is “so fine.” She describes a swan with a dark complexion, a scornful and distrustful face, and gangly legs: “...with swart blind look askance and gondoliering legs...” (Moore, 19) By describing the swan in such a way, Moore makes it sound like the dead beautiful swan is far better looking than the one who gets to experience life: “...the chintz china one with fawn-brown eyes and toothed gold collar...” (19). When Moore describes the artificial swan, she makes it sound very beautiful; however, she also describes a collar around it’s neck which could be interpreted several different ways. One could see it as a beautiful collar showing off the swan’s worth, or as a sign of ownership. I believe Moore is trying to show how the living swan, even if it may not be as beautiful, is still free compared to the one in the Louis Fifteenth candelabrum. “...Moore may be defending the real-life swan not in spite of but precisely because of his imperfections. The elegant setting of the china swan, amidst ‘polished sculptured flowers,’ becomes a prison” (Martin, 31).

The first stanza of “No Swan So Fine” is difficult to interpret because it is hard to tell which swan is more appealing to Moore. As Linda Leavell said, “With objects in Moore’s poems it is sometimes more difficult to distinguish her approval from her disapproval” (Leavell,

162). Overall, the first stanza explains that, “The water of the fountain seems serene, even appealing, and the real-life swan rather clumsy by contrast. But the ‘chintz china’ swan, which ought to be as appealing as the formal fountains, ends up being trapped by the control and ownership that its ‘toothed gold collar’ represents” (Martin, 30).

The second stanza goes into great detail by explaining the ornamental swan and where it is located. “Lodged in the Louis Fifteenth candelabrum-tree” (Moore, 19) came from the article reporting the sale of Louis Fifteenth’s candelabra. Moore explains all the delicate and precise ornamentation on the candelabrum such as the flowers, sea-urchins, plants, and beautiful colors that make it stand out so much. “The poet’s excitement for the ornament is objectified by means of a list that conveys its sensuous luxuriance and that recalls the exuberance of the past” (Shulman, 3).

The final sentence of the poem, “The king is dead,” (Moore, 19) could mean many things depending on the reader. When I first read it I was very puzzled and had no idea what Moore was trying to convey. However, after doing some research on the background of the poem I began to come up with an explanation. When Moore says, “The king is dead” (19) I believe she is saying that just like the fountains of Versailles, and just like the ornamental swan, the Louis XV is now dead as well.

After conducting more research I discovered several other ways this sentence could be interpreted. Earlier when I explained how Taffy Martin felt about Moore’s views toward the swan she also related it to the last sentence in the poem. “...the (ornamental) swan’s beauty lacks spirit, just as the king lacks life” (Martin, 31). Martin continued her interpretation by saying, “the waters of the fountains, like the king, are lifeless” (31). I agree with this

interpretation mainly because it seems the most logical, considering Moore's background with the late Lord Balfour.

Grace Shulman presented a different interpretation of what "The king is dead," (Moore, 19) may mean. "The final statement might equally evoke a cry of 'Long live the king!' The poet's mind contains the life of the ornamental swan as well as the death it symbolizes, and her excited description betrays that fascination" (Shulman, 3). I do not agree with this interpretation. To me, the poem was almost a tribute to the king because in a way I think Moore was trying to convey the message that nothing seems as beautiful or as alive now that the king is dead.

With each piece of research I dug up, the more intriguing this poem became. I think it is an interesting poem on many levels. The main reason it is so stimulating to me is because of the background that comes along with it. Moore started by writing a letter and cutting out a few clippings. Two years later she wrote a beautiful poem to portray the entire experience. I think it is truly amazing to work on something and put so much dedication into one piece of work.

My final conclusion on the poem is that Moore was indeed trying to show how there is no swan as fine as one who gets to experience life and no king as fine as the late Louis XV. However, "The poem argues effectively for each point of view" (Martin, 31). Nobody will ever know what exactly Moore wanted the reader to think or believe after reading the poem, and I don't think she would have wanted it that way. Whether one thinks Moore preferred the living swan or the ornamental swan really does not matter because for all we know that may not be what she was trying to achieve in the first place. Moore's "No Swan So Fine" is a great poem that could leave a reader with many unanswered questions.

“Silence”

My father used to say,
“Superior people never make long visits,
have to be shown Longfellow’s grave
or the glass flowers at Harvard.
Self-reliant like the cat-
that takes its prey to privacy,
the mouse’s limp tail hanging like a shoelace from its mouth-
they sometimes enjoy solitude,
and can be robbed of speech
by speech which has delighted them.
The deepest feeling always shows itself in silence;
not in silence, but restraint.”
Nor was he insincere in saying, “Make my house your inn.”
Inns are not residences.

In “Silence,” Marianne Moore is obviously the narrator and is talking about her father or someone who is a father figure. Moore was the daughter of John Milton Moore, a construction engineer and inventor, but never met him because of his nervous breakdown after his invention of the smokeless furnace failed. Once he was hospitalized, Marianne and the rest of her family moved to her mother’s original home. Therefore, it would make sense that Moore is directing this poem towards her grandfather, John Riddle Warner, or some other male figure in her life. (Gale & Oswald, 1) The notes in the back of the book suggest that Moore could have been explaining something Miss A.M. Homans or Edmund Burke once said. Either way, I believe that Moore found what these two people said very similar to the way she was feeling at the time towards her grandfather and other men in society.

Marianne Moore describes and explains her family through many of her poems. Although she never comes right out and says who she is talking about, it is obvious in many of her poems that she is referring to either her mother or brother. Some of the poems by Marianne Moore that talk about her family, or can be related to them include: “The Paper Nautilus,” “By Disposition of Angels,” “Bird-Witted,” “Marriage,” and many more. Moore’s mother was very

protective and so there is a reoccurring theme in Moore's poetry of maternity and protection. However, in all of her poems there are very few that could relate to her father, or some type of father figure. Only in "Silence" does Moore specifically talk about a father figure. I think she chose to write about a father figure because of the way women were being treated at that point in time. Back in Marianne Moore's time women were taught to be subserviant to men. It was not acceptable for women to speak out about things that were bothering them. Because of this, I can see Marianne's grandfather, or any other man, telling her to conform to the norm by practicing restraint. He believed this to be the only acceptable way for a woman to behave, and since Marianne was very different from other women her age, he was probably threatened and talked to her about changing her ways several times.

To me, this poem is more in the form of a lecture. The entire poem is one stanza, and the majority of it is a quote. This makes it look like more of a conversation than a poem. I assume the quote comes from a conversation Moore had with her grandfather, or was something she heard him say to someone else. Either way, I believe it was directed towards someone within the family. Although these may not be the exact words her grandfather spoke, I think this is how Moore interpreted what he said, or how she wanted it to sound on paper. She makes it a very powerful quotation because the way it appears on the paper is more like a list.

The entire quote is explaining "superior people," and how they should act. Moore puts her grandfather's quotation into a list by saying that these people never intrude, they are self-reliant, and they enjoy their privacy. My favorite line of the poem is when Moore says, "The deepest feeling always shows itself in silence;/ not in silence, but restraint." I like this sentence because she says one thing, but then contradicts herself. She goes from saying it is silence and then, instead, restraint that helps people show their deepest feeling. When Moore says this she

very well could be mocking her grandfather. I think he said this because Moore may have been opposed to many of the things he stood for or how he believed women should act. The last few lines of the poem are the most powerful to me because I feel they are the underlying meaning of the entire poem.

"Make my house your inn" to me states that her grandfather did not want Marianne to get too comfortable to her surroundings. Instead of wanting her to feel at home, he thought she should think of his place as more of a temporary placement. I think this is very unusual and apparently Marianne Moore did as well which is probably why she chose to include it in the poem. I think it shows how little freedom her grandfather was willing to give her. The entire time he was hinting that she should act how he is telling her to because then she will be superior, or at least that is what he wanted her to believe. However, he obviously underestimated how clever Moore was because she took his words and made a mockery of them. Back in the 1800's men would have been threatened by a woman such as Moore who was so intelligent and witty. Overall, the grandfather seems to be giving Moore very one-sided advice.

However, if one were to look at this poem on a broader level you could interpret something completely different. Marianne Moore's grandfather died when she was seven so it seems odd that she would remember something like this. Therefore, part of me believes that she was talking about men in general. When Moore was growing up it was during the time when women were taught to be subversive to men. They were expected to do as they were told and to keep to themselves no matter what. When Moore says, "My father used to say..." (Moore, 91) she is probably implying that is what most men at that time would say. Although she only knew her grandfather for seven years, she had to know he was a traditional man so he would have the

same feelings as any other man in that time period. However, the majority of the criticism on this poem looks at it as if Moore is in fact describing her grandfather's exact words.

Elizabeth Gregory believes this poem to be, "an exercise in the very restraint bordering on silence that a father recommends (Gregory, 2). Gregory goes on to say that Moore is not only stating how her grandfather wanted her to practice silence but she is actually showing it in her poem. Since the majority of the poem is a quote, this shows how Moore is just relaying what was said, not actually telling how she feels like most of her other poems. However, although this poem may be "quieting the poet," Elizabeth believes that since Moore alters the words used, she is in her own way mocking her grandfather and not being silenced so much after all.

Cristanne Miller believes this poem to rely heavily on how "words constitute not just actions but acts of power toward persons" (Miller, 8). Miller elaborates on this by saying the poem shows how the grandfather is trying to encourage Marianne to be independent. He believes independent people to be superior, and so he wishes Marianne to model independence by restraining herself from some of her feelings. This is very different from Gregory's criticism because Miller believes Moore's grandfather to be encouraging her rather than trying to be powerful over her actions.

Jeanne Heuving argues yet another much more different approach to Moore's poem. She believes that Moore is quoting her father's words ironically to show both his dominating will-to-power and her subversion to it. "'Inns are not residences,' is how the poem ends—which is to say, that even if a literal, or a poetic, daughter rests within the house of a father, she does not and perhaps cannot spiritually or practically 'live' there" (Heuving,8). I really like this interpretation because I could see how Marianne Moore would feel distant to him being that he was not her

biological father. I can also see the two being distant with one another because back then women were supposed to get married and raise a family; however, it was probably very apparent that Marianne had a different outlook on how her life would be.

J.G.A. Pocock has added more criticism that I agree with as well. Pocock's criticism mainly deals with how the title of the poem correlates with the father's words. "'Silence' quotes a father performing an act of power upon his daughter, in a way that presupposes her silent, or restrained, obedience. The daughter responds however by repeating this father's words at length, in a new performative act that undermines, if it does not transform, the power structure assumed" (Pocock, 8). Pocock also mentions that Moore says in one of the two non-quoted lines, "My father used to say," which could mean one of two things. Either she uses past tense because he is dead, or because at the time when she wrote it his words no longer affected how she acted.

Joseph Parisi states in Marianne Moore: The Art of the Modernist that, "Moore admires the 'wiry diction, accurate observation and a homogeneous color sense'" (Parisi, 154). He also explains how there is a "masculine tone in 'Silence' because Moore is belonging to two different classes. There is a connection in her writing between weapons and beauty" (155). I think Parisi is saying that Moore is supposed to be acting feminine but instead is defying her grandfather's wishes and is saying what is on her mind. To Moore, her weapon was her words, not her beauty. This would be much more powerful to others and Marianne Moore knew this.

Charles Altieri makes an interesting criticism of how "Silence" fits in with a common theme throughout all of Moore's poems. "All of Moore's poems, and especially 'Silence,' contribute to, and are modified by, this dialectical assertion of her female strength. This assertion, in turn, depends on a controlled manipulation of the very exemplifying her very different values" (Altieri, 8). I think this is true because Moore does in fact represent a woman

who is very much outspoken. This poem, along with many others, are a good example of how she interpreted what was going on around her, or in "Silence," what was happening to her. Altieri goes on to say that, "Should the daughter either overestimate her power or underestimate the task of fixing her father and freeing herself, she is likely to trap herself in poses of hatred and obsessive resistance that only confirm his victory...One in her situation must refrain from any self-staging" (8). I think this is a good point because the last line in the stanza shows that Moore knows she is not comfortable where she is at now because it is not home. Therefore, she refrains from saying anything that she knows her grandfather would not agree with because to him that would not be superior. Although she knew she did not fit in, I think she refrained because then it was less noticeable to others.

Overall, "Silence" is quoting men showing power over women. Moore's grandfather, or the society of men around her, are trying to intimidate Moore by telling her how she should act. Their idea's of independence and superiority are very dated to today's norms. People are taught to use their right of free speech, not refrain from saying anything because that is more powerful. The way these men thought were completely backwards, and for Moore being such an intellectual she had to see this which is probably why she mocked what they said in her writing. The way she conveys their words into her poem belittles her grandfather and any other man who thought women were inferior to them.

However, like all of Moore's poems there is more than one meaning. Although on the surface she is talking about her grandfather, or men in general, trying to administer power over her, I also think it is about how Marianne Moore never felt comfortable at home, or within the society around her. When her grandfather took their family into his home he considered it more as an inn, but what Moore needed was to have a home. This poem shows that distant feeling

Moore felt and elaborates on it by telling the reader how she was supposed to act while staying there.

I thought it was interesting how Altieri found a way to connect “Silence” with many of Moore’s other poems. Many of the other critics in one way or another agreed that Moore’s grandfather was trying to lecture and use his power over Marianne to have her act how he thought was proper. By saying that all superior people acted this way, he probably thought he could make Marianne comply. However, as always with Moore’s poetry she was probably implying several different things, and one will never know whether she practiced restraint; I have a hard time imagining she did.

One question that I am left with after reading this poem is why she used the word father when she was more than likely explaining men in general. My only guess is that she wanted the reader to find the underlying meaning behind her words. By using this technique though her poem becomes much more powerful.

Marianne Moore: Life and Writing

Marianne Moore’s life had a major impact on her writing. In “No Swan So Fine” she took her friend George Saintsbury’s experience and wrote about it within her poem. Although the death did not affect her directly, she felt sympathy for her friend and chose to write about it through a poem. Just like the fountains at Versailles will never be the same, either will her friend George Saintsbury. Moore could sympathize with his loss and could find a way to compare it to something material. Moore lost her father and her grandfather when she was very young so it would be somewhat easy for her to sympathize with someone who was going through a death. Also, I think when one is grieving it can be easier for a person to write about it in words rather

than talking about it with someone else. For Moore to write about George Saintsbury's friend, Lord Balfour, he had to be moved a great deal.

In "Silence," Marianne Moore took what was happening in society and made it into a poem. At first glance a reader would think that Moore is talking about something her grandfather once said to her; however, if you think of the time frame she wrote this in then one's interpretation would greatly change. When you think back to how men acted towards women during this time it is easy to believe that Marianne Moore could have been explaining how all men, not just her grandfather, wanted women to practice silence. Moore was quite the opposite of most other women during this time. She was very independent and spoke her mind when and where she wanted to. The way she was able to do this, and to write so freely within her poems was more than likely very threatening to men. Therefore, both of these poems are directly related in one way or another to her life.

Common Characteristics

Although "No Swan So Fine" and "Silence" are not a lot alike, they do have several characteristics in common. Like many of Marianne Moore's poems, both of these explain something by talking about an object that is somewhat unrelated to the poem. In "No Swan So Fine" Moore uses the candelabrum and the real swan to discuss the beauty between what is real and what is not. It is hard for a reader to determine which swan Moore prefers because she goes into great detail describing each one. "No swan, with swart blind look askance and gondoliering legs, so fine as the chintz china one with fawn-brown eyes and toothed gold collar on to show whose bird it was" (Moore, 19). Although the swan on the candelabrum is beautiful, it will never get to experience life. The swan that is living does get to live it's life how it would like,

but it is considered ugly by others. Marianne Moore makes it almost impossible for the reader to decide which way is best.

Although this poem is talking about two different swans and the king's life, there is a hidden meaning under the surface. Moore is explaining how things are never the same once something leaves them. The fountains of Versailles will never be the same because of the king's death. This is shown when in the end of the poem she says, "The king is dead" (Moore, 91). Also, the way Moore goes into detail about the dead swan and how beautiful it is also shows she is glorifying the dead king and how great he was when he was living. Now that he is dead though nothing will ever be the same and that is why the fountains seem dead as well.

In "Silence," Moore follows this same pattern. The entire time she is supposedly quoting something that her grandfather said; however, the fact that her grandfather died when she was seven makes this hard to believe. The more someone examines this poem, the more obvious it becomes that Moore is talking about men in society as a whole. I think it is interesting though how Moore uses her grandfather, or father, to get her point across. One of the main reasons I think she does this is because she viewed her grandfather as a traditional man in that time period. Her grandfather probably viewed women quite like many other men did during that time. Women were expected to be subservient to men and although Moore probably could not remember if this is how her grandfather felt, she probably assumed that he did since he was very old-fashioned.

Like I mentioned earlier, in both poems it is hard to say what Marianne Moore agrees with when she is writing. In "No Swan So Fine" she describes two kinds of swans; one that is living and one that is placed in a candelabrum. The swan that is living is described as having a

dark complexion, a scornful and distrustful face, and gangly legs: "...with swart blind look askance and gondoliering legs..." (Moore, 19). This is the exact opposite of what we view as a beautiful swan looking like. The swan in the candelabrum is described as, "chintz china one with fawn-brown eyes and tooth gold collar...cockscorn-tinted buttons, dahlias, sea-urchins, and everlastings" (19). When Moore describes this swan we get a beautiful picture in our minds of this gorgeous swan placed in the candelabrum.

After looking at the detail Moore places on both of these swans, it is hard to tell which one she prefers. Although the living swan is ugly, it still gets to experience life. At the same time though the beautiful swan has a collar and is forced to the candelabrum no matter how much beauty it possesses. It is far more beautiful than the living swan, but that doesn't seem to matter because it will never experience the beauty of life. This is one question that Moore leaves the reader with. After much research I would have to say that Moore values the swan that gets to experience life far more than the one who possesses beauty. I came to this conclusion because the poem is mainly about honoring and celebrating the king's life. The poem is also in memory of George Saintsbury's late friend Lord Balfour. Also, although Marianne Moore placed a high value on art and the beauty it portrayed, I don't think she was someone who would place a higher value on that than one's own life. Overall, one can come to a conclusion about what Moore may have been trying to say, but the way she describes each swan in this poem makes it hard to decide which one she saw more beauty in, or which one was, "more fine."

In "Silence," Marianne Moore describes two scenarios: practicing silence and not practicing silence. From what I have studied about Moore, it is hard for me to think that she would be okay with practicing silence and restraint. Moore was very untraditional when it came to women's roles, so I think for her to practice silence would be absurd. However, the way she

goes about describing this silence in her poem almost makes it sound like she has practiced it before. She is very descriptive and this makes it sound like it is coming from a personal experience. However, even though her writing sounds very real, knowing some background on Marianne Moore makes this very hard to believe. Either way it is hard for a reader to tell which side Marianne Moore stands on. The following lines from her poem make me believe this: “The deepest feeling always shows itself in silence; not in silence, but restraint” (Moore, 91). When she goes back and says not silence but restraint, it makes me think she has felt this way before.

Both of these poems come from a personal experience. “No Swan So Fine” comes from an article Moore clipped out of a paper about Lord Balfour passing away. Lord Balfour was a good friend of George Saintsbury and so this makes the poem personal to Moore. Also, the fact that Moore would write a poem about this man means that his death had to have an impact on her life.

“Silence” relates to Moore’s life on an even more personal note. Even though Moore says, “My father used to say,” (91) she more than likely is not talking about her father or her grandfather. However, this is not to say that her grandfather never told her to practice silence. Her grandfather died when she was seven, so up until that point the silence he told her to practice was more than likely just because he wanted her to be quiet. Young girls can usually be very loud and have shrill voices. Because of this I can see her grandfather, or anyone around her for that matter, telling her to be quiet. In this poem, Moore takes this experience and applies it to a much broader and political level. Either way, the poem still has a personal experience that is related to it in one way or another.

Views On Women

Although Marianne Moore and William Carlos Williams shared many things in common, their views on women were one place where they did not see eye to eye. William Carlos Williams wrote many poems about women and how he viewed them. In some of his poems, but not all, he demeans women and makes them come across as an object more so than a person. However, there are other poems by him where he puts women on a pedestal. As a pediatrician he came into contact with women on a daily basis. Because of his interactions with them, he became fascinated with both their bodies, and the fact that they could produce life. An example of this comes from the poem "Portrait of a Lady." Within this poem he describes women as having thighs that look like apple trees, knees like the southern breeze, and ankles that are like tall grass. William Carlos Williams' daily interactions with women helped him become very intimate with their bodies and this helped him describe them within his poems.

We know that Williams had an affair on his wife so obviously he did not have a great deal of respect for her, or his mistress. Overall, I think Williams liked how he felt power over women. When pregnant women would go to him they were under his control as a doctor and I think he liked how they relied on him. I also think he was fascinated with them and felt some level of jealousy towards these women because they could bring life into the world and all he could do was help in the process. Several poems by Williams that discuss women are the following: "Young Housewife," "Portrait of a Lady," and "Queen Anne's-Lace." All of these, and many more, portray William Carlos Williams' views on women.

Marianne Moore, being what one would consider an untraditional woman, had a very high respect for women. She did not view them as less superior than men, but instead more as

equals. Her and her mother both fought toward giving women the right to vote so she obviously felt that women were at a disadvantage compared to men. Most women in her time would do whatever they were told; however, Marianne Moore was not someone to sit back and let some man take control of her life. Therefore, she used her words to give herself and other women a voice. As you can see from the two poems I described, she was a very educated and bright woman.

After describing both William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore, it is obvious where their differences are when it comes to describing women. Although I think Williams has respect for women, he does not give them enough credit like Marianne Moore does. His writing comes off as more of an obsession than anything else, and the fact that he is a doctor helps him get away with this.

In conclusion, “No Swan So Fine” and “Silence” share several characteristics in common. They both portray many of the ideals and characteristics that Marianne Moore stood for. Moore’s life is directly related with these poems and many of her common characteristics that show up in her writing show up in these two poems. At first I did not think these poems had anything in common, but once I started to compare my research between the two I realized they were more similar than their surface would appear. I enjoyed researching both these poems because they helped me learn a great deal about Marianne Moore’s past. Although I did not research any of William Carlos Williams’ poems in great depth, it was interesting to look at how his views toward women and Marianne’s views towards women differed.

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