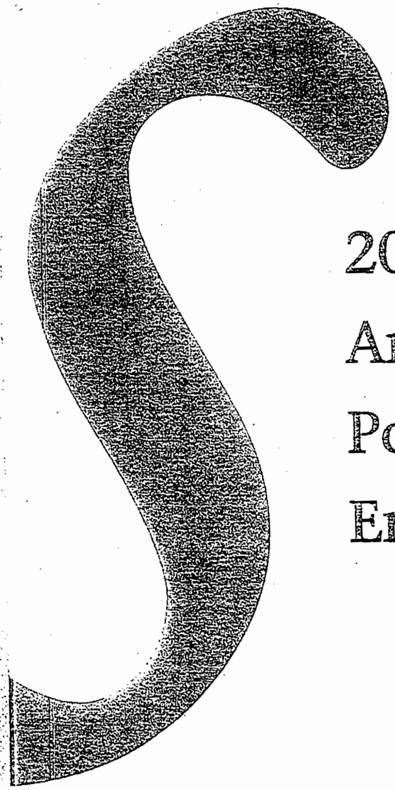
printemps 2002
n° 12

sources

Revue d'études anglophones



20th-Century American Women's Poetics of Engagement

Université d'Orléans

Les articles adressés à *Sources* seront anonymement soumis à deux rapporteurs. Les rapports, également anonymes, seront communiqués aux auteurs. Les articles proposés devront être adressés (en trois exemplaires aux normes MLA + résumé de trois cents signes en anglais si l'article est en français, en français si l'article est en anglais) à :
Sources – Revue d'études anglophones, Université d'Orléans, Faculté des Lettres, rue de Tours – 45072 Orléans Cedex.

Articles sent to Sources *will be submitted anonymously to two readers, whose anonymous reports will be sent to authors. Authors should send three copies (MLA style sheet) and a summary in French to:*
Sources – Revue d'études anglophones, *Université d'Orléans, Faculté des Lettres, rue de Tours – 45072 Orléans Cedex.*

Sources est une publication des Éditions Paradigme
paraissant à l'initiative et avec le soutien de l'Université d'Orléans

Dépot légal :
Deuxième trimestre 2002
ISSN : 1276-8693

Ce pictogramme mérite une explication. Son objet est d'alerter le lecteur sur la menace que représente pour l'avenir de l'écrit, particulièrement dans le domaine de l'édition technique et universitaire, le développement massif du photocopillage.
Le Code de la propriété intellectuelle du 1er juillet 1992 interdit en effet expressément la photocopie à usage collectif sans autorisation des ayants droit. Or, cette pratique s'est généralisée dans les établissements d'enseignement supérieur, provoquant une baisse brutale des achats de livres et de revues, au point que la possibilité même pour les auteurs de créer des œuvres nouvelles et de les faire éditer correctement est aujourd'hui menacée.

DANGER
PHOTOCOPILLAGE

Nous rappelons donc que toute reproduction, partielle ou totale, de la présente publication est interdite sans autorisation du Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC, 3 rue Hautefeuille, 75006 Paris).

© *Paradigme*, Orléans, 2002

Tous droits de traduction, d'adaptation et de reproduction, par tous procédés, réservés pour tous pays

Sommaire/*Contents*

I. 20th-Century American Women's Poetics of Engagement

7 **Introduction** — Cristina Giorcelli, Cristanne Miller, Shira Wolosky
11 **Charlotte Gilman's Public Poetry** — Shira Wolosky
29 **Marianne Moore and a Poetry of Hebrew (Protestant) Prophecy** — Cristanne Miller
48 **Finding Her Yiddish Voice: Kadya Molodowsky in America** — Kathryn Hellerstein
69 **"The Servant-Girl at Emmaus (After a Painting by Velazquez)": Denise Levertov's Religious Ekphrasis** — Cristina Giorcelli
93 **Lineage/Language: Susan Howe's Poetic History** — Antoine Cazé
106 **"A Hyphenated Poet":** An Interview with Shirley Kaufman — by Lisa Katz
123 **"ex / Creme / ental /eaT / ing":** An Interview with Caroline Bergvall — by Marjorie Perloff

II. Voix/*Voices*

139 **A Poem on the Indian Removal** — William Jay Smith
142 **"Habitations"** — Michael Blumenthal

III. Comptes rendus/*Reviews*

147 **Trois livres sur le jazz** — Éric Gonzalez
153 **"Bonnes feuilles" : Denis-Constant Martin, Olivier Roueff, *La France du jazz. Musique, modernité et politique dans la première moitié du XXe siècle***
159 **Achmat Dangor, *Bitter Fruit* ; Zoë Wicomb, *David's Story*** — Jean-Pierre Richard

3. Some activities seem to cross between domestic/non-domestic, such as temperance, which also imposed on women and children both poverty and violence; and moral reform, the efforts to address problems with prostitution.
4. This is almost all she says about her second marriage in *The Living of Charlotte Gilman* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), always vigilant against sentiment.
5. Her doctor, Weil Mitchell, was famous for his treatment of female hysteria, the psycho-social epidemic of Victorian times whose current analogue is anorexia. This treatment included complete incarceration in bed, to be spoon-fed crême all day, with all intellectual exertion, including reading or writing, forbidden—a regime, as Gilman put it, which nearly drove her into irreversible insanity. Part of her motive in writing "The Yellow Wallpaper" was to denounce this rest cure. A superb discussion of nineteenth-century hysteria can be found in Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).
6. For discussion of the switch into formalist closure, see Shira Wolosky, "Santayana and Harvard Formalism," *Raritan* 18.4 (Spring 1999): 51-67; also *Poetry and Public Discourse, The Cambridge History of American Literature* 3, forthcoming.
7. Shirley and Edwin Ardener, in *Perceiving Women* (London: Malaby Press, 1975). These models are extremely fruitful in reading and explicating literature, and particularly the sort of rhetorical writing that is fundamental to Gilman's art.
8. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoievsky's Poetics*, tr. C. Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 184.
9. Ruth Bloch, "Virtue in Revolutionary America," *Signs* 13.1 (1987): 38, 56-57.
10. On the turn from nineteenth- into twentieth-century feminism, see Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).
11. A considerable part of Charlotte Gilman's verse has been collected in *In This Our World* (NY: Arno Press, 1974 reprint of 1899 edition by Small, Maynard of Boston); and *The Later Poetry of Charlotte Gilman*, ed. Denise D. Knight, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996). Here cited as *World* and *LP*, followed by page number.
12. On the relation between the double standard and women as property, see Sir Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20.2 (April 1959): 195-216
13. On the functions and meanings of the corset, see Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight, op. cit.*
14. Gilman, *With Her in Ourland, Utopian Novels*, ed. Minna Doskow (Teaneck, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999); *The Home* (NY: Charlton Co., 1910).
15. For discussion of the republican tradition, see J. A. G. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1992) and *Capitalism and a New Social Order* (NY: New York University Press, 1984). For a specific discussion of women in this tradition, see Ruth Bloch.

Marianne Moore and a Poetry of Hebrew (Protestant) Prophecy

Cristanne MILLER*
Pomona College

While much has been written about the conjunctions of Judaism and Modernism for Jewish writers and thinkers, there has been no attention to the parallel fact that reading poetic prophecy of the Hebrew Bible stimulated American Protestant Marianne Moore's development of her modernist poetic. As I will argue, the ethical, factual, and public aspects of Moore's poetic, frequently remarked in Moore criticism, were authorized and in part stimulated by her reading of Hebrew poetry, through the guidance of current Protestant scholarship. Specifically, several of her poems written between 1914 and 1924 present Hebrew poet-prophecy as a model both for her stance as ethical speaker addressing issues of contemporary public concern and, secondarily, for the anti-lyrical, prosaic, descriptive, but highly structured and cadenced forms of her poetry.[1] Similarly, Moore's characteristic indirection in embedding a political position in the apparent statement of fact takes early form in her claims for Hebraic poetry. Because most of these poems were dropped from collections of her work after 1924, it has been difficult to see the significance of this model to her mature work. Moore consistently represents Biblical verse as "Hebraic": in other words, unlike previous generations of Christians, she does not claim the Christian Bible's "Old Testament" as "Christian," or as belonging to an Anglo-American tradition—as well she might, given her reliance on English translations in Christian Bibles. Instead, by insisting on the foreignness of such poetry, Moore opposes the parochialisms of fundamentalist Protestant, Anglo-Saxon, and Victorian pieties. Moore uses the factual marker of the word "Hebrew" to stand for an entire set of implied principles and positions, celebrating a non-Western, non-Christian ancient language and tradition as key to her poetic.

---

* Cristanne Miller is W. M. Keck Distinguished Service Professor of American literature at Pomona College. She has authored *Emily Dickinson: A Poet's Grammar* (Harvard, 1987), *Comic Power in Emily Dickinson* (with Suzanne Juhasz and Martha Nell Smith, University of Texas Press, 1993), *Marianne Moore: Questions of Authority* (Harvard, 1995), and is currently completing a book-length project called "Women Shaping Modernism: Nation, Gender, Poetry." She also co-edited *Selected Letters of Marianne Moore* (with Bonnie Costello and Celeste Goodridge, Knopf, 1997). All unpublished material from Moore's letters and notebooks is quoted with the permission of Marianne Craig Moore, the Moore estate literary executor, and the Rosenbach Museum and Library, which houses the Moore archive.

Previous scholarship on Moore and her religion focuses on the poet in relation to Calvinism, as represented by colonial Puritan writings and Jonathan Edwards or by seventeenth-century British poets like Herbert and Donne—implying that Protestantism did not change significantly between the composition of those texts and Moore's life. Moreover, this criticism sees the poet's views as identical to those of her mother and brother, hence regards especially her mother's piety as representing Moore. In contrast, I see Moore not as a "devout" and strict adherent to a particular creed but as a product of turn-of-the-twentieth-century liberal Protestantism, which develops out of but is in no sense identical to earlier Calvinism or even earlier Presbyterianism. Mary Warner Moore's rhetoric of Christian battle and concept of the family as "a Peculiar people," "a people *set apart* . . . [with] a mission in the world," developed in the post-Civil War era, cannot be accepted wholesale as Moore's own.[2] The poet indeed shares with her family a deep and abiding faith in a God defined by Christianity, and she adopts the language of armor and battle, but to different purposes. Moore develops her poetic immediately preceding and in the early years of World War I, when the world is literally embattled, and war is a frequent topic of her early poetry; moreover, she sees herself as having a charge to speak without conceiving of either her poetry or herself as having a Christian "mission." Moore herself develops these distinctions during the 1910s by adopting elements of her interpretation of Hebraic prophetic poetry for her own poetic.

A conjunction of factors came together in the year 1914 intensifying Moore's focus both on writing poetry and on the question of what it meant to be a poet. First, from March until December of 1914, Moore attended a Bible study class in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, taught by Edwin H. Kellogg, the Moore family's Presbyterian minister.[3] The exact material discussed in the class is now unknown, but Moore's notes indicate that her primary interest focused on the forms of Biblical or Hebrew poetry, and generally on how to read the "Old Testament" or Hebrew Bible. These classes offered Moore information on the structures of the Hebrew language and on the ways current scholarship interpreted Biblical texts, within a progressive Christian context.[4] Second, in September of 1914, Moore lost her job teaching at the Carlisle Indian School, when the department in which she taught was disbanded.[5] No longer occupied with a full-time job, Moore turned with greater seriousness than ever to the writing of poetry. On the day her first poems were accepted for publication, her mother wrote, "You must not forget *July 6, 1914!* We must set up a little Arc de Triumph some where" (sic., RML VI:20.07).[6]

Finally, 1914 marks the beginning of World War I. This international political development was constantly in the minds of the Moore family. Despite U.S. general isolation from events in Europe and Moore's own relative isolation in small-town central Pennsylvania, in September and October, she refers to writing war poems and, later in October, her mother indicates her intent to give to the "American Association in Red Cross work in Paris": "We have little to do *with*; but no man can go scot free in as terrible a world anguish as is now upon us."[7] In a mock newspaper Moore issues in November, one headline announces "Common Sense on The War," and concludes with a Swiftian satire, written under her family nickname, "Rat": "The Rat says the only way to rout the aggressor, is to kill all the female rats within the boundaries of the demon bitten territory, but to kill these rats would be horrible, i.e., to kill any rat is horrible and the whole war is an outrage."[8] The Moore family's currency in and concern for international politics is similarly marked by Marianne's comment in an earlier letter to Warner that she had "informed Mole [their mother] today that they were thinking of reestablishing the Jews in Palestine but that the Jews weren't sure they wanted to go . . . 'Well,' said Mole, 'how would you feel if you were told you would have to collect your possessions and set sail for Ireland tomorrow?'" (22 January 1914; RML VI.20.02). Between their private economic concerns at losing a substantial salary, ongoing concerns about family health, questions about Warner's ministerial career, the uncertainty of Marianne's success as a poet, and a world in flux and at war, the Moores were highly conscious of the precarious instability of their lives and of life generally. Moore came to poetic maturity with a well-developed and concrete sense of one's responsibility to know and respond at least through commentary to familial, national, and international crisis and instability.

Knowledge of the Bible was nothing new for Moore in 1914, and must be understood in a broad historical context. With both a maternal grandfather and a brother who were ministers and a mother whose letters frequently read like sermons, Moore grew up in an atmosphere where familiarity with Christian precepts and scripture was taken for granted. On Sundays, the Moore family attended church and eschewed work and social engagements, a practice the poet maintained even after her mother's death; Moore at least once even taught Sunday school.[9] This background has encouraged some critics to link her strait-laced behavior with a reductive sense of Christian morality, and even prudery: Moore did not smoke, drank moderately, disapproved of casual references to bodily functions, never married and apparently never had a sexual liaison, and disliked at least some visual representations of nudity—arguably the latter for feminist reasons.[10] While Moore's moral sense was unquestionably fostered by her religious upbringing, this upbringing was itself part of a widespread contemporary movement towards liberal, non-doctrinaire religious commitment. According to church historian Jerald C. Brauer, turn-of-the-century American clerical and lay concern with the social problems produced by immigration, rapid industrialization, and the huge economic disparities of the late nineteenth-century produced a socially focused, liberal orientation that dominated especially northern Protestant denominations through the mid-twentieth century. Protestantism, in short, was affected by and helped to define the Progressive Era, just like other social and political institutions. For example, at the 1908 founding of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, joining most major Protestant denominations, the basic point of unification was a desire for "applied Christianity" against "greed, war, and selfishness": "Ignorance was to be overcome by knowledge, selfishness was to be conquered by service, and war was to be blotted out by fellowship . . . Social activity was the mark of the hour."[11] Moore's Christianity partakes in precisely this American Protestant "Social Gospel," not in attachment to a particular theology or strict religious belief. It is in sync with but does not determine her behavioral propriety, and it significantly intersects with her social and aesthetic politics. Moore's church participation and Christian belief was a spur to social engagement and pluralist thought, not a restrictive barrier.

Moore's letters and notebooks abundantly document her lack of dogmatism and piety. Especially when in her teens and twenties, Moore differentiated herself from her mother and brother in terms of religious enthusiasm: as she writes Warner on August 31, 1916, immediately before moving into his parsonage in Chatham, New Jersey: "We all know that Mr. Rat has not such a predilection for buildings with steeples as for buildings of latter and more informal club house type . . ." (RML VI.22.09). In the notebook she kept while taking the Bible study class, she wrote: "Protestantism[:] a belief in no institution or creed which is not in a constant process of disintegr[ation?], reconstruction."[12] Similarly, she records herself in a conversation notebook as saying to Reverend Kellogg: "I see not a whit more reason in extant Protestantism than in Roman Catholicism"—a statement that would have shocked fundamentalist Protestants in an era of Ku Klux Klan persecution of Catholics as well as of African Americans and Jews (RML VII.10.06, p. 18). On the other hand, this ecumenical stance was at least partly shared in her family; in the same notebook, she quotes her mother as saying: "I have been afflicted with a wide intellectual sympathy with every type of creed and belief under the sun but that of these people to whom in God's grace I have been appointed to minister—hard shelled Presbyterianism" (RML VII.10.06, p. 21).[13]

In *The Savage's Romance*, John M. Slatin initiated the now widely held assumption that Moore's turn to Hebrew poetry is analogous to other modernist poets' use of ancient, non-Western traditions as a source of authority and inspiration—for example, Pound's turn to Chinese, Eliot's to Indian culture and religion, H.D.'s to Greek, or Amy Lowell's to the cultures of China and Japan.[14] Indeed Moore writes Pound in 1919 that the "minor prophets" are "so far as I know" among the few "direct influences bearing on my work."[15] Furthermore, in a 1926 essay on "'New' Poetry Since 1912," Moore comments that "new poetry seems to have its counterpart in the poetry of the past—in Hebrew poetry, Greek poetry, Chinese poetry."[16] Yet Chinese culture and the Chinese people, for example, did not have the immediate political and social resonance for Pound, Lowell, Williams or others as Judaism and Jewish people did for Moore, especially once she began spending substantial time in New York, in 1916. China remained exotic, while Jews in America were increasingly an ordinary aspect of daily life to anyone living in the urban northeast.[17] Equally important, there is no comparable link of spiritual heritage in modernist use of Chinese rhythms or characters, as there was for Moore in Hebrew poetry.

Jewish prophet-poets appear most prominently in Moore's early poems dealing with war or with the subject of poetry itself—the two topics most urgently on her mind during this period. Almost certainly written in 1914, "Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel" is typical in combining the two topics. This poem states that the noise of war overwhelms any pacifist voice yet implies that the poet must speak out against it:

> *Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel,*
> Bloodshed and Strife are not of God;
>
> *What is war*
> *For;*
> *Is it not a sore*
> *On this life's body?*
>
> *Yes? Although*
> *So*
> *Long as men will go*
> *To battle fighting*
>
> *With gun-shot*
> *What*
> *Argument will not*
> *Fail of a hearing!* (The Lantern, *23 (Spring 1915): 60)*[18]

Because these four prophets each spoke against the idea of divinely mandated warfare, and generally against violence, the poem seems to summarize their ideas as a single composite speech: "Bloodshed and Strife are not of God."[19] Structurally, however, the poem seems to speak *to* the prophets—especially as implied by the questioning "yes?" of stanza two, as though the poet calls them to confirm *her* claim. In either case, Moore places herself as a speaker among them. Their messages are the same—that war is "a sore / on this life's body"—but the modern technology of "gunshot" makes the twentieth-century poet's argument against such catastrophic killing even more necessary, if also more hopeless. By allying her voice with that of poet-prophets, Moore expresses her felt need for the poet to speak out, claiming the authority of a tradition of socially responsible poetic speech.

Moore speaks with less certainty about war in a 1924 poem, perhaps revealing her conviction that the U.S. was right to enter World War I despite war's horrors.[20] The title quotes Isaiah 9:10: "The Bricks are Fallen Down, We Will Build with Hewn Stones. The Sycamores are Cut Down, We Will Change to Cedars":

In what sense shall we be able to
secure to ourselves peace and do as they did—
who, when they were not able to rid
themselves of war, cast out fear?
They did not say: "We shall not be brought
into subjection by the naughtiness of the sea;
though we have 'defeated ourselves
with false balances' and laid weapons in the scale,
glory shall spring from in-glory; hail,
flood, earthquake, and famine shall
not intimidate us nor shake the
foundations of our inalienable energy." (Observations *(1924): 24)*

Speaking as for a community in this poem, Moore contrasts her "we" to Biblical Jews. By making up what the poem claims "they did not say," she may even imply that this is what the U.S. does say about itself: "we" can be neither beaten nor intimidated. Such arrogance, Moore implies, is wrong. One should not pronounce defeat impossible but learn from Isaiah to face defeat with flexibility. The Israelites claimed if bricks were unavailable, they would hew stones: they would meet any disaster by turning to alternate means. Moore seems both to admire this resilience and to condemn its pride. Perhaps she published this poem only once because of its uncertainties of position and tone. "Hail / flood, earthquake, and famine" should intimidate any reasonable person or land, she implies. Like the once too-proud Israel, America needs to learn not to "'defeat [itself] with false balances' and laid weapons in the scale." In this sense, Moore is like Isaiah in warning the U.S. not to assume it can overcome any disaster by appropriating new resources—from bricks to stones. And yet, she recommends Israel's equally strong-minded "cast[ing] out of fear." For the purposes of my argument, most significant here is Moore's use of Isaiah's ethical and political advice to Israel to comment indirectly on the U.S. present.

On December 9, 1914 Moore writes in her religion class notebook: "There aren't 2 meanings in the prophecy—They are one, the historical and the spiritual. There is no such thing as a 'meaning' without a meaner"; one should "avoid the idea of prophecy as pre-diction. Prophecy is to speak forth the word of God to living men." This understanding of prophecy is fundamental to liberal Protestant scholarship. Smith, for example, calls it "vulgar" to identify prophecy with prediction, and insists that the "first duty of every" student is to "get rid of this idea" (*Book of the Twelve* 11).[21] According to Smith, the biblical prophets were not theologians, philosophers, or soothsayers but men who declared "the character and will of God" through explicit reference to immediate "political and ethical" issues (13); they combined "the care of souls with political insight and vigilance for the national interests" (27). In her early poems, Moore experiments with what it means to make large claims on the basis of her own limited judgment, or to be a "meaner" with "meanings," acknowledging personal perspective while eschewing the egocentric narrowness of mere opinion or feeling.

Consequently, Moore's poems participate in what she understands as both ancient Hebrew and contemporary Protestant questioning of what it means to claim the voice of prophecy—for her figured as the authority of the poet. For a female poet at the turn of the twentieth century, it was more than usually difficult to establish a signature, or speaking position.[22] To whom was she writing, in what modes, and—a question still dominating the lyric in the 1910s—in what voice(s)? While a fundamentalist reading of prophecy as God-given language would make Moore's use of such a model heretical, her liberal and historicist understanding has the opposite effect: in Hebraic verse, she reads urgent and significant grappling with the question of how to speak persuasively to people uninclined to hear an alert, ethical observer. According to Smith, the prophet's duty is to "start from the facts of his own day and speak first to his contemporaries." Prophets stress "justice and equity," enforcing religious observances "most frequently for social ends, or with regard to the interests of the poorer classes of the community"; they "liberate" individuals from "a *merely* national religion" by bringing them to understand their participation in an expanded or international community. Moreover, they help to shape such awareness through insistence that religious duty demands not only love of God but also "of thy neighbour as thyself."[23]

Prophecy, in this interpretation and as Moore understood it, was based on religious belief but dealt with secular issues of the public political world. Hence devotion to one's God made honest expression a necessity, not a choice.

Moore may also have been attracted to Hebrew prophecy because much of it was written in verse, and its verse forms (again, as interpreted by Protestant commentators) emphasized principles Moore had been coming to independently. As she understood it, speaking in the mode of prophecy constituted an attempt to pitch one's language beyond the merely personal, to regard one's self as the historical shaper of language but not a genius-creator, or "poet." Indeed, writes Smith, "Those who among the Hebrews correspond to the Aryan poets call themselves singers, minstrels, shepherds of words, comparers, bewailers, and the like—anything but makers. The verbs which describe their functions express not the power of creation but the capacity for impression: not the art of building or of ornament so much as the process of outpouring and the spirit of urgency."[24] Perhaps for similar reasons, or even following this model, Moore herself rejected the title of "poet" as having too much privilege and authority for her "observations," as she titled her own first book publication. What she wrote could be called "poetry," she explained, only because "there is no other category in which to put" it; she instead calls her poems "experiments in rhythm, or exercises in composition."[25] As Moore puts it in essays, what is important in poetry "is to see the vision and not deny it"; "writing is difficult—at least it is for me . . . [but] 'our salvation is urgency. That saves us . . . verbal felicity is the fruit of ardor, of diligence, and of refusing to be false'" (*CPr* 426, 436, 437). To be a prophet-poet is to attempt to speak truthfully about the world as one sees it, "to care and admit that we do," not to have any guarantee of God-given recognition or success (*CPr* 425).

In this sense, Moore's poetic is much closer to a Hebraic than to a Calvinist model: her concern is not with the moral virtue of a speaker or with "warfare between the forces of self-effacement and self-assertion, with which the Puritans were obsessed" (Merrin 99). Hebrew prophecy offers her a mode divorced from Calvinist self-examination, privileging not her faith or vision or private relation to God but the necessity to speak publicly for what one believes is right. Because the Hebraic model, while familiar to Moore, was more distant than that of Christian mission or the drama of sin and redemption, it may also have allowed her somewhat greater latitude in combining the urgency of compelled speech with the humor of sympathetic reflection about human foibles and dislikes—as in the playful self-reference of "To an Intra-Mural Rat" (1915) or the puns of "To a Steam Roller" making the "you" of the poem a "sparkling chip[] . . . crushed down to the level of the parent block" (*The Egoist* October 1915, Schulze 165-168). While humor is hardly a characteristic of biblical prophecy, its dense punning textures and frequent use of synecdoche create rich possibility for imaginative fantasy, even in the most exalted passages—for example, when Isaiah rebukes the Israelites for their oppression of each other: "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope" (5.18). Such language has a kind of extravagance, as well as emphasizing the need for a people to, as it were, pull together to overcome both national aggression and individual selfishness. Moore's own punning and wryly humorous reflection may also have parallels here.

As Moore rhymes in "That Harp You Play So Well," "art" without "heart" is useless. This poem begins full of praise: "Oh David, if I had / Your power, I should be glad— / In harping, with the sling, / In patient reasoning!"[26] Power and energy like David's have "wrought / Stout continents of thought." Yet without the attribute of sympathy, prophecy and power "will fail":

But, David, if the heart
Be brass, what boots the art
Of exorcising wrong,
Of harping to a song?

The scepter and the ring
And every royal thing
Will fail. Grief's lustiness
Must cure that harp's distress. (last two stanzas)

While envying David's "power" manifested in multiple forms, Moore obliquely criticizes his lack of sympathy (for Bathsheba, and the death of her child?), thereby also suggesting his inadequacy as a model. Indeed, in her own verse, Moore does not adopt the characteristics she admires as David's: her verse is not soothingly lovely in harp-like, or traditionally lyric, form; it does not challenge enemies directly, as with "a sling," and does not excel in "patient reasoning," preferring the imaginative leaps of metonymic and idiosyncratic observation or, later, scientific detail. Moore constructs for herself a colloquial, anti-lyrical mode. On the other hand, Moore is like the young David—as poet and as relatively unarmed individual willing to face "Goliath," or the largest problems and issues of her day, albeit indirectly.[27]

The prophet Habakkuk, in contrast, seems adequately to represent Moore's poetic goals. In a 1915 poem referring in its notes to Reverend Kellogg and, apparently, material from his classes, Moore presents herself as having been "goaded" into this recognition. First titled with a long proposition distinguishing the future from the present, in 1924 Moore retitled the poem "The Past is the Present," thereby marking even more clearly the speaker's link to the poet-prophet:[28]

If external action is effete
And rhyme is outmoded,
I shall revert to you,
Habakkuk, as on a recent occasion I was goaded
into doing, by XY, who was speaking of unrhymed verse.

This man said—I think that I repeat
His identical words:
"Hebrew poetry is
prose with a sort of heightened consciousness. 'Ecstasy affords
the occasion and expediency determines the form'."

As John Slatin points out, Moore's opening "if" leaves uncertain whether or not rhyme is in fact "outmoded" or action "effete," but the poem is unequivocal in presenting Habakkuk as a model for expression that is neither.[29] At the same time, Moore does not slavishly follow this model. While her verse certainly blurs the boundaries of prose and poetry in following the syntactic rhythms of prose, it maintains both rhyme and highly constructed stanzaic verse structures. The tension of the extended and complex syntax against the artifice of relatively short, syllabic and rhyming lines may be "expedient," but it is not simply so. On the other hand, Moore is following Hebrew poetic practice in the grammatical balance of her propositions and in striving not for poetic effect but "heightened consciousness"; her artifice intensifies her expression without poeticizing it. This balance of formal, patterned intensity, spontaneous elements of colloquial responsiveness, and "prosaic" syntax characterizes Moore's mature form.[30]

"The Past is the Present" is also significant in its implied identification of another aspect of Moore's mature poetic. It is indirect in its claims and initially confusing: for example, because rhyme had hardly been discarded in 1914, even by those who were to become the most innovative of modernist poets, and because "external action" cannot in all cases be considered "effete" regardless of how one defines these three slippery words, the opening "if" of the poem seems more like a hedge than a condition. Similarly, the speaker says "I shall revert to you" as a future conditional event even at the moment of in fact turning to Habakkuk in her poem. Yet to the extent that this poem serves as a manifesto of sorts for the young poet, its indirections and uncertainties function as statements of principle.[31] Smith's *Book of the Twelve Prophets* declares that Habakkuk introduced speculation into the field of Jewish prophecy; he was the first to acknowledge that his "revelation is baffled by experience" (*Book of the Twelve* II:131).

Moore would also have been attracted to Habakkuk by Smith's (and perhaps Kellogg's) repeated insistence on the "exquisite" and "brilliant" qualities of his poetry; Smith calls Habakkuk not only a real prophet but "a real poet" (*Book of the Twelve* II: 138, 149, 127). The power of his verse lies not in lyric sonorities but in strong cadences, striking figures of speech, forceful prosaic rhythms marshaled in parallel structure. For example, in Smith's rendering, Habakkuk describes the heathen: "Fleeter than leopards their steeds, / Swifter than night-wolves. / Their horsemen leap from afar; / They swoop like the eagle a-haste to devour" (I:8). In such passages of crescendoing intensity, Habakkuk constructs a powerful series of parallels, leading to a climactic reversal contrasting physical strength to the eternity of God's time: "But doomed are those whose own strength is their god!" In other passages he authorizes a personal stance of uncertainty: "Is it with hills Jehovah is wroth? / Is Thine anger with rivers? . . . Mountains see Thee and writhe . . . I have heard, and my heart shakes" (3:8. 16). Habakkuk, then, authorizes both an artistically enviable prosaic rhythm in verse and a poetic stance of uncertainty; his poems openly acknowledge their lack of inspired or revealed truth by addressing questions to, rather than speaking for, God. Like Habakkuk, Moore combines the "ecstasy" of "occasion" or lived historical moment with the "expediency" of her own anti-lyrical, syntactically prosaic forms and questioning, anti-authoritative mode.

Moore demonstrates this speculative, questioning stance in "Feed Me, Also, River God" (1916). Using her first line as a title, the speaker cries "Feed Me . . . Lest by diminished vitality and abated / Vigilance, I become food for crocodiles—for that quicksand / Of gluttony which is legion. It is there—close at hand." Unlike the Israelites who in their pride said "'the bricks are fallen down, we will / Build with hewn stone, the sycamores are cut down, we will change to / Cedars,'" the speaker claims not to be "ambitious"; she cannot "match . . . their ability to catch // Up with arrested prosperity." "I am not like / Them, indefatigable," she bluntly concludes—"but if you are a god you will / Not discriminate against me."[32] This dramatic monologue quotes not from Habakkuk but from three passages of Isaiah: one representing God as controller of waters—hence the "river god" of the title; one describing the Israelites' hunger and rage against God while in their exodus; and one berating them for "pride and stoutness of heart."[33] The speaker is not "indefatigable" or ambitious like the Israelites, she claims.[34] Yet she has a pride of her own and, on her lesser level, she demands nourishment, challenging God not to "discriminate" against her. Similarly, like Isaiah, and unlike the Israelites, she fears her own "gluttony": if she is not "fed" she may fall prey to the "crocodile" of her own weakness, a desire to see God only as that which can answer her selfish needs or desire. Paradoxically, then, she asks to be fed in order that she not succumb to selfish gluttony. This request is simultaneously proud and humble. Like Isaiah, she will not deal with a god who is satisfied with ritual homage: "if you may fulfill / None but prayers dressed / As gifts in return for your own gifts—disregard the request," the poem concludes.[35] Her verbs are imperative; she reminds the deity of a more chosen people yet prefers no "gift" given under false pretences. At the same time, she acknowledges her weakness in asking for aid against her own potentially gluttonous desire.

Moore never called herself a prophet and did not think of herself as one. As "Feed Me, Also, River God" indicates, neither did she think of herself as having a privileged perspective from which to judge the behavior of her peers. Although her mother uses the language of Calvinist election, Moore does not. When asked "what distinguished her as a poet from the ordinary man," Moore responded "Nothing."[36] Like the prophets, Moore speaks to her own people, those with whom she identifies herself, even when using a tone of impatience, anger, or irony—all common tones in the early poems. This is not the stance of Calvinist "mission," with its imperative to bring the light of Christianity or of higher moral behavior to the heathen. "Nothing" distinguishes her except that she feels compelled to speak—a stance of simultaneous modesty and authority made viable by her liberal Protestant reading of the Hebrew prophets. Like prophecy for them, poetry for her provided an active means of exploring fundamental values and understandings, not a platform for pronouncing truths.

According to Arthur Cohen's analysis of Judaism and modernism, the modernist position is one of despair. In its eyes, "the estate of prophecy" is at best "precarious"; "the modern world cannot bear that the man of spirit should also be the one who can interpret and communicate himself" or that the prophet also be the poet. Cohen's critique of modernism is that in it "something has been lost, values have been elided, . . . vital connections of human creativity to the eternal orders of the universe . . . have been pushed aside" (441, 439). One thinks easily of Jewish and Christian thinkers who found religion antithetical to modernity—Marx, Mathew Arnold, Nietzsche, Freud. Moore refuses to let those vital connections be "lost," to split the poet from the prophet. It is perhaps because of her recognition of the potential for despair in modern culture—especially given the international precariousness of war, massive emigrations, and rising xenophobic nationalisms—that Moore "revert[s]" to Hebrew prophets, finding there interpretive and engaged expression closer to her sense of poetry's purpose than was that of many of her peers. Traditional Judaism, like American Protestantism, values truth above beauty; as the preface to the 1640 Bay Psalm Book reminds, "God's Altar needs not our polishing." Cohen describes "truth" in the Jewish tradition as having not "the stamp of the ego . . . but rather the image of God which is of an altogether different order of individuality and expression" (440).

Moore would also have found Hebraic prophecy's perceived attention to the immediate contemporary world analogous to her peers' new formulations for poetry. In her religion notebook, she refers to Hebrew "incapacity for abstraction," continuing: "couldn't philosophize, wasn't their genius." Moore perhaps marks some discomfort with the implied prejudice of this common portrayal of Hebrew—suggesting that an entire language, or people, is incapable of philosophy—by crossing out the word "couldn't" and substituting "didn't," although she repeats "couldn't" in the margin. She would certainly, however, also note the echo of Pound's dictum "Go in fear of abstractions."[37] In "Poetry," Moore herself restates this idea with the ethical edge suggested by her interest in the prophets: "things are important not because a // high sounding interpretation can be put upon them but because they are / useful" (*Others* July 1919; Schulze 193).

By the mid 1920s, Moore wrote with mature confidence in a style widely praised and virtually inimitable because of its combination of colloquial and prosaic directness with highly structured, complex syllabic forms, calling attention to the arbitrariness of poetic form and eschewing lyric beauties while maintaining a witty and often powerfully cadenced play and progression of sounds. That she achieved such maturity through the influence of Hebraic poet-prophecy is the indirect claim of her 1923 poem "Novices" (*The Dial* February 1923; Schulze 306-312). In this poem, Moore sharply distinguishes the work of "supertadpoles of expression," or those who play pretentiously at poeticizing, from that of poets by enumerating what "novices" do not understand. The poem presents no aesthetic criteria for poetic excellence. Instead, novices are defined as those whose understanding is inadequate to powerful expression in any form: "blind to the right word, deaf to satire / . . . averse to the antique / . . . they write the sort of thing that would in their judgment interest a lady— / curious to know if we do not adore each letter of the alphabet that goes to make a word of it." Such poetasters are "'unlit by the half-lights of more conscious art'"—a phrase Moore quotes from A. R. Gordon's *Poets of the Old Testament* (1912). Thinking themselves "the masters of all language," they have no interest beyond "the little assumptions of the scared ego" and represent in every way the opposite of what Moore values in her poetry.

Above all, the sequence of the poem suggests, the acquaintance of novices with Western literature and learning blocks their appreciation of Hebrew writing: familiarity with the "'noble vagueness and indefinite jargon'" of the Greek tradition ("Plato") obscures "the willowy wit, the transparent equation of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel." They see as "detailless," "reiterative and naïve," chaotic, and "stuffy" what she regards as an extraordinary display of living language. The poem then ends with an extended description of the Hebrew language as a sea in motion, an energetic and cadenced play of sound and action[38]:

> *"split like a glass against a wall"*
> *in this "precipitate of dazzling impressions,*
> *the spontaneous unforced passion of the Hebrew language—*
> *an abyss of verbs full of reverberation and tempestuous energy"*

> *in which action perpetuates action and angle is at variance with angle*
> *till submerged by the general action;*
> *obscured by fathomless suggestions of colour,*
> *by incessantly panting lines of green, white with concussion,*
> *in this drama of water against rocks—this "ocean of hurrying consonants"*
> *with its "great livid stains like long slabs of green marble,"*
> *its "flashing lances of perpendicular lightning" and "molten fires swallowed up,"*
> *"with foam on its barriers,"*
> *"crashing itself out in one long hiss of spray."*

In these lines, Moore sets herself the challenge of showing what the mature poet, who is not "blind to the right word, deaf to satire," might produce in contrast to the work of "Novices." The poem's closing eighteen-line sentence explicitly links the contrast to a knowledge of Hebrew poetry. According to its basic subject and predicate, novices "demonstrate . . . that it is not necessary to be associated with that which has annoyed one." The lines quoted above then present "that which has annoyed" the novices, and the only phrase that can function grammatically or logically as the object of that implied predicate is "the spontaneous unforced passion of the Hebrew language." What then above all novices avoid is precisely what Moore most values as a model for poetry: spontaneous, unforced, passionate language that communicates the "transparent equation" of poetic speech striving for the highest truth and usefulness—like that of "Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel" and other Hebrew prophets. The other twelve lines of her conclusion demonstrate such "unforced passion" in a characteristic mosaic of quotation and Moore's own words, showing how language alone may constitute a drama like that of the elemental "water against rocks."

After *Observations*, Moore does not republish "Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel," "Feed Me, Also, River God," "The Bricks are Fallen Down . . .," "That Harp You Play So Well," "To A Man Working His Way Through The Crowd," "Is Your Town Nineveh?" (a Jonah poem), or a poem suggesting identification with a modern Jew, "To Disraeli on Conservatism."[39] Moore's dropping such poems from her canon may be a matter of aesthetics; she does not reprint many of her early poems. It could also be that by this time, as she moves towards the editorship of *The Dial*, she prefers to stress connections between herself and other modernists rather than to emphasize her distinctive route to similar aesthetic ends: as she remarks in "England," referring to a number of ancient and modern cultures, "noted superi- / ority . . . has never been confined to one locality" (1920).[40] It could also be that in composing long poems like "Marriage" and "The Octopus," or the shorter "Roses Only" and "People's Surroundings," where gender is a primary theme, Moore has become less interested in establishing masculine prophetic authority for her feminist poetic. Similarly, in the mid-1920s the world was not at war, and Moore may have felt less strongly the impetus to look back to earlier protest against nationalist militarism. Or it may be that having achieved some comfort in her developed patterns of urgent, direct, ethical speech she now sees with greater clarity aspects of her poetic like playfulness, wit, and love of the idiosyncratic, which is not strongly modeled by Hebraic prophecy or the language of Hebrew poetry. Whatever her reasons, the effect of the omission of these early poems from her later collections is to disguise her acknowledged debt. For Moore, especially between 1914 and 1924, Hebraic prophetic poetry provides not just an inspiring example but an ancient and revered justification for the mixture of ethical, public, and aesthetic principles important to her, and hence a workable foundation for her modernism.

Notes

1. While Moore refers to Jewish prophets in poems after her publication of *Observations*, she does not identify her speaker with them, as she did in her first decade of publishing. My thanks to Dale Miller for his knowledgeable commentary on Hebrew Bible and to Robin Schulze and Linda Leavell for comments on an early draft and sharing information about Moore.
2. Quoted from Jeredith Merrin's "Sites of Struggle: Marianne Moore and American Calvinism," *The Calvinist Roots of the Modern Era* (University Press of New England, 1997) 91-106. Merrin sees Moore as both explicitly and implicitly subscribing to her mother's conviction that "the path of the Elect must be hacked through the forest of adversity" (95), as does Andrew J. Kappel in both "The World is an Orphan's Home: Marianne Moore on God and Family" (*Reform and Counterreform: Dialectics of the Word in Western Christianity Since Luther*, ed. John C. Hawley [Mouton de Gruyter, 1994] 173-192) and "Notes on the Presbyterian Poetry of Marianne Moore" (*Marianne Moore: Woman and Poet* 39-51). The thoughtful distinctions of these three essays have helped me clarify my sense of Moore's departure from the Calvinist tradition, and from the attitudes of her mother and brother. Kappel describes Moore as rejecting the liberal feminized deity of "Gilded Age Protestantism," unlike her mother and brother; while I agree that the poet does so, I do not see this as a matter of her devout belief in a more Calvinist or stern deity, but as part of her move towards an ethical perspective rather than one of "devout" religion—a word Kappel frequently repeats to describe the poet.
3. In *The Savage's Romance: The Poetry of Marianne Moore* (Pennsylvania State UP, 1986), John Slatin describes this class as "a series of lectures given in 1914-15"; my reading of Moore's notebook in which she took notes on this material suggests that the format was somewhat more interactive. Her final dated notes in this notebook are for December 1914. To my knowledge, there is no evidence outside of this notebook for the reading, format, or any other aspect of this study group or class.

4. Moore's notes refer to James Stalker's *The Life of Jesus Christ* (1891), A. R. Gordon's *The Poets of the Old Testament* (1912), George Herbert Palmer's *The Field of Ethics* (1901), Arthur S. Peake's *Christianity, Its Nature and Truth*, and George Adam Smith's *The Book of the Twelve Prophets, Commonly Called the Minor* (1898). Moore also takes extensive notes on something she lists as "Ecclesiastes/Wisdom of Solomon Macmillan" in a 1916-21 Reading Diary (RML VII.01.02), under the heading of "Hebrew poetry." Around the turn of the century, there were many publications of Hagiographica selections referring to Ecclesiastes and/or Proverbs and called *The Wisdom of Solomon*. Because Kellogg, as represented in Moore's notebook, closely echoes the views of major scholars like Smith, it is not always possible to know what Moore learned from independent reading and what from Kellogg, although she did read Gordon and at least some of Smith's *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*.
5. In effect, her job ended when she took the summer off from teaching, since by then she knew the department would probably close, as she wrote her brother John Warner Moore, May 23, 1914 (RML VI.20.06; all letters and notebooks quoted are housed at the Rosenbach Museum and Library [RML] in the Moore archive). Moore did not take another paying job until after she and her mother moved to New York in 1918. Despite the loss of salary, Moore's family opposed her seeking full-time work again because they worried about her health. Moore in turn worried about her mother's health, writing her brother in March of 1915 that their mother "takes things so acutely that she will *never*, not in any case, live a very long time"—although she lived another thirty-two years (RML VI:21.04).
6. Moore was in Washington, D.C. for eye treatments at the time and so, uncharacteristically, corresponding with her mother rather than living with her.
7. Letters to John Warner Moore, September 13, October 4, and October 27, 1914 (RML VI:20.10 and 11); in January of 1914 she already comments that she is not much of a war poet.
8. From "The Philadelphia Public Rat-Tail File" mailed to Warner 29 November 1914 (RML VI.20.12).
9. April 15, 1915 Moore refers in a letter to the fact that she is teaching Sunday school for a few weeks (RML VI.21.05).
10. See Linda Leavell, *Marianne Moore and the Visual Arts: Prismatic Color* (Louisiana State UP, 1995) 49.
11. Jerald C. Brauer, *Protestantism in America: A Narrative History* (London: SCM Press, 1966) 250. Sydney E. Ahlstrom regards Walter Rauschenbusch's *In Christianity and the Social Crisis* as giving classic utterance to this Social Gospel (*A Religious History of the American People* [Yale UP, 1972] 785). Of course, neither all denominations nor all congregations participated in this liberal turn, and some churches—especially in the South—became more avowedly fundamentalist in response. The refounding of the Ku Klux Klan by a minister in the South in 1915 as an organization of white Protestants reacting defensively against large-scale immigration, especially of Bolsheviks, Jews, and Catholics, reveals the extremity of the difference between Northern liberal and Southern fundamentalist Protestantism during the 1910s and 1920s.
12. RML VII:08:03; all further references to this notebook will refer to this file.

13. The northern Presbyterian Church was among the more liberal protestant churches during these decades, but the national Presbyterian Church remained steadfastly fundamentalist. For example, the national church accused and tried ministers for heresy because of their increasingly historical and sociological (or "scientific") understanding of scripture during the 1890s. Warner's religious views seem to be more doctrinaire than his sister's or perhaps even his mother's—not a surprising outcome of his education at Princeton Theological Seminary, a staunchly conservative institution through the 1920s (Ahlstrom 775, 883-815; Brauer 225-26).
14. Slatin 25, 32, and throughout the first chapter. See also Darlene Erickson, *Illusion is More Precise than Precision* (University of Alabama Press, 1992) 23-24. Excellent on modernist orientalism is Zhaoming Qian, *Orientalism and Modernism: The Legacy of China in Pound and Williams* (Duke, 1995).
15. January 9, 1919 to Ezra Pound, in *Selected Letters of Marianne Moore*, eds. Bonnie Costello, Celeste Goodridge and Cristanne Miller (Knopf, 1998) 123.
16. From *The Complete Prose of Marianne Moore*, ed. Patricia C. Willis (Viking, 1986), 124. This volume will hereafter be cited in the text as *CPr.*.
17. In 1910, 31 percent of the population of New York City was Jewish; by 1917, the city had approximately 1.4 million Jewish inhabitants (Frederick M. Binder and David M. Reimers, *All the Nations Under Heaven: An Ethnic and Racial History of New York City* [Columbia University Press, 1995] 115). Moore also had Jewish classmates at Bryn Mawr and railed against the anti-Semitism of one of her Christian classmates. See letters to her family 7 and 22 October, 1906; RML VI.12.11.
18. It is unclear if the second line of this poem, "Bloodshed and Strife are not of God," is an epigraph or a continuation of the title. In *The Lantern*, the poem appears in different typeface than the title or the rest of the poem; Schulze presents the line as part of the title (154, and 415).
19. For example, Isaiah writes that the people "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:4); Jeremiah repeats, "do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place" (22:3, 7:6); Ezekiel describes the "just" man as he who "hath not oppressed any . . . hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment" (18:7); Daniel concludes an interpretation of the king's dream by saying "Break off your sins by practicing righteousness, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the oppressed" (4:27). Daniel is also famous for meeting with committed pacifism and conviction monarchs' threatened violence.
20. I surmise from its topic and quotation from Isaiah that this poem was written considerably earlier than it was published, and perhaps shortly after "Feed Me, Also, River God" (published 1916) which quotes the same passage. No manuscripts exist in the Rosenbach Moore archive from which it can be dated.
21. See also Thomas Henshaw, *The Latter Prophets* (George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1958), who asserts that prediction was "incidental and not fundamental" to the prophet's mission; fundamental instead was immediate involvement in social reform or statesmanship: "To [the prophet] social and political problems were moral and religious problems" (60, 61).

22. This is a topic dealt with at length by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own* (1927) and much discussed by feminist critics, including Suzanne Juhasz, *Naked and Fiery Forms: Modern American Poetry by Women, A New Tradition* (Harper & Row, 1974), Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, eds., *Shakespeare's Sisters: Feminist Essays on Women Poets* (Indiana UP, 1979), Margaret Homans, *Women Writers and Poetic Identity* (Princeton UP, 1980). I discuss it in relation to Moore in *Marianne Moore: Questions of Authority* (Harvard UP, 1995), chapters 1 and 4.
23. *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament* (London: Hoder and Stoughton, 1901) 217, 267, 273. In multiple passages and books, Smith emphasizes that the form of prophecy represented by the featured Biblical prophets arose in the historical period when the Israelites were developing an increasingly commercial and urban culture, giving rise to what he calls a "new civilization" of international awareness, surprisingly similar to that of the modern Western world (*Book of the Twelve* 30; *Modern Criticism* 267-274).
24. *The Early Poetry of Israel in its Physical and Social Origins* (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), xi.
25. See the *Marianne Moore Reader* (Viking Press, 1961) 258.
26. First published in *Poetry* 6.2 (May 1915): 70; Schulze 409.
27. Moore has a similarly measured response to Ezekiel in the 1915 poem "To a Man Working His Way Through the Crowd," first published in *The Egoist*, 1915.
28. First published in *Others* 1.6 (December 1915): 106, under the title *"So far as the future is concerned, 'Shall not one say, with the Russian philosopher, "How is one to know what one doesn't know?"' So far as the present is concerned"* (Schulze 196-98).
29. Slatin's excellent discussion of this poem influences mine in several respects (*Savage's Romance* 19-40).
30. In discussing this poem, Darlene Williams Erickson claims that most major characteristics of Moore's verse are parallel to those of Hebrew poetry: in particular, her use of syllabics, prose rhythms, innovative rhyme, and unusual parallels of thought; *Illusion is More Precise than Precision* (University of Alabama Press, 1992) 23.
31. Slatin reads this aspect of the poem quite differently, seeing Habakkuk as an intermediary figure through which Moore differentiates herself from Pound (30-32).
32. First published in the *Egoist* 8.3 (1916):118 (Schulze 422-23). I have silently corrected spelling errors of this printing.
33. See Isaiah 8:6-8, 8:18-22, and 9:8-12. In the first, Isaiah describes the Assyrian conquest as a God-given flood of "waters of the River, mighty and many."
34. Although the speaker is ungendered, I use the feminine pronoun to emphasize the poet's choices in the poem. As I discuss in *Questions of Authority*, typically Moore constructs a speaking position of "idiosyncratic and fluid rather than conventional and fixed gender boundaries" (114).
35. According to Henshaw, the influence of the prophets in their own age and for posterity was to contribute to Judaism the "great doctrine of ethical-monotheism . . . a new conception of religion, according to which religion became a matter of the heart and of righteous living rather than of ritualistic practices" (70, 71).

36. Quoted in Lisa Steinman, *Made in America: Science, Technology, and American Modernist Poets* (Yale University Press, 1987) 19.
37. "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," *Poetry* (March 1913).
38. Moore's description transforms another primitivist cliché about Eastern languages into a display of the "unforced passion" apparently potential to some degree in any language, since she recreates in English the chaotic energy she claims for Hebrew. Her class notes quote A.R. Gordon's description of Hebrew as a "lang[uage] of action & picture—very little inflection. Every word has in it a picture and often a picture of motion—'movies.'" Moore then continues (apparently in her own words), "Often we have a very abyss of verbs a sea of words when action ever rolls surging into action" (RML VII.08.03). Smith uses language almost identical to Gordon's in describing Hebrew in *Early Poetry* (7-9). The claim that Eastern languages are pictorial (like Chinese "pictographs") and uninflected—implying that they are less developed than European languages—holds less interest for Moore than the idea of action, and even that is not taken literally: while claiming an "abyss of verbs," for example, Moore uses very few active verbs to construct her portrait of the sea in motion.
39. She does, however, keep in her collections other poems praising the Hebrew language or modeling herself on prophets, namely "The Past is the Present," "England," "Sojourn in a Whale," and "Novices," and she quotes A.R. Gordon on Hebrew poets in the closing lines of "When I Buy Pictures."
40. Qian describes Pound and Williams finding in Chinese poetry many of the characteristics Moore finds in Hebrew: "a prolonged and rich heritage of intensity, precision, objectivity, visual clarity," and a general compression of style (3, 6). As Qian rightly remarks, Pound and Williams (like Moore) do not discover elements like "intensity" in a foreign poetic but find justified and authorized qualities they have already worked to acquire (55).