BRIAN MOORE'S SPECIAL CACHET : A STUDY IN CHARACTERIZATION

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to establish the thesis that Brian Moore's predominant concern with the characterization of his individual protagonists influences both the form and content of his first seven novels. Chapters I and II discuss the effect of Moore's interest in character on the structural elements of plot and point of view. Chapter I describes the typical Moore plot which traces the gradual transformation of the character of the protagonist as the result of a series of disillusioning events which climax in a moment of revised self-recognition. Thus, plot is operative in determining character. The most striking aspect of Moore's narrative technique, discussed in Chapter II, is his accomplished mixing of first and third-person narration. As a consequence, Moore is able to present the protagonist with the objectivity of third-person narration at the same time as he advances the protagonist's subjective view in the first-person. In all Moore's novels, however, the emphasis is on the protagonist's view ensures that his personality dominates the narrative.

Chapters III and IV deal with the elaborate patterns of language and image which illuminate Moore's novels. Chapter III links the unique linguistic quality of each novel to its source in the language, character, and situation of the protagonist, while Chapter IV describes the patterns of imagery which reveal the protagonist's vision of himself and of his world. In the latter chapter, the several methods by which Moore depicts the physical and psychological qualities of his characters are discussed as well as his special visualization of each novel in its entirety. Both
chapters argue that Moore's considerable skills in manipulating language and image find a focus in the central character of each novel.

Chapter V deals with the underlying ideas in Moore's fiction and, in particular, with the search for identity which is fundamental to all seven novels. Like Moore's protagonists, who are themselves ordinary human beings, Moore's themes are founded in common human experience. And so, the discussion of thematic content which concludes this study illustrates yet another area in which Moore's concern with the portrayal of character influences his fiction.
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INTRODUCTION

Like many novelists before him, Brian Moore is primarily concerned with the depiction of character. The very titles of several Moore novels - Judith Hearne, The Luck of Ginger Coffey, I am Mary Dunne, and Fergus - point to his overriding interest in people and, especially, in one person who is the novel's subject. All Moore's novels illustrate how the character of the protagonist is altered by the events which he initiates. The surprising feature of this preoccupation with a single character is that Moore's protagonists are typically unimportant people. The only characters who verge on the extraordinary, Brendan Tierney and Fergus Fadden, are by no means famous writers. Therefore, the truth or the moral which a Moore novel imparts is a realistic truth about ordinary human beings. As Christopher Ricks notes, "The singular strength of Brian Moore's novels is manifest in their abolishing brow-distinction."¹

Brian Moore's novels are short (he has pointed out that he intends his novels to be read in an evening)², brilliant exercises in characterization. He effectively brings to life an ordinary person who totally engages the reader's sympathies. It is because Moore's characters are so essential to his art and so successfully realized that his skills in characterization deserve to be examined. This thesis will discuss how the plot, the narrative point of view, the diction, the imagery, and the themes are all instrumental in the realization of Moore's protagonists.

Although Brian Moore is a contemporary novelist, his novels are not remarkably modern in technique. Moore's dominating interest in creating characters precludes, for example, such experimentation as the French
anti-novelists have undertaken. In fact, it is obviously Moore's success in portraying character which exonerates him from Iris Murdoch's frequently echoed criticism of the modern novel in general:

The 19th century novel (I use these terms boldly and roughly: of course there were exceptions) was not concerned with "the human condition," it was concerned with real various individuals struggling in society. The 20th century novel is usually either crystalline or journalistic; that is, it is either a small quasi-allegorical object portraying the human condition and not containing "characters" in the 19th century sense, or else it is a large shapeless quasi-documentary object, the degenerate descendant of the 19th century novel, telling, with pale conventional characters, some straightforward story enlivened with empirical fact. 3

"The real various individuals" who people Moore's fiction ensure that Iris Murdoch's "crystalline" and "journalistic" labels cannot be applied to his novels which belong, as Christopher Ricks maintains, "without any embarrassment in the tradition that the Victorians magnificently established." 4

A consideration of Moore's fictional techniques reveals in some instances, particularly in his handling of plot and point of view, a developmental trend from one novel to the next, while his treatment of diction, imagery, and the underlying themes of each novel often shows interesting parallels between novels. In order to illustrate both the developments and the similarities it is preferable to discuss Moore's methods of characterization with examples from all the novels rather than to discuss the techniques of each novel in relation to that novel alone. Accordingly, the
chapters of this thesis will be devoted to Moore's techniques beginning with his formulation of plot.


4 Christopher Ricks, "The Simple Excellence of Brian Moore," p. 227.
CHAPTER I  PLOT

Brian Moore has an old-fashioned penchant for telling a good story. His novels have the prime requisite for a good story - a plot - which rises to an important and revealing climax near the end of each novel. In Moore's novels, the plot centres on one character, and the climactic moment brings to this character a revelation about himself of such magnitude that the character's life must be different from that moment on. That is, Moore's plots are based on the notion of personal change which is the result of events affecting the protagonists. In the early novels, these events bring about a gradual stripping away of the central characters's illusions until the climax which is usually the moment of greatest disillusion. In the later novels, the protagonists also forfeit their illusions, but the climax is not always totally disillusioning. In either case, it is clear that the character of the protagonist has altered to some significant extent because of the events he has experienced. Consequently, in Moore's novels, the plot itself is an instrument of characterization, not only because actions reveal character, but principally because the events of the novel shape and change the character of the protagonist. In short, Moore's concern with character influences the very structure of his novels.

Brian Moore brought this type of plot to perfection in his first novel, Judith Hearne. He has said that this novel describes loss of faith for an ordinary person, and certainly, at the climactic moment, Judith Hearne's illusions about religion are destroyed. This climax is rendered even more pathetic because previous to this moment all Miss Hearne's other hopes
for the future have also been crushed, one by one. The events of *Judith Hearne*, then, comprise a series of ever-increasing disillusions which lead to a total breakdown for the unfortunate protagonist. The following detailed examination of this plot will reveal the intricate pattern of development which Moore follows in all his subsequent novels.

At the outset of the novel Judith Hearne is endeavouring to begin a new life in another admittedly shoddy boarding house. Her new "digs" appear especially promising because of James Madden, an eligible man who does not, as all other males before him, reject her at their first meeting. In fact, he even invites her out in the evening and accompanies her to mass on Sunday. Her new boarding house also provides her with anecdotes to entertain her friends, the O'Neills, for Judith Hearne things that a single girl has to have a store of entertaining stories about other people, like new new landlady, Mrs. Rice and Mrs. Rice's son, Bernie. However, Judith Hearne's hopeful new circumstances are more apparent than real; it is painfully clear that she is still very poor and lonely. Nevertheless, her upbringing by her wealthy Aunt D'Arcy has instilled in her a certain condescension. For instance, she agrees with her aunt that "church affairs .. tend to put one in contact with all sorts of people whom one would prefer not to know socially." (p.58). As for religion, Judith Hearne feels that,

*Religion was there: it was not something you thought about and if, occasionally, you had small doubts about something in the way church affairs were carried on, or something that seemed wrong or silly, well, that was the Devil at work and God's ways are not our ways. You could pray for guidance. She had always prayed for guidance, for help, for her good intentions. Her prayers would be answered. God is good.* (p.52)
It is apparent to the reader that Judith Hearne's prayers have never been answered, for Moore makes it clear that she is unattractive, unwanted, and impoverished. Judith Hearne, however, manages to cling to the illusions that she has good looks, good friends, and hopes for a better future.

Judith Hearne is encouraged in her illusions right up until the moment in Chapter VII when she mistakenly believes that James Madden will propose to her, and ironically he mistakenly believes that she is a woman of some social status who has money to invest in his restaurant scheme. This moment of greatest happiness for Judith Hearne is immediately followed by the first in an inevitable series of disillusioning events. In Chapter VII Judith Hearne learns that James Madden far from being a hotel manager in America was a doorman. This revelation about James Madden which does not, of course, deter her from wanting to marry him, coupled with an unpleasant interview with Mrs. Rice and her son, Bernie, so upsets Judith Hearne that she rushes to alcohol for comfort thereby confirming earlier hints in the novel that she is an alcoholic. Alcohol, Moore explains, is particularly comforting to those who deceive themselves:

A drink would put things right. Drink was not to help forget but to help remember, to clarify and arrange untidy and unpleasant facts into a perfect pattern of reasonableness and beauty. Alcoholic, she did not drink to put aside the dangers and disappointments of the moment. She drank to be able to see these trials more philosophically, to examine them more fully, fortified by the stimulant of unreason. (pp. 106-7)
Naturally, alcohol does not really put things right for Judith Hearne. Humiliated because the Rices and James Madden know of her carouse, and disillusioned because she has not been able to resist temptation, Judith Hearne goes to church to seek expiation and solace. But since she feels rejected by everyone, she even begins to feel rejected by God who does not give her the sign she prays for. She is terrified by her blasphemous doubt that "in the tabernacle there was no God," (p.123) but she cannot dislodge it. As she leaves the church, she feels cheated:

She began to walk. Supposing, just supposing, her heart cried, supposing nobody has listened to me all these years of prayers. Nobody at all up above me, watching over me. Then nothing is sinful. There is no sin. And I have been cheated, the crimson nights in that terrible book from Paris, the sin, permissible then. (p.124)

However, when she is almost hit by a car, she interprets her near escape from death as a sign from God, and she momentarily repents ever having doubted.

Because of her bout with alcohol, Judith Hearne suffers a third disillusion. She naturally thinks that James Madden avoids her after her carouse because he is appalled by her drinking. But in a stormy interview outside the church he tells her that he is no longer interested in her because he has learned that she is poor. They both realize that they have been deceiving themselves about each other. Judith Hearne has to accept the unwelcome truths that not only did James Madden not alter his plans to marry her because of her drinking, but also that he never had any such plans in the first place.
Deceived by James Madden, Judith Hearne falls back on the illusion that she has some true friends who would not deceive her. There is irony in Judith Hearne's remark, "Thank God I have some real friends left, the O'Neills," because as Moore has shown in Chapter V, the O'Neills invite her each Sunday out of charity, not friendship. As Judith Hearne tells the O'Neills a modified version of her relations with James Madden and the Rices, Moore comments on the process by which she habitually deludes herself:

Telling it, reversing the events to fit a more dignified pattern, she was uneasily conscious of the obligations of the lie. Told once, it must be retold until, in the blurring of time, it became reality, the official version, carefully remembered. (p.145)

Judith Hearne has also convinced herself that she will not need alcohol again, but the sherry she drinks with the O'Neills, an incident on the bus, and the memory of James Madden's cruel words lead her to a second bout with whiskey. This time she is encouraged by Bernie Rice who greatly disturbs her by suggesting that James Madden really does want to marry her and by describing her situation in blunt, truthful terms she does not want to hear:

"Religion is it? And what has religion ever done for you, may I ask? Do you think God gives a damn about the likes of you and me? I don't know what got you into this mess. I can guess -- you're no beauty and this is a hard country to find a man in -- but I know what's keeping you this way. Your silly religious scruples. You're waiting for a miracle. Look at yourself: a poor piano teacher, lonely, drinking yourself crazy in a furnished room. Do you want to thank God for that?" (p. 159)
The scene ends with a tumultuous confrontation between the Rices and James Madden as well as Judith Hearne's eviction from the boarding house. Judith Hearne has finally realized that James Madden definitely does not want to marry her.

This disillusioning experience prompts Judith Hearne to look again to religion for solace, this time from her new confessor Father Quigley who, she imagines, will help her:

God's confessor. His anointed priest would hear it all, he would give comfort. Father Quigley,...Hollow-cheeked, he came before her, his accusing voice calling his parishioners to repent, to forget the world and its follies, to get down on their bended knees and prepare for their last end. He will be glad, a man of God, seeing the sinner sworn in God's ways, the erring sheep shorn of her sins. And at Mass, that day when I saw him first, I knew he would take poor Father Farelly's place, a real shepherd, and maybe even better than Father Farelly, more stern. (p. 167)

However, once again Judith Hearne is disillusioned. Father Quigley can only reprimand her for coming to the wrong confession, mouth clichés about alcohol, and look noticeably bored by her confession. Since "even God's anointed priest did not understand," (p.143) she again concludes that God does not exist, that the tabernacle contains only bread. But this time she is not frightened by her blasphemy:

She stood up, staring at the tabernacle. She stepped out of her bench. She did not genuflect. She turned away from the altar and walked slowly out of the church. Her hand, from the habit of a lifetime found the Holy Water font, dipped two fingers in it. But she did not make the Sign of the Cross.

Show me a sign, she said. (p.175)
At the climax of the novel, when the sign has not come, and Father Quigley has again failed to help her as she feels a priest should, Judith Hearne finally tries to prove for herself whether or not God exists by trying to open the door of the tabernacle. Although she cannot open the door, she is so totally deranged by alcohol and depression that she does imagine that God appears. However, the God she sees is actually Father Quigley -- "He came out, terrible, breathing fire, his face hollow-cheeked," -- (p. 211) who catches her as she collapses in a total breakdown.

Judith Hearne's assault on the tabernacle is her last brave effort in the struggle to keep her illusions alive; afterwards she is totally defeated and quiescent. She finds herself supported by the O'Neills who have placed her in Earnscliffe Home, the hospital run by nuns that she has dreaded. And even at the end of the novel when it seems that Judith Hearne can have no more illusions to lose, she realizes the truth about her friendship with the O'Neills:

Friends. Oh, how did I deceive myself all these years? A friend is hurt when you are hateful. No one is Christ. Friends are human, they resent. You don't resent, Moira. No, you pity me, you urge me to come again. Come and we will be nice. We will feel sorry for you. No, I have your charity, I lost friendship for it. You are paid. You are rid of me. (p. 218)

Judith Hearne is spared nothing. Moore has shown how all her life-giving illusions have been destroyed dramatically in but a few days, so that she is left with only her familiar possessions to comfort her and absolutely no hopes for a better future either in this world or the next. In Judith Hearne, then, the plot traces the process of disillusionment which irrevocably
alters Judith Hearne. This type of plot, based on the notion of personal change, is germane to all Moore's novels as the following plot summaries of Moore's later novels will illustrate.

Moore's second novel also involves several disillusioning events for the protagonist. In *The Feast of Lupercal*, Diarmuid Devine, like Judith Hearne, is forced by new circumstances to face unpleasant and unsuspected truths about himself. And if Devine's disillusion is not as devastating as Judith Hearne's, it is certainly equally poignant. At the beginning of the novel, Devine chances to overhear a remark made about himself by one of his colleagues and is prompted by the insulting nature of this remark to prove his colleague wrong. Devine imagines that courting Una Clarke, a much younger girl than himself who is also of a different faith, will enable him to break out of the stultifying pattern of life which is turning him into "an old woman." (p.45) And, indeed, Devine's amorous intentions lead him to act in a most unusual fashion for him. It is these actions, however, which eventually bring Devine to the climactic moment of self-discovery. When his courtship abortively ends in scandal, a totally unprecedented situation for the circumspect Devine, he makes some discouraging discoveries about his inadequacy to help Una in her predicament. Sadly, Devine realizes that,

Every dreamer must one day wake. Until a few days ago, he had thought well of himself... One of his dreams was that he had not yet been tried, but that, if tried, he would not be found wanting in the deeds of this world. Love and loyalty. A week ago, he would have said he was capable of both. They were only words, last week. But now he had failed in both. (pp.217-18)
And when, too late, Devine finally defends Una and even defies his superiors, he is depressed to see that his defiant self-assertion is virtually ignored by the authoritarian figures who control his life:

It was a relief, in a way. But it was also disappointing. After all, for once in his life he had spoken up; for once he had told the lot of them where they got off. He hadn't minced words, either. But they sent him home in a taxi and paid the fare. It will all blow over, the President said. (p.241)

Ultimately, Devine is reconciled to the notion that he is incapable of becoming his own man. After his last meeting with Una he concedes:

She was right, he couldn't change. For the rest of his life he'd go on telling people what they wanted to hear. (p.246)

In the end, Devine knows that he is doomed to living as he always has. He can no longer delude himself into believing that he can change his way of life. To the extent that he has become more fully conscious of his limitations, Diarmuid Devine is a changed man at the end of the novel. Clearly, the plot of The Feast of Lupercal, based as it is on the disillusionment of the protagonist, is very similar to the plot of Moore's first novel. Ginger Coffey and Gavin Burke, the protagonists of The Luck of Ginger Coffey and The Emperor of Ice-Cream, are also changed during the course of the novels in which they appear. Although one is a man and the other, an adolescent, each undergoes a similar transformation: they both grow up. And while the truths they must face in order to mature destroy certain illusions which they at first cherish, both Ginger Coffey and Gavin Burke profit from being disillusioned. Because their moments of disillusion are later followed by hopeful revelations, Gavin and Ginger, unlike Judith
Hearne and Diarmuid Devine, end their stories on a promising note. That is, Moore's first two novels in which the protagonists move from hopeful expectations to disillusionment are in the tragic mode, while his third and fifth novels in which the protagonists progress from hope to despair and again to hope are in the comic mode. Northrop Frye has outlined the typical movement of these two basic plots:

A tragic or comic plot is not a straight line: it is a parabola following the shapes of the mouths on the conventional masks. Comedy has a U-shaped plot, with the action sinking into deep and often potentially tragic complications, and then suddenly turning upward into a happy ending. Tragedy has an inverted U, with the action rising in crises to a peripety and then plunging downward to catastrophe through a series of recognitions, usually of the inevitable consequences of previous acts. But in both cases what is recognized is seldom anything new; it is something which has been there all along, and which, by its reappearance or manifestation, brings the end into line with the beginning.

Since Moore uses both types of plot for what is essentially the same subject, -- bringing one's expectations into line with reality -- it is evident that in Moore's novels reaching a mature understanding of oneself is not always tragic.

Ginger Coffey reaches a point of despair when, having failed to get the promotion he was striving for, he believes that he will lose his wife and daughter to another man. To make matters worse, he has also been arrested, while extremely intoxicated, and charged with indecent exposure in a public place. At this moment Ginger finally realizes that luck is an illusion he can no longer count on to improve his lot. But it is also at this moment of despair that he begins to mature, and for the first time in his life he admits that he is responsible for his acts:
But Oh! He knew something now, something he had not known before. A man's life was nobody's fault but his own. Not God's, not Vera's, not even Canada's. His own fault. **Mea culpa.** (p.223)

The "new" Ginger Coffey subsequently tries to spare his family the shame of being involved with him by giving a false name in court. This selfless act so impresses his wife that she reverses her decision to leave him. Ginger also learns from his daughter's behaviour while he is in jail that she cares for him more than he had suspected. Fortunately, Ginger is given a suspended sentence. And so, the novel ends happily with Ginger reunited with his family and reconciled to accepting a less glamorous job than the one he had wanted.

The events of the last part of the novel also lead Ginger to a more mature, if less romantic, understanding of the nature of happiness and love. After he has been allowed to leave the courthouse, he experiences a moment of tremendous elation on the courthouse steps. The mature Ginger Coffey is able to accept the notion that such moments of pure happiness are rare indeed:

...Yes, a momentary happiness might come to him again. But was that all he could hope for now -- a few mystical moments spaced out over a lifetime? Yes, it might be all. (p.226)

Similarly, the mature Ginger realizes that the love he feels for his wife is less a matter of desire than of companionship:

Ah, you idjit, you. Don't you know that love isn't just going to bed? Love isn't an act, it's a whole life .... Why, I'll tell you what love is: it's you at seventy-five and her at seventy-one, each of you listening for the other's step in the next room, each afraid that a sudden
silence, a sudden cry, could mean a lifetime's talk is over. (p.243)

At the end of the novel Ginger Coffey is an altogether different person from the puerile fellow who had counted on luck to bring him wealth, love, and happiness.

The same movement from despair to mature self-knowledge characterizes the plot of The Emperor of Ice-Cream. In this novel, Gavin Burke becomes totally disillusioned about his inability to break out of the repressive atmosphere of his father's world, where Gavin is always a juvenile and a failure, into the adult world where he imagines he will be independent and successful. His spirits reach their nadir when, after a year and four months in the Air Raid Precautions Unit which he had joined in hopes that it would be his entry to the adult world, he dares to come home intoxicated only to find himself going "down with a bump to being a child again, slapped by Daddy, lectured about exams, sent to bed in disgrace." (p.191). However, it is also at this point that Gavin realizes that the childhood sin of lack of purpose which still besets him is also a sin in the adult world. Fortunately, Gavin is allowed an opportunity to act with a purpose, thereby demonstrating that he is an adult, when the war finally comes to Belfast. Like the mature Ginger Coffey, the mature Gavin Burke begins to see his life in a new way. He discovers that he is able to act independently of his family who are fleeing Belfast for the safety of Dublin. Gavin elects to stay in Belfast to do his job with the A.R.P., defying his family. To his surprise he realizes:
I didn't even say good-bye to them, any of them, I've finished with them, let them run off to Dublin, I can live here alone. (p.217)

Then he finds that he is even capable of defying a priest when he and Freddy, who are both free-thinkers, refuse to kneel when the priest recites the Lord's Prayer. Gavin is again almost surprised at his own behaviour, but he also realizes:

You're not afraid now of bombs, or priests, of Our Father of your father or anybody. You've changed Gavin. (p.224)

Gavin's girl friend, Sally Shannon, on the other hand, will never change, and therefore the mature Gavin finds that he is "over her." Gavin definitely knows that he has changed when he discovers that he is no longer torn between the demands of his two angels, one which counsels orthodox behaviour and one which seductively suggests the opposite. Instead he hears "a new voice, a cold grown-up voice within him," which he heeds as he had never heeded "the childish voices of his angels." (p.250)

At the end of the novel an adult Gavin comforts his father who weeps like a child when he discovers how terribly wrong he has been in his opinions about the war which has apparently destroyed his world. The war, rather than an action of the protagonist, is the precipitating event in The Emperor of Ice-Cream, which is the only Moore novel in which circumstances outside the control of the central character affect the outcome of the novel.

For different reasons, An Answer From Limbo is also an exception to the typical Moore novel. Instead of one main character, An Answer from
Limbo really has three main characters, although Moore does confer special status on Brendan Tierney. His sections are the only ones narrated in the first person, and it is a question about his character to which an answer (from limbo) is supplied at the end of the novel. In the beginning Brendan wonders whether he is capable of becoming a "true" writer, and he ponders a question posed by an old friend: will he sacrifice himself for his work? At the end of the story, when his first novel is going to be published, Brendan is saddened by the realization:

I know at last the answer to Ted Ormsby's question. I have altered beyond all self-recognition. I have lost and sacrificed myself. (p.319)

The irony of Brendan's realization is, of course, that while he had previously feared the oblivion of being an unsuccessful writer more than anything else, success brings him an even greater oblivion. He is truly consigned to limbo when he loses the only thing he believes in, himself.

Moore also confers special status on Brendan's mother, Mrs. Tierney, since she is the most sympathetic character in the novel. Her lingering and solitary death, which is certainly the emotional climax of the novel, confirms her intuition of her children's indifference and Brendan's egoism. Whereas Mrs. Tierney had left her familiar Ireland expecting to enjoy a new life in New York with Brendan's family, she finds instead that she is misunderstood, rejected, and even abandoned by them. After her death, Brendan comments on the cruel irony of his mother's fate:
Yet my mother's life was what is called a success. She was pretty; she married a successful man; she lived in a large house; had maids, a car and holidays abroad. She bore her husband four children and nursed him through his final illness. She had known in her lifetime perhaps a thousand people and some of these people loved her. Yet she died alone in the limbo of a strange apartment and lay dead until, by accident, a stranger found her. (p.318)

The third important character, Jane Tierney, Brendan's wife, is also bitterly disappointed at the end of the novel. At the outset she is enthusiastic about returning to work to support her husband while he writes a novel and at the same time, "doing something creative for godsakes, after years of parks and prams and diapers." (p.56) But her dream of a happy, creative life turns into a nightmare of adultery. In the end she discovers that not only has her marriage been destroyed but also that her life completely lacks meaning. She reasons:

At twenty-eight, wasn't it an admission of failure to have no person, no thing which you loved more than you loved yourself? I do not love myself, she thought, but if I do not love others either, then I am no better than Brendan. (p.309)

The outcome for each of the three major characters of An Answer From Limbo is both disillusioning and ironic. All three are disillusioned in themselves. Brendan is disappointed that he cannot be both a writer and a sentient human being; Mrs. Tierney feels she has failed as a Catholic parent; and Jane realizes that her existence is pointless. The irony of each realization lies in its unexpectedness, especially for Brendan and Jane who had proudly never imagined that they could fail as people.
The irony in the outcome for the protagonists of *An Answer from Limbo* is also evident in the outcome of the novels already discussed. The ending is never quite what the protagonist expects in the beginning, but it is also never improbable. The conclusion always involves a recognition by the protagonist of some facet of his character which becomes apparent as a result of what he experiences. The main character, then, gains a measure of self-knowledge from the events of the novel and develops accordingly. These novels are based on Moore's assumption that the self is determined by what it experiences. Moore has said in reference to himself, "People's lives change them" and obviously this notion lies in back of Moore's fiction. In his two latest novels, *I Am Mary Dunne* and *Fergus*, Moore explores the assumption on which the earlier novels are based. These two novels are centered on characters who examine their pasts (that is, what they have experienced) in order to understand themselves in the present. While in both novels the action is limited to the events of a single day, it is not the events themselves which bring the central character an understanding of himself, but the recollections and ideas which the day's events generate. In both novels, then, memory is an important element.

In *I Am Mary Dunne* Moore suggests that memory, in fact, constitutes identity, and then he examines what happens to Mary Dunne whose memories are guilt-ridden and destructive. Mary Dunne experiences a crisis of identity which brings her close to madness, even to suicide, but her recollections of one day's experiences reassure her in at least two ways. First, she concludes that the act of remembering itself must mean that she
has a self which remembers, and secondly, the fact that someone else's memory of her is unchanging means that she has a self which in turn is remembered. She realizes that her panic upon not being able to remember who she is at the beginning of that day was unjustified. The novel ends with Mary's affirmation:

> And see, when I put my mind to it, I did manage to remember most of the thoughts, words and deeds of today, and now I will not panic. I am not losing my memory. I know who I am, my mother said tonight that I am her daughter. I have not changed, I remember who I am and I say it over and over, I am Mary Dunne, I am Mary Dunne, I am Mary Dunne. (p.217)

Where Moore's earlier novels have a climax which brings a degree of self-knowledge to the protagonist, the climax of *I Am Mary Dunne*, which serves to convince the protagonist of her identity, involves a much deeper level of self-knowledge.

Memory is equally important in *Fergus*, the protagonist of which is a writer, Fergus Fadden. When he is asked to make a wish for anything at all, Fergus asks for total recall. "If I had total recall," he reflects, "then I wouldn't go on making the same mistakes, year after year." (p.204) While Mary Dunne's memories are of people and events, Fergus is principally concerned with memories of people, for other people and their opinions of him are very important to Fergus. His life has been dominated by the need to be well-thought-of by relatives, by friends, by a contemporary reading public, and even by posterity. But whereas Mary Dunne's recollections are triggered by real people from her past who visit or telephone her all in one day, Fergus's memories are inspired by ghosts. Fergus is so full of anxiety that he imagines that his past has risen up in judgment
of his present. During the single day which the novel covers he invokes a myriad of dead or distant relatives and acquaintances who appear to converse with him in a very real way. The day's conversations with his "ghosts" bring Fergus certain revelations about his character and his life. He realizes the truth of the dictum often cited by his friend, Paddy Donlon, "A man is what he does, not what he says he does." (p.89) Further, he sees that if people will judge him by what he has accomplished, then he must be certain of the principles which guide his actions. His ghostly father sums up Fergus's situation:

"Don't you see? If you have not found a meaning, then your life is meaningless." (p.227)

Fergus' "ghosts," it must be remembered, are his own invention. Instead of voicing his own complaints about himself, he imagines that the criticisms are spoken by other people. But, of course, the ideas are his own, as even he acknowledges. (p.124) In other words, Fergus is a dramatized stream-of-consciousness novel, and like all novels of this type, the subject of the novel is the psyche of the central character. The plot of Fergus is, then, less a matter of events than of an argument by which a question about the protagonist is solved. Although this loose plot, like the plots of other Moore novels, builds up to a revelation about the character of the protagonist, the novel still suffers from a lack of structure. As one critic has pointed out, the coherence of the theme is too slow to emerge. It is not clear until halfway through the novel that the rather predictable opinions of Fergus's ghosts will bring Fergus an important
revelation. And the revelation, when it comes, falls short of the revealing. Surely the meaninglessness of human existence is not a discovery for the irreligious, educated, and sensitive observer of twentieth century life that Fergus is supposed to be.

The plot of each Moore novel, though not always as slight as the plot of Fergus, is generally simple. However, in a few novels the plot is complicated by a sub-plot which, without directly involving the central character, does show to what degree that character is a victim of circumstances he cannot control. Judith Hearne, for example, does not know that she is being used by Bernie Rice in his Machiavellian (or so he would like to think) schemes to evict James Madden from his mother's boarding house. And Diarmuid Devine is the hapless pawn in a power struggle between the Reverend Daniel Keogh, President of St. Michan's where Devine teaches, and the Dean of Discipline, Father McSwiney, who would like to usurp the President. Similarly, Jane Tierney who is manipulated by Vito Italiano comes to feel that her marriage is ended as a consequence well before Brendan Tierney has any notion that a stranger has designs on his wife. This view of a character as victim of another's schemes, which Moore's sub-plots suggest, is a corollary to his basic assumption that character is influenced by events.

In all Moore's novels the development of the main character and of the plot are closely inter-related. The central character who initiates the action of the novel is also affected by this action and in every novel is substantially changed by it. When the character of the protagonist at
the outset of the novel is compared to his character at the end, the extent of the changes wrought in him by the events of the novel is clear. However, the protagonist is never changed so much as to become unrecognizable or in a manner which is inconsistent with his character. The Judith Hearne who has lost all her illusions but who still bravely tries to think of her hospital room as a new home is latent in the Judith Hearne who is desperately trying to make the best of her new "digs" at the beginning of the novel. As Northrop Frye suggests, the end of either a comic or tragic plot should come into line with the beginning, and in Brian Moore's novels, basing the plot on the development of the central character makes this symmetry possible.
Footnotes for Chapter I.

1 Brian Moore, *Judith Hearne* (London, Andre Deutsch, 1955). Further references to this novel are from this edition and are identified by page number after the quotation.


3 Brian Moore, *The Feast of Lupercal* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1957). Further references to this novel are from this edition and are identified by page number after the quotation.

4 Brian Moore, *The Luck of Ginger Coffey* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1960). Further references to this novel are from this edition and are identified by page number after the quotation.

5 Brian Moore, *The Emperor of Ice-Cream* (New York: Viking Press, 1965). Further references to this novel are from this edition and are identified by page number after the quotation.


7 Brian Moore, *An Answer from Limbo* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1962). Further references to this novel are from this edition and are identified by page number after the quotation.


9 Brian Moore, *I Am Mary Dunne* (New York, Viking Press, 1968). Further references to this novel are from this edition and are identified by page number after the quotation.

10 Brian Moore, *Fergus* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970). Further references to this novel are from this edition and are identified by page number after the quotation.

11 See Robert Humphrey, *Stream of Consciousness in the Modern Novel* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1968), p.2. Humphrey defines such novels as, "Novels which have as their essential subject matter the consciousness of one or more characters."


13 See supra, p.10
Brian Moore molds his novels around a central character not only by centering the plot of each novel on a main character but also by the very telling of that character's story. Generally, Moore adopts Henry James's method of filtering his narrative through the consciousness of the main character. The variations Moore makes in this basic narrative technique, however, reveal a trend in his novels toward an ever-increasing concentration on the point of view of the protagonist. The first four novels, told principally from the point of view of the main character, are also narrated by minor characters and by the author. The later novels, by contrast, are more consistently seen through the eyes of the central character alone. Moore's sixth novel, *I Am Mary Dunne*, a first-person narrative by the protagonist, has, of course, the most concentrated point of view of all Moore's novels. But even when Moore's protagonist is not, like Mary Dunne, the official narrator of a novel, Moore still contrives to give maximum exposure to his central character by constantly adopting his point of view so that the aura of the protagonist permeates the entire novel.

With the single exception of *I Am Mary Dunne*, Moore's novels begin from the point of view of the author. Then -- in some novels it is only a matter of sentences -- he shifts to the view of the main character and resumes the author's point of view only when the shift is necessary. Thus, while the main character seems merely to be acting out his role in the novel, he is actually performing the function of the author. As
Wayne C. Booth points out in his study of the various modes of handling point of view, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*:

The most important unacknowledged narrators in modern fiction are the third-person "centers of consciousness," through whom authors have filtered their narratives. Whether such "reflectors," as James sometimes called them, are highly polished mirrors reflecting complex mental experience, or the rather turbid, sense-bound "camera eyes" of much fiction since James, they fill precisely the function of avowed narrators -- though they can add intensities of their own.

In Moore's novels, not only is the narrative filtered through the consciousness of the main character whose "complex mental experience" is the subject of the novel, but also, and more significantly, the main character frequently speaks in his own voice. Every time the protagonist's voice replaces the voice of the author, the novel gains in dramatic intensity. The reader, like the audience at a play, is overhearing the character without the apparent intervention of the author. Moore's combination of authorial exegesis and vivid dramatic rendering reveals his desire to achieve the fullest possible realization of the character of the protagonist since he is seen, as it were, both from within and from without. Naturally, Moore does not use an identical combination of the two voices in every novel. In fact, a trend toward a greater and greater emphasis on the protagonist's point of view is discernible in his novels. This trend includes eliminating the view of minor characters as well as limiting the author's role as narrator.

Moore's artful blending of voices is as sure in his first novel as in his seventh. *Judith Hearne* begins with the author's voice, "The first thing
Miss Judith Hearne unpacked in her new lodgings was the silver-framed photograph of her aunt. "(p. 7) Then, in the fourth paragraph, Judith Hearne's distinctive voice is heard as she muses on the deline of her new neighbourhood:

(1) Like this house, she thought. (2) This bed-sitting room must have been the master bedroom. (3) Or even drawing-room. (4) And look at it now. (5) She turned from the window to the photograph on the mantelpiece. (6) All changed she told it, all changed since your day. (7) And I'm the one who has to put up with it. (p. 8)

Clearly, sentences 1, 5 and 6 can be ascribed to the author. The intervening sentences 2, 3 and 4 are apparently Judith Hearne's, and the last sentence, 7, is undoubtedly hers. This deft mixing of first and third-person narration allows Judith Hearne to speak in her own voice without any prefacing remark from the author. As a matter of course, her own words provide a dramatic insight into her own character: her lady-like language, her nostalgia for a former gentility, and her consciousness of the injustices that she has to suffer are all marks of the spinster. Throughout the novel, Judith Hearne's personality and her reactions to any other character are constantly kept before the reader by the interplay of her voice with the voice of the author. So skillful is Moore in combining first and third-person narration that one can read the following paragraph in context without being jarred by the inconsistency of pronouns:

"Yes, Good-bye, Moira." She did not kiss her. I couldn't. Not after what I said. (my italics) (p. 203)

The subtle blending of voices which is the essence of Moore's technique
totally accustoms the reader to hearing Judith Hearne speak in her own voice without introduction.

Despite the prevalence of passages narrated from Judith Hearne's point of view or even in her voice, the controlling presence of the author is always discernible in the novel. As Wayne Booth has pointed out, "Though the author can to some extent choose his disguises, he can never choose to disappear." In this novel, what is written from the author's point of view tends to make the reader aware of the irony of Judith Hearne's illusions, and in some instances, the close juxtaposition of the author's objective view to Judith's subjective view is humourous as well as ironic. When, for example, Judith Hearne is identifying with the characters in a film, the author is at the same time slyly drawing the reader's attention to the incongruity of her romanticizing:

Miss Hearne, her glasses slipped furtively on her nose under the cover of darkness, saw Samson Madden stride into the halls, dazzling all with ... his smile.... He loves her still, he will always love her. And she went up unto the Temple of Dagon, her heart filled with love and longing.... He implores her, Delilah Judith, to leave for her own safety.... She watches from the shadows, welcoming death. And Samson spoke with Madden's voice, unfolding the final stupendous spectacle.

Beside her Mr. Madden ate jujubes and thought of California. Bible stuff was okay but there was too much talk in it. (p.85)

By simply reminding the reader that Delilah Judith wears glasses and that Samson Madden eats jujubes, the author renders the whole episode comic as well as pathetic.
The above passage also illustrates how Moore varies the narration of *Judith Hearne* to include the points of view of minor characters. Generally their views, like the view of the author, point up Judith Hearne's self-deceptions. It is, for example, Mr. Lenehan, a fellow-boarder at Mrs. Rice's, who is the first to mention that James Madden is showering attentions on Miss Hearne because he thinks she is wealthy and not, as she thinks, because he is interested in her personally. (p. 80) However, the passages narrated by minor characters also serve to advance the action; in fact, they are often used to describe Judith Hearne's actions between important scenes. Chapter XV, for example, describes what she does from the time she leaves Mrs. Rice's boarding-house until she is settled in the Plaza Hotel. It includes the views of characters as varied and as marginal as the cashier in Judith Hearne's bank, the proprietor of a shop for wines and spirits, the clerk and the bellboys at the Plaza Hotel, Mr. Lenehan and Miss Friel, Bernie and Mrs. Rice, and James Madden's drinking companion, Major Mahaffy-Hyde. By using minor characters as narrators, Moore is obviously opting for a more dramatic means of telling his story than a straightforward recounting of events by the author alone would be. However, there is some evidence that Moore is not easy in this multiple type of narration. In the first place, he is forced to use the rather unsophisticated and mechanical technique in Chapter VI of entitling the passages which reflect the views of minor characters with the names of the speakers. Secondly, in the novels which follow *Judith Hearne* Moore tends to limit the point of view to fewer and fewer characters and thus to focus greater and greater attention on the
central character of each novel. The narration of Moore's first novel, then, sets a pattern which is both followed and refined in the later novels.

Although the narration of Moore's second novel, *The Feast of Lupercal*, is limited to fewer points of view, the technique of mixing first and third-person narration is essentially the same as that used in *Judith Hearne*. Diarmuid Devine's story is largely told from his point of view and in his characteristic language. Where *Judith Hearne* has three chapters completely allotted to the points of view of minor characters, *The Feast of Lupercal* has only one, Chapter VIII, which is told from the points of view of a dancing teacher, a tailor, and student of St. Michan's who is also Una Clarke's cousin. Here Moore is using minor characters to describe what amounts to unusual behaviour on Devine's part as well as events of which he can have no knowledge. In addition, parts of other chapters are narrated by minor characters to illustrate how others view Devine's actions and to make the narration more dramatic. For example, Moore elects to describe Devine's rehearsals with Una partially as they are seen by the sexton who looks after the hall. He is a crusty old fellow who intensely dislikes any interruption of his normal routine. The reader learns from his complaints that Una and Devine have been rehearsing very frequently (pp. 62-3), that Devine is moved by these "quare rehearsals..., him and her alone in this place, acting out love stuff," (p. 67) and that Devine has shaved off his mustache. (p. 68) The sexton, unlike an omniscient author, does not discuss the motivations of their behavior, but the reader has no difficulty in imagining them for himself.
However, as was the case in *Judith Heame*, the omniscient author is never far from the scene. It is Moore who first describes the sexton with his sour old face set in a righteous scowl, "shouldering his feather duster like a soldier carrying a rifle," (p.62) to prepare for the tone the sexton will adopt in his narration. Similarly, since the novel is concerned with depicting Devine as a victim of a repressive and cruel environment, the author always describes the setting and Devine in that setting both before and after moving to Devine's point of view. Chapter II, for instance, begins with a description of Devine approaching Tim Heron's house for the party where he meets Una Clarke:

> A damp night wind, blowing along the Cavehill Road, almost took Mr. Devine's hat with it as he entered the street where Tim Heron lived. It was a street of small, red brick houses, their bay windows thrust out to repel the stranger; (p.16)

At the end of the chapter the author describes Devine's lonely departure from the party:

> Nobody cares, he thought sadly. I'll never be missed.
> And he was not. No one called after him as he shut the front door. It was dark and cold in the street. The wind sent his hat brim patting gently against his forehead as he bent forward, hurrying to the Cavehill Road and the bus stop (p.34)

In the author's descriptions of Devine's situation, even the wind is part of the hostile circumstances which seem to render Devine as helpless as his hat.

The author's judgment of the characters he introduces in both *Judith Hearne* and *The Feast of Lupercal* is implied by the figurative language
with which he describes them. The long-suffering Judith Hearne sits alone in her bed-sitting room, "waiting like a prisoner for the long night hours." (p.34) The ludicrous Bernie Rice who is both spoiled and petulant is "like some monstrous baby swelled to man-size." (p.9) The self-righteous Miss Friel, when she is protesting Mrs. Rice's preferential feeding of her son, has "the air of a woman storming the barricades." (p.36) And the easily-baited James Madden, rebutted in argument, "gasped like a big fish landed on a dock." (p.39) Moore's first description of Tim Heron's appearance clearly prepares the reader for Heron's subsequent neurotic and angry treatment of Diarmuid Devine:

> His bony body was warped by tics and tremblings of suppressed rage, his electric-blue eyes flickered to and fro in search of a sneak attack. His hand constantly calmed his brow, smoothing his gray waved hairs, each of which lay single on his skull as though drawn on in pencil. (p.17)

Similarly, when Devine's Mrs. Grundyish landlady is outraged by Devine's behaviour, she is pictured, "enormous in the doorway, staring down at him with the serenity of the apex figures in a monument to motherhood." (p.178) But although she solidly stands for morality, Moore also suggests that there is something faintly ridiculous about her unyielding bulk when he shows her, "backing slightly, ... letting her great velvet rump meet the edge of the armchair, like an airliner's undercarriage, swinging slowly into position." (p.179) Thus, without overt comment Moore is influencing the reader's opinions since his figurative language not only supplies the facts about these people but also the feel of the facts.
In Moore's first two novels, then, his narrative technique is an important means of presenting the central figure who is the subject of the novel. As Dorothy Van Ghent explains in her discussion of Richardson's narrative method in *Clarissa*, the author must always consider his subject when deciding on a particular point of view:

The technical problem with which we are confronted here is that of the "point of view" (or "focus of narration"), a problem which may be phrased thus: given a certain kind of subject matter, how can it be brought into focus for the reader? From what "angle", what point of observation, can the drama best be seen? From the author's own? or from that of the chief character in the novel? or from that of one of the minor characters? or from the points of view of several characters? or from some presumably automatic and mechanical point of view (like that of a camera)?

Moore uses three of these methods in *Judith Hearne* and *The Feast of Lupercal*. The basic narrator is Moore whose ironic juxtapositions and figurative language influence the reader's attitude to the protagonist and other characters. But for much of each novel, the narrative voice is that of the protagonist who reveals himself in his own words. And occasionally, the speaker is a minor character whose comments provide an ironic commentary on the actions of the protagonist. The manner in which the story is told necessarily affects the way the reader perceives the protagonist. The reader is both sympathetically drawn to the central character who appears to address him directly and ironically made aware of the protagonist's illusions when the author or minor characters take up the narrative.

Moore's handling of point of view in his third novel, *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, constitutes to some extent a special case. In an interview
with Richard B. Sale, Moore confesses that the idea which governed his choice of narrative method was actually based on a misconception:

When I wrote The Luck of Ginger Coffey, I had read an interview with Alberto Moravia in which he said, "One of the most interesting things for a writer to do is to write a first-person narrative in the third-person, writing it from a first-person point of view." And that's what I tried to do in Ginger. Years later I met Moravia and told him I'd read what he said. He told me: "I wasn't talking about anybody doing that today. I was talking about Caesar's Gallic Wars."

In another interview with Robert Fulford, Moore describes his handling of point of view as a kind of technical experiment:

This book was a first-person novel written in the third person. In other words, I tried to have everything seen through the eyes of my central character. That's very limiting, but it was interesting to try, technically, and it also gave the book a unity.

But, in point of fact, the narrative technique of Ginger Coffey is not markedly different from that of the two earlier novels. Again the story is filtered through the consciousness of the central character, Ginger Coffey, and the same mixing of first and third-person narration occurs. Contrary to what Moore says, the novel is not written exclusively in the third-person, and even when Moore uses the third-person, the diction which is obviously Ginger's creates precisely the effect of first-person narration. A typical paragraph illustrates that the handling of point of view is very similar to that of the first two novels:

'Yes, dear.' Flute! Couldn't a man get a bit of breakfast into him before she started that nattering? He knew about telling Madam Beaulieu. All right, (p. 4)

Obviously, Moore is mixing first and third-person narration in this passage and is not at all writing solely in the third-person. Although it is generally
true, as Moore claims, that everything is seen through the eyes of the central character, Ginger himself is often described from the author's point of view. A sentence such as, "And so, at one in the morning, when Coffey rode home on the bus, a newly printed newspaper on his lap, he had, by his habitual processes of ratiocination, convinced himself that the day was not a defeat but a victory," (p.78) clearly communicates the author's opinion of Ginger in the author's language. The controlling vision of the author, though less obvious than Ginger's, is perceptible throughout the novel. One feature of the narrative technique does differentiate Ginger Coffey from the earlier novels: on only three occasions does Moore introduce the views of minor characters and these instances are not prolonged. Apparently Moore cannot resist the ironic implications of the opinions that two Canadian businessmen have of Ginger's inappropriate outfitting as a Dublin squire, and he allows them their say. (pp.23,136) He also includes a brief comment by one of his fellow proof-readers (pp.210-211) on Ginger's erratic behaviour after MacGregor refuses him a reporter's job. The consistency with which Moore does narrate the novel from Ginger's point of view, however, and the reduction of the views of minor characters do mark a significant change in Moore's narrative technique and do bear out his claim that Ginger Coffey is a "first-person novel."

Moore's fourth novel, An Answer From Limbo, illustrates, in part, a logical progression in his style, since sections of it are actually written in the first-person. In this novel, Moore replaces the usual division by chapters with shorter sections which contain the views of the three main characters. Brendan Tierney, his mother, Eileen Tierney, and his wife,
Jane Tierney, each take up the narrative by turns, so that the point of view of each character is kept constantly before the reader while the story never lags. But of these three narrative strands, only Brendan's is written in the first-person throughout. The sections devoted to Eileen Tierney and to Jane Tierney are narrated by the author with frequent shifts to the direct words of the character concerned. In addition, the drama which involves all three is also described from the points of view of characters who are indirectly involved. For example, an incident in Brendan's struggle to become a published novelist is caustically described by his fellow-writer, Max Bronstein, to Brendan's disadvantage; and the seduction of Jane Tierney is coldly planned by Vito Italiano, who calculatingly plays on Jane's weaknesses. Of the novel's fifty-eight sections, eight are given over to minor characters, fifteen to Jane, sixteen to Mrs. Tierney, and nineteen to Brendan.

Clearly, Brendan is the character who receives the greatest attention in this allotment of narrative space. Moreover, Brendan's sections, the only ones narrated in the first-person, are generally longer. Brendan is also the only character who seems aware that he is thinking or "reflecting" a story. Naturally, as a writer, he is more given to observing the other characters and, in particular, to observing himself, a pastime which he seems to enjoy. In a sense, then, Brendan emerges as the central character in the novel and his longer, autobiographical sections with their self-conscious language reveal much about his character. A typical para-
graph written from Brendan's point of view is dotted with "I's" which are
the subject of every sentence:

I am happy. I cannot explain this happiness except to say
that I wake each morning sure that there is no place in the
world I would rather be than here, nothing in the world I
would rather do than get on the subway and go down to that
shabby, airless room. I feel a sense of excitement which I
would not have believed possible. I am not bored or lonely.
I wish this state to last forever but, of course, it is almost
over. I am nearing the last paragraph and the rest is revision.
On Sunday, before I start those revisions, Sidney Gerston
wants to read the last two chapters. I am not worried about
his verdict; not in the least. I know the book is right. I
have never been so confident of anything in my life. (pp.245-6)
(my italics)

Brendan's egotism may be the result of or even the requirement for creative
activity, but it also renders him incredibly insensitive to the needs of his
wife and mother. At the very moment that he is declaiming his sheer
happiness, Jane Tierney is agonizing over her miserable adultery and
the concurrent failure of her marriage, and Mrs. Tierney is suffering the
rejection of her children as she is left to fend for herself in a lonely New
York apartment. Since Brendan's sections are written in the first-person,
the author's view of his behavior is never explicitly phrased. However,
Moore's condemnation of Brendan's egotism is implied by the juxtaposition
of his narrative with those sections devoted to the other characters. This
condemnation is nowhere more obvious than in the final portion of the novel
where the passages which describe Mrs. Tierney's painful death are
immediately juxtaposed to those sections in which Brendan's frantic object-
ions to his editor's demands for a few apparently inconsequential changes
in his novel prompt him to behave in a near-demented fashion and, naturally, to abandon his mother. There is no mistaking the author's view of Brendan's cruel thoughtlessness when this section in which Mrs. Tierney dies:

I'm not dying, O my God, I'm not dying, help me, somebody come, somebody please come, somebody, help, Grattan -- Brendan -- Rory -- help me? Somebody, please?
The thump, I feel it, afraid, O please, I'm worse, I know it, worse, my breath, can't get my br ___ Love me?

is immediately followed by Brendan's insipid whinings over losing face:

Today I did something so embarrassing that I can hardly bear to remember it. Even now I cannot credit that I, of all people, made such an abject fool of myself. (p.290)

Even though the author is obstensibly absent from Brendan's first person narration, he clearly does make a comment on Brendan's character, just as he also contrasts Jane Tierney's selfishness to Mrs. Tierney's selflessness by the positioning of their sections. And while their portions of the narrative are written in Moore's usual style of mixed first and third-person narration, Moore does allow both characters to speak for themselves in large measure just as Brendan does. Essentially, then, An Answer from Limbo, is a series of three first-person narratives artfully intertwined with each other and with the views of minor characters to add further depths to the characterization.

The Emperor of Ice-Cream, Moore's fifth novel, which has only one main character, demonstrates a further narrowing of the narrative focus.
Moore's typical mixture of first and third-person narration here involves only two narrators, Gavin Burke and the author. At no times does Moore devote an entire chapter or even a section of the novel to the point of view of a subsidiary character as he does in *An Answer From Limbo* and other earlier novels. But the author does exercise his power of omniscience to move freely into the minds of Gavin and his acquaintances to relate what they are thinking although he does abstain from commenting on their behaviour. The author, for example, recounts that "Freddy [Hargreaves] considered himself an independent Marxist," (p.22), that Soldier [MacBride] wanted to become Craig's deputy, "and if getting the job meant kissing Craig's Royal Irish arse, then Soldier could do it, on his soul he could," (p.27), and that Sally Shannon "had been more than keen on Gavin Burke, even though he was a year younger than she and an awful baby in some ways." (p.53)

As usual when Moore elects to disclose what a character is thinking, he adopts that character's idiosyncratic language. And since Gavin Burke is the only character to share the narration with the author, much of the novel is related by Gavin in his special diction. Gavin's indecisions are often represented as an argument between his two angels:

Well, Burke, said the White Guardian Angel. Are you a man or a mouse? Take off your raincoat. Yes, and put your tin hat on while you're at it, mocked the Black Angel. Salute that Naval lieutenant, he's your superior. Nonsense, the White Angel said. You're a civilian, he has no authority over you. How can you be sure, the Black Angel whispered. (p.35)
By means of the two-angel convention, Moore dramatically renders Gavin's inner conflicts until Gavin outgrows his angels and replaces them with the single voice of maturity.

This traditional story of growing up is, appropriately, the least experimental in narrative technique of all Moore's fiction. The use of the omniscient author is also appropriate to the semi-autobiographical subject of youth maturing, since, as Dorothy Van Ghent explains, the point of view of the omniscient author "implies a removed standpoint," and "a godlike sweep of vision and knowledge of the meaning of events," which the mature Moore presumably can exercise. The point of view is also more limited in The Emperor of Ice-Cream than in any previous Moore novel. Moore concentrates his narrative powers on the development of Gavin Burke's character to the exclusion of minor characters as he never has before.

It is not surprising, then, that Moore should next write a novel which focuses even more intently on the protagonist by making her the sole narrator. I Am Mary Dunne, Moore's sixth novel, is written entirely in the first-person. The significance of first-person narration lies, as Wayne Booth has pointed out, in the character of the narrator:

Perhaps the most overworked distinction is that of person. To say that a story is told in the first or the third person will tell us nothing of importance unless we become more precise and describe how the particular qualities of the narrators relate to specific effects.
Several of Mary Dunne's character traits which influence any reading of her story are apparent in the first pages of the novel. From the beginning the reader perceives that Mary Dunne is intelligent, enough so to be concerned with philosophical issues like the nature of existence. The first scene of the novel is followed by Mary's speculation:

If we are what we remember, did that girl I was die because I forgot her? As now, perhaps, I am beginning to die because some future me cannot keep me in mind. (p.3)

Secondly, the reader can immediately sense the nervous tension which pervades Mary Dunne, not only because she freely confesses it, but also because her diction reveals her anxiety:

...then shut up, heart, calm down, there's nothing to be afraid of. I tell this to my heart as I would tell it to a very stupid person. I tell it it is a perfectly normal heart: the reason it's acting up is anxiety. I tell it no wonder it's acting up after a day like today, and especially tonight with that story about Hat. But that has nothing to do with me, no matter what people say, it has nothing to do with me, all that is over and done with, I'm in love with Terence, I'm happily married at last, the only thing we haven't got is children, but that will come, the doctor says we're both fine so that will be all right too. (p.4)

Mary Dunne's near hysteria is also communicated by very long run-on sentences here and elsewhere in the novel. Thirdly, one is soon aware of Mary Dunne's sensitivity. The first few pages of the novel reveal that she is constantly atune to what other people are thinking about her. She remembers thinking of Mother Superior's smile in class, "It could mean, 'A silly girl has misunderstood Descartes,' or 'See how we have
engaged the attention of Mary Dunne'.' (p. 3) She senses that the respectable-looking man on the street who makes an obscene remark to her is excited by the outrage visible in her face. (p. 7) And she knows that the young boy, a friend of her former step-son, does not believe her when she says that she remembers his unusual surname. (p. 10) Mary Dunne's intelligence, her anxiety, and her sensitivity inevitably affect her account of a day's encounters with friends and relatives and the memories which the day's events evoke.

In addition, Mary Dunne's narration is further influenced by her notion of herself as narrator. Like Moore's other self-conscious narrator, Brendan Tierney, she is intent on relating everything. In the beginning she hopes that, "far from losing my memory, I could, if I put my mind to it, remember every single thought, word, and deed that happened to me today," (p. 4) and ends on a note of confidence, "And see, when I put my mind to it, I did manage to remember most of the thoughts, words, and deeds of today, and now I will not panic..." (p. 217) Part way through the novel Mary remarks with typical honesty:

This is a story of how I lost part of my innocence, lost part of that Mary Dunne who left Butchersville and never can go back. It is a story of what money did to me. If I am to learn anything from past mistakes, then there's no sense blaming it all on Jimmy. (p. 139)

If the reader is to believe that Mary Dunne is honestly trying to establish her sense of self by faithfully recalling her past, then the reader has to believe in her integrity. This quality is gradually revealed in the novel, particularly in Mary Dunne's conversations with Janice Sloane. As far as
trivial matters are concerned, such as Janice's mistake about the name
of a restaurant, Mary politely lies or is silent to avoid hurting Janice's
feelings or sparking a pointless argument. But when they begin to discuss
important issues, like the question of Janice's husband's infidelity, then
Mary's integrity emerges. It is clear that Mary is appalled by Janice's
intention to deceive her philandering husband in turn as well as by Janice's
selfish notion of seeking revenge by buying an expensive fur coat. It is
also clear from what Mary confesses about her two previous ill-fated
marriages that she has learned the necessity of never deceiving herself
or others:

And later, very late that night, I lay awake beside Hat
in the dark and I remember a tiny feeling that it hadn't
been all it might have been, a feeling so small, so
unwelcome to my mood that night that I dismissed it.
I never should have dismissed it. Never. For the
central thing was no better than it had been with Jimmy.
I knew it, yet I did not want to know it and that was
my fault, my fault, my most grievous fault. (pp.34-5)

Clearly, Mary Dunne has learned from past mistakes to be honest.

As Mary Dunne relates her day's "thoughts, words, and deeds,"
her intelligence, anxiety, sensitivity, and integrity are all revealed to the
reader. But in addition, the reader becomes increasingly aware of her
vulnerability. Pre-menstrual tension makes her nervous and depressed
and intensifies the anxiety she would normally feel over Janice Sloane's
duplicity, Ernie Truelove's selfish claims to her affection, and the suggestion
by both of them that she is to blame for her second husband's death. She
even feels threatened by Karl Dieter Peters's harmless charade as a potential
lessee for her apartment. In fact, she feels menaced by the world of men in general; as she points out herself when she realizes that she has no recourse after she is verbally molested in the street, "You can't fight male solidarity." (p. 7) By the end of the day, Mary has been driven by feelings of guilt and suggestions of impending madness to fear even her third husband, Terence, to whom she has been happily married. The effect of Mary Dunne's fragile psyche on her narrative is to increase the reader's sympathy for her. Wayne Booth has noted that any first-person narration increases the reader's sympathy for the narrator:

> Perhaps the most important effect of traveling with a narrator who is unaccompanied by a helpful author is that of decreasing emotional distance. We have seen that much traditional commentary was used to increase sympathy or to apologize for faults. When an author chooses to forgo such rhetoric, he may do so because he does not care about conventional sympathy, like Gide in Les Caves du Vatican. But he may also do so because his central intelligence is of the kind that will seem most sympathetic if presented as an isolated, unaided consciousness, without the support that a reliable narrator or observer would lend.

In the case of I Am Mary Dunne, the reader's sympathy for Mary Dunne is heightened by his sense of her valuable qualities and of her vulnerability in a sometimes hostile world.

Although Mary Dunne is "unaccompanied by a helpful author", it is nevertheless clear that Brian Moore, the implied author of I Am Mary Dunne does sympathize with her. His values obviously approach those of Mary Dunne and her husband, Terence Lavery, who are both morally and intellectually superior to most of the other characters in the novel. Terence, for
example, shares Mary Dunne's well-placed dislike of the boorish Ernie Truelove whom he upbraids for wanting to hurt Mary. Moore's concern for Mary Dunne is also implied by the hopeful conclusion of the novel. By the end of the novel Mary has rejected the accusations of responsibility for Hat Bell's death, she has demonstrated to herself that she does not want to commit suicide, and she has discovered that she does have a single identity which does not alter no matter how often she changes her name or others change it for her. And so, the reader who travels alone with Mary Dunne can sense that her creator wishes his heroine well. Brian Moore has, in fact, spoken of his empathy with Mary Dunne:

I am Mary Dunne, because I have taken my own life and transmogrified it into hers. I have taken my years of wandering from country to country, my changes of nationality, my forgettings, rememberings, my feelings of being lost and a stranger and have ... made them hers. 11

One might expect Moore to show equal or even greater sympathy for Fergus Fadden, the hero of Moore's seventh novel, *Fergus*, since Moore resembles Fergus in many more ways than he does Mary Dunne. Fergus is an Irish, male, novelist, whose upbringing and schooling, emigration to North America, and subsequent career as a film writer all resemble Moore's experiences. However, the same empathy between author and central character is not evident in *Fergus*. A certain distance between them is in part created by the ghost convention with which Moore introduces Fergus' past. Clearly, neither Moore nor the reader believes in ghosts. Yet Fergus
is bound by the content of the novel to take the ghosts seriously. As one reviewer complains, "For me the weakness of the book emerges in Fergus’: virtually total inability to defend himself, to mount any sort of counter-attack, to send them [the ghosts] packing."\(^\text{12}\) In addition, because Moore has reverted to his earlier technique of mixing first and third-person narration rather than duplicating the straight first-person narrative of \textit{I Am Mary Dunne}, Fergus appears as less a character with whom Brian Moore identifies than as a character he presents. True, Moore and Fergus share a common background and perhaps even the same moral dilemmas; still one senses a critical coolness between author and protagonist which is not suggested in \textit{I Am Mary Dunne}. Moreover, the presence of the author --- and in \textit{Fergus} much of the narration is in the third-person --- diminishes the confessional tone which in Mary Dunne’s first-person narration has the effect of linking author and narrator. The handling of point of view in \textit{Fergus} indicates that this "portrait of the artist" is not a portrait of Brian Moore.

Although Moore’s reversion to the narrative technique of his earlier novels appears to be a retreat from what is regarded as a stylistic breakthrough in \textit{I Am Mary Dunne},\(^\text{13}\) in other respects \textit{Fergus} does mark an advance in Moore’s narrative technique from \textit{The Emperor of Ice-Cream}. The omniscient author of that novel moves freely into the minds of other characters besides Gavin Burke to inform the reader what they are thinking. In \textit{Fergus}, however, the author’s omniscience is limited to Fergus so that he becomes the centre of the novel’s attention to an even greater extent
than Gavin Burke. In part, this restriction of the focus of narration is
due again to the ghost convention since the ghosts are actually extensions
of Fergus' psyche. But the thoughts of characters who do have minds of
their own, such as Dani, Mrs. Sinclair, and Boweri, are never revealed
except insofar as they speak their minds in conversations. The narration
of Fergus is focused on Fergus and his point of view almost as fully as
if Moore had written the novel in the first-person. And, of course, as in
all Moore's novels of mixed first and third-person narration, much of the
narrative is spoken by Fergus himself. He recounts his meetings with
Boweri and Redshields, and his courtship of Dani, and even his dialogues
with his ghosts may be regarded as dramatized interior monologues. The
concentration on Fergus and the concomitant exclusion of other points of
view are appropriate to this novel, for the crisis which Fergus must over­
come is entirely his own and the resolution which concludes the novel
applies only to himself. It is also this concentration on Fergus who is
always at the centre of the novel which distinguishes Fergus from earlier
novels such as Judith Hearne, in which Judith Hearne is occasionally pushed
aside to make way for other points of view. Fergus marks a further step
in the gradual evolution which is evident in the intervening novels from
a multiple to a more limited point of view, and thus, to a greater concen­
tration on the character of the protagonist.

Another factor which necessarily influences the depiction of the pro­
tagonist is the attitude taken towards him by the implied author of each novel.
In most of his novels Moore remains sympathetic but distant from the main
character: he portrays both their strengths and their weaknesses and he allows them to speak for themselves while also presenting the contrasting views of other characters. The author's objectivity is further attested to by his desire to write dramatically, to present rather than to tell. Moore generally, for example, conveys the physical appearance of his main characters by their mirror image. This often repeated device in Moore's novels is frequently awkward though indicative of the author's desire to remain outside the scene. As Wayne Booth points out, "When we remember the many cumbersome 'mirror-views' -- 'What he saw in the mirror was a man of middle height' -- we see how much trouble the desire to dramatize such descriptive detail can cause." 14

Moore's distance from his protagonist is never quite the same in every novel, however. In fact, his attitude to the main character becomes ever more sympathetic as he restricts the point of view in each succeeding novel. In the first three novels Moore is a sympathetic but detached observer of the fates of Judith Hearne, Diarmuid Devine, and Ginger Coffey. One senses, in particular, the intellectual distance between Moore and these three characters, especially insofar as they are examples of an Irish Catholic provincialism. Moore's attitude to the three Tierneys is more complex. While Mrs. Tierney is a typical Irish provincial, Moore obviously presents her as a moral example to Brendan and Jane. Brendan, however, is more Moore's intellectual equal. Later, in The Emperor of Ice-Cream, Moore appears both morally and intellectually closer to Gavin Burke. He obviously shares Gavin's
contempt for his family's outdated political attitudes, and for Craig's cruel stupidity, while he approves of Gavin's attempts to find meaning for himself in modern poetry. Paradoxically, in the one novel in which Moore's voice as author is never heard, *I Am Mary Dunne*, his relation to the protagonist is the closest of all. It is perhaps because of his moral and intellectual identification with Mary Dunne that he does not need to speak in his own person. The events in *Fergus* confirm that the author agrees with Fergus' estimation of his life: "In the past year his life seemed to have become some other person's story, a farcical tragedy or a tragical farce from which he was trying to emerge and start a new life." (p.10) But although Moore is critical of Fergus for his sins of the past, he is still obviously closer to Fergus in terms of intellect and values than he is to one of his earlier protagonists such as Ginger Coffey. The evolving relation between Moore and the protagonists of his seven novels reaches a degree of greatest proximity in *I Am Mary Dunne* and to a lesser extent in *Fergus*. And so it appears that Moore grows increasingly closer to the protagonist of each succeeding novel, just as his concentration on the character of the protagonist is intensified by the narrowing of the narrative focus.

The diversity in narrative method of Brian Moore's seven novels illustrates his artistic awareness of the many ways a story can be told. From the several speakers in *Judith Hearne* to the single voice of *I Am Mary Dunne*, from the ironic distance of the author of *The Feast of Lupercal* to the sympathetic identification of the author and protagonist in
The Emperor of Ice-Cream, and from the multiple view points of An Answer from Limbo to the restricted view of The Luck of Ginger Coffey, Moore easily adapts his rhetoric to present his protagonist and his tale as effectively as possible. The important consideration as Wayne Booth explains, is not the particular method chosen but the skill with which the author tells his story:

We have seen that the author cannot choose to avoid rhetoric; he can choose only the kind of rhetoric he will employ. He cannot choose whether or not to affect his reader's evaluation by his choice of narrative manner; he can only choose whether to do it well or poorly.

Inasmuch as Moore frequently defers to the point of view and the voice of the protagonist, his narrative method reveals his skill in using narrative techniques for the depiction of character as well as for telling his tale. Once again, Moore's technique points up his dominating interest in the central character of each novel.
Footnotes for Chapter II


6 In one instance, Moore drops his objective stance to make a dig at Freddy Hargreaves' politics. Having learned that Captain Lambert has been evicted from his lodgings, Freddy forgets his usual disdain for the Captain to come to his aid. As Moore points out, "Freddy might not have much time for the Captain, but a man without a bed was a man in conflict with the system." (p.78).

7 In an interview with Richard B. Sale, Moore said that The Emperor of Ice-Cream is his most autobiographical novel. See Studies in the Novel, I (Spring, 1969), p.73.

8 Dorothy Van Ghent, The English Novel, p.46.

9 The Rhetoric of Fiction, p.150.

10 The Rhetoric of Fiction, p.274.


14 The Rhetoric of Fiction, p.172.

15 The Rhetoric of Fiction, p.149.
CHAPTER III       LANGUAGE

Brian Moore's artful handling of point of view concentrates the reader's attention on the central character of each novel, but it is Moore's consummate skill with language which makes his characters spring to life. The fictional world of any novel, as David Lodge shows in Language of Fiction, is a verbal world, "determined at every point by the words in which it is represented." In Moore's novels language plays a particularly important part in the characterization of the protagonist because the narrative voice is often the protagonist's and because the novels themselves proceed largely by dialogues which are always realistic. Moore is particularly adept at reproducing the idiolects of a wide selection of people: from Belfast landladies to New York sophisticates, he captures idiosyncrasies of speech which strike the reader as absolutely authentic. In addition, Moore's language is the principal source of humour in his fiction, which is rarely comic in mode. Still the most significant feature of Moore's style, which illustrates again his concern with the central character of each novel, is his technique of elaborating unique patterns of language around the protagonist which characterize at the same time as they draw attention to the main themes of each novel. Dorothy Van Ghent points out,

that each author does not consult the whole body of the language in selecting words for his meanings; that he is driven, as if compulsively, to the selection of a highly particular part of the language; and that the individual character of his work, its connotations and special insights, derive largely from the style he has made his own --
that is to say, from the vocabulary and verbal arrangements he has adopted out of the whole gamut of words and rhetorical patterns available in the language."  

Clearly, the "individual character" of each Moore novel, which is created by the patterns of language associated with the protagonist, is as uniquely different from one novel to the next as the protagonists themselves.

The Luck of Ginger Coffey, as its title suggests, is concerned with Ginger Coffey's gamble "all on one horse, a horse coloured Canada, which now by hook or crook would carry him to fame and fortune." (p.11) And so, words and expressions relating to gambling, to luck, to hopes, to victories and defeats, abound in the novel. In the first paragraph of the novel, Ginger reflects that the decorations of his Tyrolean hat "might be lucky to him," that the fine weather is "good augury," and that "maybe today his ship would come in." (p.3). Before applying for two positions he does not obtain, he assures himself,

There must be a law of averages in life as well as in cards. And surely if anyone's luck was due for a change, his was? (p.20)

Similarly, before he applies to be an editor on the Tribune -- another position for which he is refused -- he interprets his wife's matitudinal kindness as "a good omen somehow," and hopes again that "maybe today his ship would come in." (p.43) Ginger, whose "habits of an habitual ratiocinator must be fixed in hope," (p.179) is always ready to find "little victories" (p.41) in depressing circumstances. When his wife and daughter have left him and he is struggling to perform two menial jobs on an empty
stomach, the gift of ten dollars from his employer prompts him to forget his misfortunes and to think instead:

There was always a bright side: you just had to look for it, that was all. It was still uphill, but, with a little victory now and then, you could keep running.
As long as you had hopes. And he still had hopes. (p.140)

It is soon apparent in the novel that Ginger's references to his luck are the verbal manifestations of his failure to accept responsibility and ultimately of his immaturity. Moore constantly stresses the boyishness of Ginger's language and the contrasting adult tone with which others address him.

Ginger, who still goes by his boyhood name, is given to juvenile expressions: he "risks it" into rooms (pp.3,30) he "shanks'mares it" down the street, (pp.10,11) he "dawdles" on the way home, (p.28) he considers himself "a fine big fellow," (p.6) and avoids thinking of his diminishing capital because "it was a frightener to think how little" was left. (p.19). Even his habitual expletives -- "Flute," By J", "Holy Smoke," and "Suffering J," -- are childish, and when he challenges Gerry Grosvenor to fight (a boys' way of settling disputes), he does so in the juvenile phrase, "Put up your dukes!" (p.91) Like a boy, Ginger is not always strictly truthful. When the clerk at the Unemployment Insurance Commission takes him up on his false claim to a completed B.A. by suggesting that Ginger is qualified to teach, Ginger is forced to act out a bashful disclaimer,

"Holy Smoke," said Coffey, giving J. Donnelly an honest grin. "That was years ago. Sure, I've forgotten every stitch." (p.8)
Ginger has a delightfully childish and uneducated notion of the names of people in the news. He complains of Gerry Grosvenor's habit of letting slip names like "Joe Enlee or J.F. Dee or Rab or Mac or Matsy Dong or Mick O'Yan as if he was related to all of them." (p.46) When Ginger realizes that Gerry Grosvenor has become his rival for his wife's affection, his complaints against Grosvenor turn into childish invective:

"Be seeing you," Coffey echoed....Seeing you, yes; and, seeing you, aren't you one of the drippiest drinks of water I've ever laid eyes on? Expense account or not, artist or not, what could she see in you, you self-satisfied sausage? (p.85)

Soon after making this remark Ginger does see Gerry Grosvenor — tête-à-tête over lunch with Veronica, Ginger's wife. Ginger flees from the sight, "a boy escaping a pair of bullies." (p.86) Equally boyish are his skirmishes with the Godhead:

If there was a God above, was that what God wanted? To make him poor in spirit? To make him call pax, to make him give up, to herd him back with the other sheep in the fold?

He looked at the tabernacle. His large ruddy face set in a scowl as though someone had struck it. His lips shut tight under his ginger mustache. I never could abide a bully, he said to the tabernacle.

In a world of bullies it is small wonder that Ginger is most comfortable with his five-year-old friend, Michel Beaulieu, for whom he buys "Gob-stoppers" which he cannot afford. "But ah! Coffey remembered his boyhood, the joys of a penny paper twist of bullseyes." (p.6) The most tender moments in the novel occur when Ginger and Michel find themselves united in loneliness ("...and gravely, thirty-nine and five years old, they
built a house with a long sugar-lump chimney." p.82), in a misdemeanour
("Man and child exchanged glances, strangely united in apprehension."
p.88), and in fantasy ("I wish we had a whole lot of toys and you and me
could play with them all the time. Because I love you, M'sieur," p.98)
Games and toys signify happiness for Ginger; between himself and all
harm he interjects the finger game whenever possible. (pp.49,153,172-3)
He is often nostalgic for the days when his daughter was younger and for
the games they played together. (pp.29,148,178) Although he cannot
retrieve the past, Ginger can still see his relation with Paulie in terms of
play, as Moore illustrates when he describes their situation without
Veronica: "And so, in his fortieth year, Ginger Coffey began playing house
with a fourteen-year-old girl." (p.147)

Ginger's childish speech and manner elicit condescending responses
from other adults. His wife's habitual tone to him is one of redress: "Sit
down, Ginger, you're as bad as the child," (p.3) or worse, when she is angry,
of contempt:

"And stop standing there like a dog waiting for a pat
on the head. You're not getting any pat. Not any more.
Now, go away." (p.61)

Beauchemin's receptionist addresses Ginger in a "school-mistressy tone,"
(p.12) and Beauchemin himself thinks that Ginger should know better than
to dress like a college boy. (p.23) MacGregor also scolds Ginger for
attempting to bluff his way into a job for which he is not qualified and, before
hiring him as a lowly proofreader, insultingly verifies his ability to spell. (p.51)
Even Rose Alma who sees Ginger but briefly recognizes the child beneath his man's exterior:

> Behind that large trembly dignity, behind that military façade of mustache and middle age, Rose Alma saw his true face. Like a boy, she thought. Lost. (p.217)

Ginger himself comes to see behind the façade of boyish optimism which he presents to the world. Indeed, the novel traces the changes in Ginger as he moves from recognizing the folly of his boyhood illusions to actually giving them up. At the beginning of the novel he realizes for a moment that his mother's estimate of his ability to deal with money is still true:

> Ah, what's the sense of giving Ginger money for his tram, she'd say; he'll never use it. Doesn't he spend every penny on some foolishness the minute you put it in his pocket? And it was true, then as now. He was no great hand with money. (p.10)

But he quickly dismisses this truth by thinking of himself as a romantic adventurer, "all on his onlie-oh, remembering that any man who ever amounted to anything was the man who took a chance, struck out, et cetera." (p.11) He also remembers another judgment from his past, this one delivered by his confessor, Father Cogley, in a sermon directed at Ginger. Father Cogley warned that the boy who does not finish his studies, who leaves Ireland to find adventure in other countries, who is "unable to accept his God-given limitations," would end up as a labourer in "some place of sun and rot or snow and ice that no sensible man would be seen dead in." (pp.17-18)

As Ginger trudges through snow-bound Montreal, he obviously realizes that Father Cogley's warning has come true, but again he dismisses that sermon
as "missionary malarky, of course." (p.18) He uses the same word to dismiss Veronica's harsh indictment of his character even as he recognizes the underlying truth in what she says:

Ah, sure that was a lot of malarky, that stuff about them letting him go in those other jobs he had. A lot of malarky too about him being selfish and putting the blame on other people -- all nonsense -- sure, what did she know, the woman? (p.62)

Half-way through the novel Ginger begins to see that he can no longer dismiss the adult facts of his life with boyish disclaimers and unfounded hopes. When Veronica comes to tell him that she is leaving him for Gerry Grosvenor, Ginger is engaged in fixing Michel's toy:

And [Michel] ran off down the hall, the robot in his hand. Slowly, Coffey stood up. Oh, to be a boy ... tears one moment, all wiped away the next. A world of toys. Nothing so terrible a kindness would not change it.

Oh, to be a boy....

Too old for toys, he turned to face her; (p.89)

Similarly, when Ginger has to stop playing with Michel to leave for his unpleasant proof-reader's job, his longing to be a boy is quickly followed by the reflection, "but children must grow up." (p.98) It is also at this point in the novel, when Coffey is losing his family, that he is confronted with the full realization of what he has become:

Look at yourself, would you. Take a good look.

He looked at him. A stupid man, dressed up like a Dublin Squire. Looked at the frightened, childish face frozen now in a military man's disguise. He hated that man in the mirror, hated him. Oh God, there was a useless bloody man, coming up to forty and still full of boy's dreams of ships coming in; of adventures and escapes and glories to be. (p.93)
Once Ginger has faced the "True Facts" of life, he begins his lonely struggle to regain his family and to become its self-supporting head. In the last half of the novel, the language which depicts Ginger as a boy is therefore less evident, and Ginger is correspondingly less ebullient. The process of accepting one's "God-given limitations" is a sobering one, and without his boyish attributes Ginger no longer cuts a jaunty figure. On only one occasion does Ginger experience the joy which his childish dreams could evoke before. After his release from jail, Ginger is overwhelmed by the sensation of freedom:

He was free. The night that had passed, the cells below stairs, the shouting warders, the terrifying laughter of the spectators in court; it happened and yet it had not. It was a nightmare washed into nothingness by the simple and glorious fact of freedom.... For one liberating moment he became a child again; lost himself as a child can, letting himself go into the morning, a drop of water joining an ocean, mystically becoming one. (p. 235)

Sadly, the mature Ginger Coffey assesses that moment of childish joy as a rarity; he knows that he will not often feel like a child again. So grown-up has Ginger become that even Veronica admits her admiration for his adult behaviour at the end of the novel. (p. 241)

Clearly the words and phrases which Moore chooses to depict Ginger Coffey stress more than the Irishness of his speech. They also portray the fundamental and gradual growth in Ginger's character from boy to man which is the subject of the novel.

Gavin Burke undergoes much the same kind of maturation in The Emperor of Ice-Cream. Like Ginger, Gavin begins by feeling he is a failure and only sensing the truth in the advice which adults and friends give him.
While Ginger ignores his responsibility and blames his misfortune on fate, Gavin prefers to believe that his failure, particularly in exams, is predetermined by "the authorities." Both Ginger and Gavin come to realize that only they can change their lives; by the end of both novels, both characters have matured. In *The Luck of Ginger Coffey* Moore stresses Ginger's juvenile language, an anomaly in a thirty-nine-year-old man, but in *The Emperor of Ice-Cream* Moore takes a different approach to Gavin's language since a boyish remark is hardly significant when spoken by eighteen-year-old Gavin Burke.

The most significant fact about Gavin's language is the small proportion of it that is represented as being spoken aloud. Freddy Hargreaves and Sally Shannon are the only two people with whom he speaks at any great length. The rest of the time Gavin is actually very reticent. Especially in those scenes in which a group of people are gathered together, Gavin's remarks are minimal. At the Reverend McMurty's soiree, Gavin's sole utterance is "O.K." (p.94) Gavin's silence signifies his estrangement from other people and in particular, from his family. He thinks that his mother would no longer speak to him if she spent merely thirty seconds inside his mind, (p.134) and he has completely given up trying to converse with his father:

His father, a solicitor, believed that his legal training had made him impartial, logical, and reasonable in judging issues. Actually, Gavin thought, he's one of the most prejudiced, emotional, and unreasonable people I've ever met. It was more than a year since he had decided there was no longer any point
in arguing with his father. Silence and silent rebellion were the only defense against his father's pious prate about Catholicism, his father's fascist leanings in politics, his father's literary pronunciamentos. (p.33)

Gavin even finds himself at a loss to explain himself to his brother who is only slightly older than Gavin. Instead he enumerates his problems to Owen's bent back:

How could you explain to Owen the feeling you had before every examination, a feeling that the authorities had somehow predetermined your failure?...How could you explain to Owen that you suspected there were things wrong with you, that, for one thing, you were a sex maniac whose every moment was plagued by thoughts of girls, that you sensed you would become a drunkard the first chance you got, that you no longer believed in God..., yet remained reasonably in dread of God's vengeance for the fact of this unbelief? How could you tell the likes of Owen...that your only thoughts of the future were elaborate daydreams...?

Of course, these questions are rhetorical; Gavin cannot converse meaningfully with people who do not understand or who threaten him. His typical response is either to say nothing, as he does with Sheila Luddin, (p.52) with his father, (p.70) and with John Henry, (p.170) or to say "all the right things -- but to himself," as he does after an argument with Sally Shannon. (p.41) When Gavin does bring himself to tell Sally the truth about his situation, he experiences the same relief which he knew "in the days when he had believed in confession." (p.139) But if committing himself to the spoken word is difficult for Gavin, the endless mental recitation of his fears and the constant inner debate about his conduct are apparently effortless. The two sides of every dilemma are frequently deliberated by the voices Gavin calls his "angels": the White Angel takes the accepted, "decent" point of view, while the Black Angel, predictably, argues for a
more liberated and daring behaviour. (p.10) When, for example, Gavin is outwardly silent in response to Soldier's plan to "let [Craig] out with a brick on the noggin," he is mentally struggling to find the right reply:

This is the way sins are committed, the White Angel warned. You have to make a stand somewhere, do you hear me, Gavin?

But Soldier's black eye was upon him. Lynan leaned forward, his crooked teeth showing in an anticipatory grin. Come on, the Black Angel urged. Stop being a wet-nosed kid. Uneasily Gavin nodded. (p.129)

Since Gavin's reply is still not articulated, it is clear that he has no intention of becoming an accomplice to a murder, as he later points out to Freddy Hargreaves.

In the debates between Gavin's angels, such as the above, in his own imagined conversations with a religious statue, the Divine Infant of Prague which obviously represents Gavin's conscience, and in his less frequent conversations with compatible people, the two recurring and significant words are "failure" and "authority." At the beginning of the novel, Gavin who believes that his failure to obtain the Schools Leaving Certificate was preordained by the authorities, (p.6) avoids the suggestion made by his Infant/Conscience that he failed because of sloth, self-indulgence, and lust. (His Catholic training is evident in this selection from the Seven Deadly Sins.) Gavin imagines that his new job with the Air Raid Precautions Unit is going to free him from school and that its requirements will allow him time to study for the alternate London Matric exams which he will certainly pass. He takes comfort from the prediction of certain modern poets that the future for everyone is uncertain, that World War II, when it comes to Ireland, will mean "freedom from futures," since
the grownups whose world will be destroyed will no longer have any
authority. Gavin particularly likes Wallace Stevens' couplet,

Let be be finale of seem.
The only emperor is the emperor of ice-cream. (pp. 7-8)

This couplet seems to sum things up for Gavin although he is not quite
sure what it means. It is significant that at the outset of the novel Gavin
ignores the second stanza of this poem to concentrate on the vague
implication that really no authorities exist except the fleeting power of
the moment. When Gavin's job at the A.R.P. turns into an emprisoning
nightmare rather than an escape, Gavin's sense of failure grows. Gavin,
who is forced in particular by his uniform to admit to being a member of
the A.R.P., is ashamed of his job. As he explains to Sally, "We're the
unemployables, we're a joke and everybody things we're a pack of loafers.
We are." (p. 36) And worse, Gavin sees in the older A.R.P. members, what
he may become. "They and their condition are what I fear; they are my
failing future." (p. 39) He recognizes that the A.R.P. members are misfits and
in an imaginary conversation with Sally makes the obvious conclusion:

I am like them, Sally, that is the thing that scares me.
Don't you see, I'm a part of this A.R.P. farce, I fit in,
perfectly, I'm the kid who failed his school exams, the
boy going to the dogs....(p. 39)

As Gavin makes this silent confession to Sally in a restaurant, he sees, in
contrast to his own hated uniform, a naval officer's cap, "arrogant and
elegant, symbol of an authority he would never command." (p. 41)

After seven months of enduring idle hours interspersed with Post
Officer Craig's increasingly lunatic drills, Gavin becomes more dejected,
and his future seems to him totally unpromising:

   The war will be over one day... and all the boys you went to school with last year will have finished university and have good jobs. But where will you be? A boozer, an ex-A.R.P. stretcher-bearer, a sometime amateur actor, an ex-Catholic, a masturbator, a marginal loafer, still waiting for some revolution....

   There'll be no explosion, and you know it: your father's world will not be blown up. This war is a phony war and one day it will be over, with the only Irish casualties you and your buddies who will then be out of work. Take a look at yourself. You're what you feared. A flop. (p.76)

Gavin's sense of failure, of "falling over a cliff," is naturally increased by his poor performance on the London Matric. Certain that he has failed the math examination, Gavin at first affects a kind of bravado in another of his imaginary conversations, this one with a statue of Queen Victoria outside Queen's University:

   Puff away, the Queen said. As a failure, you will never have the money to smoke decent cigarettes. So be it, Gavin told the Queen. Silly old cow, don't you know that failure's not so terrible. Nothing's terrible once you accept it... You will never get in here, she said. Not after today. (p.98)

Gavin comforts himself again with the thought that in any case the expanding war will certainly come to Northern Ireland and destroy the university to which he cannot gain entrance. But his conscience, taking the Queen's part, points out the egoism of that idea:

   But the Queen was on to him. You'd like that, said she, yes, you'd like to see the whole world blown up just because you're a miserable little failure. (p.99)

After Owen reproaches Gavin with the obvious reason for his failure -- "You bloody well didn't study hard enough," -- Gavin still prefers to place
the blame elsewhere:

I am running down. There is something wrong with me. I know I'm more intelligent than the likes of Clooney and other fellows who were in my class. Yet I am doomed to fail, while they'll go on to become the doctors, lawyers, engineers, priests, their little hearts desire. (p.100)

Gavin's father's judgment of the reason for Gavins' failure in math is harsher than Owen's. He concludes that Gavin's second failure must indicate a lack of ability and that therefore no further money should be wasted on Gavin's education: Gavin must go into trade with his wealthy Uncle Tom. Gavin is crushed by his father's pronouncement which he feels echoes the "mysterious judgment of all authority" that Gavin, a second son, will never amount to anything in life. (p.119)

As the months pass between the London Matric and the bombing of Belfast, Gavin, who is frustrated by his apparently futile A.R.P. job and by his inability to study, drifts further and further from his parents' expectations. Again and again he is reminded of his failure in other people's eyes and even in his own. He gloomily reflects that he is even a failure at pretending to enjoy being a failure. (p.132) Finally, after he has truly reached a nadir in his life, he realizes that sloth, self-indulgence, and lust are not the sins which damn him, but simply lack of purpose:

In both worlds [the adult's and the child's] lack of purpose, lack of faith, was the one deadly sin. In both worlds, the authorities, detecting that sin, arranged one's punishment. All of life's races are fixed and false. You stand at the starting line, knowing you can run as well as the others, but the authorities, those inimical and unknown arbiters, have decreed that you will not get off your marks. They know, those authorities, that your place is with the misfits, that your future will be void. (pp.191-92)
Fortunately for Gavin, if unfortunately for everyone else, the war comes to Belfast on the following day allowing Gavin to achieve a sense of purpose. He discovers that given the chance he is capable of "dashing into a burning building, snatching a girl from beneath a tumbling wall, walking among explosions, anything." (p.299) He even performs that most unpleasant task of all, coffining the dead, for which his stamina is applauded. (p.237) From this experience Gavin realizes that "The Emperor of Ice Cream" is also about the harsh facts of life and death and not just the ephemerality of the "authorities." Most pleasing to Gavin is that he himself acquires some authority in this new situation; ironically, his hated uniform becomes an asset:

He was aware that his uniform gave him some authority in the eyes of these girls. It was pleasant being a hero, if he could only keep awake. (p.243)

More significantly, he even finds himself comforting his father and hearing his father's confession as if Gavin were the adult, the person with the authority to put things right.

Gavin's failure in his exams, his intelligence notwithstanding, and the advent of World War II are the events which enable Gavin to break out of the pattern which the "authorities" who direct his life would have him follow. Had he not failed and had he been born well before the war, it is easy to imagine that he could have become another Diarmuid Devine who is also Roman Catholic, the son of a successful father, and a scholar of English literature. Devine, who is the central character of The Feast of
Lupercal shares Gavin's natural timidity of character, but whereas Gavin's reticence results from his sense of separateness, Devine's silences stem from his self-effacing and self-deprecating nature. Both Gavin and Devine feel intimidated by the authorities of family, church, and school; Devine admits that although he is a grown man, Father McSwiney can "still make him feel like a wee boy." (p.40) Of course, as a teacher, Devine is himself an authority, but when he becomes involved in a compromising situation, he is just as fearful of the arbitrary powers of his superiors as is Gavin. Yet, when the opportunity comes to both of them to escape their restricting lives, Gavin has enough rebellious courage to break away from the family mold while Devine is too schooled in what is expected of him to do the unusual. When he finally does speak out against those arbitrary authorities, his outburst is simply ignored. The language of The Emperor of Ice-Cream prepares for Gavin's rebellion by stressing his necessary spiritual and mental estrangement from the adults' world; in contrast, the language of The Feast of Lupercal calls attention to Diarmuid Devine's acquiescence both before and after his abortive rebellion, and to the conditioning which makes Devine, as Una Clarke points out, "afraid to fight against what life is doing to him." (p.192)

At the beginning of the novel, Moore's many references to the habitual nature of Devine's life establish the degree to which he has become thoroughly enmeshed in a system: "In ten years of teaching he had learned to calculate each forty-minute class period without consulting his watch." (p.3) "With practiced gentleness he raised Frankie Dugan's arm to shoulder
level." (p. 8) "He could remember that question was asked in '36, in '39, and again in '49 and '53." (p. 10) "Mr. Devine, as always, was the first master to catch the bus which took them from the suburb of Glengormly to the center of Belfast." (p. 100) His life at his "digs" is no less rooted in habit; he is, for example, familiarly irritated at the hurrying up of his twice-weekly bath. (p. 13) Mr. Devine occupies his leisure hours with an amateur drama group, but even in this endeavour he is regularly the hard-working stage-manager, the essential man behind the scenes whose contribution is regularly ignored in the programme. After Devine meets Una Clarke he realizes that although he is young he has slipped into "old bachelor habits," (p. 54) that his comfortable digs are "like an old pensioner's place: a disgrace," (p. 141) and that his school behaviour has fallen into a routine: "Normally, he guided his speech and actions as a conductor leads an orchestra: his school conduct followed a set pattern, designed to evoke the proper response from pupils, colleagues, priests." (p. 78)

Devine's "old bachelor habits" account for the uncertainty about his age to which other characters attest. Young Connolly refers to Dev as "that old woman," (p. 5) and Heron speaks to him as a peer when, in fact, Heron is nearly twice as old as Devine. (p. 17) Kevin Cooke, the director of Trinity Players says of Devine,

"Poor old Dev. He's too good-natured, that's his trouble. Though I don't know why I'm calling him old. He's younger than I am." (p. 62)

Yet Father McSwiney who does not know Dev's exact age speaks of him as a young man: "Sure, Devine's a harmless enough lad. What age is he,
Devine?" Moore explains the divergence of all these opinions about
Devine's age when he describes Devine: "He was a tall man, yet did not
seem so: not youthful, yet somehow young; a man whose appearance
suggested some painful uncertainty." (p.6)

Devine's acquaintance with Una Clarke shakes him out of his more
superficial bachelor habits. He begins to pay more attention to his
appearance: he shaves off the mustache which ages him and dresses as
a younger man. He realizes, however, that he cannot change certain deeper
aspects of his character. His self-restraint which borders on passivity is
too deeply engrained in his character. Moore skillfully brings out this
trait in his depiction of Devine's language. In the first place, Dev is not
garrulous and his speech is often awkward and hesitant, dotted with "ah's"
and nervous "ha, ha's." He frequently lets a remark pass rather than
speaking out and causing a dispute. Una Clarke complains to him that
he would betray his own mother to avoid a row. (p.192) Moore carefully
builds up a picture of Devine's polite deference to other people. No matter
how rude or insensitive Una and Tim Heron are in conversation with him,
he rarely defends himself. Devine's courtesy is exemplified by his relation-
ship with Goehegan, the gym master, who is snubbed by all the other lay
staff. Moore remarks, however, that "Mr. Devine, who did not like to
hurt any man's feelings, never had the heart to put Goehegan in his place
and as a result, Goehegan sought his company with the tenacity of a poor
relation." (pp.83-4) This picture of Devine as "the fella that wouldn't
say boo to a dead duck, tripping over himself agreeing with everybody," (p.49)
makes Devine's outburst at the end of the novel all the more dramatic:

It was as though heaven had thundered at his impudence.
In one moment of defiance he had negated the years of obe
dience and respect.

But Devine's "moment of defiance" is brief; it is much more natural for
him to go on being the humble and deferential person he has been through­
out the novel.

Devine’s circumspect nature explains his sheer horror at the thought
of scandal, and indeed, the word, "scandal", is so loaded with emotion
that throughout the novel scandal seems more heinous than sin itself. At
first Devine sees only the possibility of scandal; he realizes that coaching
young, Protestant Una Clarke and taking her to public restaurants will not
be viewed as innocent behaviour by the authorities. On the contrary, "the
authorities would say he had courted an occasion of sin; he had risked
giving scandal." (p.78) Then, because Tim Heron accuses him of illicit
behaviour, a scandal does in fact develop when three students overhear
their conversation. The three boys are caned by the Dean of Discipline for
"malicious slander,...sneaking under windows, listening to your elders,
giving scandal to two other boys." (p.94) After Heron's second angry conver­
sation with Devine outside his classroom, Devine is appalled by the reali­
zation that his students have overheard Heron's angry words. Devine thinks
of his students as "twenty-eight little wireless transmitters, primed with
scandal, ready to broadcast it all over the school, all over the city," (p.161)
and after the doggerel and graffiti appear on the walls of the boys' lavatory,
Devine thinks of all the day boys as "little talking newspapers, primed with
When the President begins the discussion which is to decide Devine's fate, he announces, as if it were his text for a sermon, "Woe to the scandal giver." (p.230) The irony of the novel is that Devine, the circumspect and innocent victim of scandal, does suffer all the woes for a sin that was never committed. At the end of the novel, Devine broods sadly on his fate:

He would never live it down. He had not even been allowed to disgrace himself, to run off to Australia or Canada or someplace, and never be heard of again, a man to be gossiped about, a man who ruined himself. No, he had promised the President he would not resign. He must ignore the whispers and the smiles: he must even pretend to be friends with that lunatic, Tim Heron. (pp.241-2)

Diarmuid Devine's terrible fate is that he must go on living as before his abortive scandal, working at the same job, living at the same house, associating with the same people, and, in all probability, still telling them what they want to hear.

Two characters in later novels whose lives and language stand in contrast to Diarmuid Devine's are Brendan Tierney and Fergus Fadden. All three characters share a common background of Catholic families and St. Michan's school, but Brendan and Fergus have both renounced their religion and escaped the narrow Belfast world for North America. There they both make a living as writers -- a further indication of their more liberated lives. While Devine always plays a background role as teacher (Those who can, do; those who can't, teach.) and stagemanager, Brendan and Fergus are both actively making their places in the literary scene. Brendan, who is just about to publish a novel, is more self-consciously
literary in his speech than Fergus, a twice-published novelist who is
less anxious to prove he is a writer. Both expatriates seem to have
left Diarmuid Devine miles behind in a musty, unchanging Belfast boys'
school. And yet, their language for all its uninhibited Americanisms,
still bears traces of their Irish Catholic pasts. Sometimes the traces
have been profaned -- "Jesus Christ" is usually a meaningless expletive
for Fergus (p.4) -- but still their speech has a religious Irish cast which
suggests that childhood influences are never completely erased.

Brendan Tierney's language reveals his intense involvement with
a literary life; his childhood boast that he will become a famous and
dedicated writer continues to haunt him. Brendan's first-person narrative
contains many allusions to great writers such as Shakespeare, (pp.89-91)
Hawthorne, (p.285) Kafka, (p.291) and to great literature such as the Greek
myths. (pp.4,228) He quotes frequently from writers such as Baudelaire,
(pp.9,72) Joyce, (p.36) Eliot, (p.70) Tennyson, (p.128) Balzac, (p.178)
James Stephens, (p.277) and compares himself to Stephen Dedalus, (pp.50,193)
Flaubert and Gide, (p.82) Aschenbach, (p.246) Conrad, (p.12) and Eliot, (p.285).
He even wonders if he will take a place with Kierkegaard and Camus,
Dostoevsky and Gide. (p.276) Before Gerston and Key take an interest in
his novel, he fears that he may be one of the many false artists who inhabit
New York, a "Village Rimbaud, covered in the vomit of sickly pastiche." (p.60)
He refers to the literary life in New York as a "vast charade" played out by
writers whose ambitions are merely "private fantasies," and who have
"neither real beliefs not the courage to implement them." (p.82) Brendan, however, not only discovers that he has the courage to be "ruthless" in the pursuit of his ambition, but even that writing has become for him "the belief that replaces belief." (p.301) But well before Brendan makes this pronouncement to Max Berstein, he has been referring to his writing in religious terms. As a schoolboy, he is filled with the "conviction" that he will be a writer. (p.6) The letter which advises him of his first publication "baptizes him in a new communion." (p.30) He explains to his mother that he has made writing his religion: "It's an act of faith that by my own efforts some part of me will survive the undertaker." Naturally, he ignores his mother's riposte that his act of faith is not a sign of religion but of "pure vanity." (p.91) When he learns that his book will be published, he announces, "My entry into Jerusalem has begun." (p.191) Brendan becomes so fanatical about his novel, the creative work which he refers to as his "child," that he will not accede to his editor's demands for small revisions. Solomon Silver who does accept editorial suggestions, has, according to Brendan, committed an original sin. (p.296) But having jeered at his mother's orthodox Catholicism while elevating his work to the status of a religion, Brendan is jolted by his mother's death into realizing that the sacrifices he has demanded in the ruthless pursuit of his new religion have been as costly to himself as to others:

...I asked myself if my beliefs are sounder than my mother's. Will my writing change anything in my world? To talk of that is to believe in miracles. Is my motive any different from hers? Is it not, as was hers, a performance of deed
in the expectation of praise? And what is that praise really worth; how many of the praised living do I, in my secret heart, admire? To wish to join their company is to desire admission to a book of saints, the true facts of whose lives and achievements bear little resemblance to the public legends. As for the verdict of posterity, is it any more deserving of belief than a belief in heaven?... Is my belief in my talent any less an act of superstitious faith than my mother's belief in the power of indulgences? And, as for the ethics of my creed, how do I know that my talent justifies the sacrifices I have asked of others in its name? O Mama, I sacrificed you; .... Jan, I abandoned you... Am I still my mother's son, my wife's husband, the father of my children? Or am I a stranger, strange even to myself? (p.319)

The religious language which Brendan adopts to describe his literary aspirations is only party metaphoric; writing has indeed become Brendan's religion. The irony is that in gaining a literary reputation, Brendan has lost his own soul.

Brendan's description of himself as a stranger, strange even to himself, climaxes the use of the words, "stranger" and "strange" throughout the novel. Brendan, Jane, and Mrs. Tierney all have occasion to refer to one another as strangers. In the beginning, it is Brendan and Mrs. Tierney who are most struck by the strangeness of each other. At Brendan's first sight of his mother arriving in New York from Belfast, he cannot wave to her, for he stands "rooted in the sight of her as a stranger."14 (p.35) Mrs. Tierney is also aware that the son she remembers is no kin to the stranger who meets her.15 (p.35) After Brendan brings his mother home to meet Jane, their talk is like "the meeting of three strangers in a dentist's waiting room." (p.39) Mrs. Tierney sees Jane as "a pretty little gypsy," (p.38) While Jane thinks of her as "the false note" which disturbs the decor of her livingroom.
Jane and her mother-in-law do not achieve any rapport. Mrs. Tierney complains to Jane that she never addresses her by her name but refers to her instead as "she". When Jane does call her, "Mother", they are both surprised by the intimacy it implies:

"Why had she said "Mother"?" When the word came out it startled her as much as it did her mother-in-law, who looked up as though recognizing a sound in some foreign tongue.

This exchange takes place after Mrs. Tierney has left her children's home, and in the meantime, Jane finds that she has totally lost her persona of mother-in-law. To Jane she has become again, "an elderly stranger, uninterested and uninteresting, a stranger who politely asked after the children,..." Mrs. Tierney is left alone in New York (although a stranger, Mrs. Hofstra, does invite her to tea), which explains why, as Brendan admits, "She died alone in the limbo of a strange apartment and lay dead until, by accident, a stranger found her." (p.318)

The formerly close relations between Brendan and Jane also deteriorate to a cold detachment. Jane, who has erotic dreams of a dark ravisher, "a feral stranger," finds her dreams coming true in the person of Vito Italiano. Although Vito is no more to her than a stranger ("She giggled: he was a stranger; the whole thing was a dream." p.168), her relationship with Brendan is affected by her affair. Brendan typically misunderstands her change in behaviour, never guessing that infidelity might be the cause: "It was strange: I felt as though I was at last master in my own house and, strangely, our lovemaking reflected it." (p.177)
At the end of the novel, Jane discovers that she loves no one in the world. Her sister, Barbara, is a stranger, (p.309) and Brendan is "a person strange and familiar to her as her parents had been strange yet familiar when she was a little girl." (p.308) After the many earlier repetitions in varied contexts, the word "stranger" as used by Brendan to refer to himself - "Who is that stranger? I met him at my mother's funeral." (p.319) is powerfully evocative of the preceding narrative in which all three characters become strangers to each other.

Fergus Fadden is the character whose background and present status most resemble Brendan Tierney's. Fergus is also a littérature. He quotes from Xenophon, (p.4) Ben Jonson, (p.11) Cyril Connolly, (p.94) and James Joyce, (p.105) and makes references to Notes from Underground, (p.76) Kant, (p.77) and the French anti-novelists. (p.132) While Brendan is inspired by Georges Clemenceau who worked unacknowledged in New York (p.112), Fergus takes courage from the example of Faulkner who endured in Hollywood. (p.34) Fergus' language links him to several other Moore protagonists as well. He shares Gavin Burke's predilection for modern poets and quotes from Eliot (p.107) and Louis MacNeice. (p.172). Like Gavin, Fergus remembers being very impressed with the first actual writer he met, Hugh Gildea, who looked like D.H. Lawrence. (p.170-3). And more important, the pattern of language which expresses Gavin's anxiety over failing is repeated in Fergus, as Fergus is constantly assailed by the meaningless of his life. Fergus is variously described as afraid, ashamed, humiliated, depressed, and anxious. Fergus realizes that the ghosts he imagines visit him are in fact voicing all his "irrational
fears, self-accusations, and doubts." (p.105-6) Although, as he confesses, Fergus has held religious doubts "from the very beginning," (p.122) the figures of priests keep recurring in his visions as arbitrary authoritarian figures who sit in judgment on Fergus' character and life. The appearances of Father Kinneally, (p.14) Father Byrne, (p.121) Dr. Keogh, (p.124) and Father Alonzo Allen (p.195) indicate that Fergus' religious schooling, even though he has rejected it, still affects his subconscious thinking. He is amazed at his complete recall of the rosary (p.143) and at his ability to detail the six-part sin against the Holy Ghost. (p.124) Like Diarmuid Devine, he cannot escape his Catholic indoctrination and he is still intimidated by priests. Also like Devine, he has a brief moment of rebellion against the Reverend Daniel Keogh (even the name is the same), but his imagined violet caning of his former teacher leaves him weeping and ashamed of his vengeful fury against an old man. (p.127) Echoes of the voices of Brendan Teirney, Gavin Burke, and Diarmuid Devine occur in the language associated with Fergus, but surprisingly, Fergus also shares certain characteristics of speech, in particular a childish quality, with Ginger Coffey, a character who is very unlike Fergus in most respects.

Ginger Coffey's juvenile language emphasizes his inability to achieve responsible adulthood; in Fergus' case, however, his childish language stresses his sense of insecurity. It is instructive that Fergus' confrontation with the past, in addition to forcing him to consider the deepest aspects of his character, also brings out the child in him. When his parents, (pp.24-5)
his Aunt Mary, (p.30) his older sister, (p.50) and the priests who were also
his teachers speak to him as if he were a child, he tends to respond in the
same vein. He often reverts to schoolboy diction (pp.14, 81-2, 185), and he
call his parents, "Daddy," and "Mama". At one point he withdraws like
a pouting child because his father will not recognize his success. But
when his father makes a sign of approval, Fergus tries to avoid him, for
"he could not bear to have his father speak to him as a grown-up placating
a child." (p.35) Fergus realizes that his fear of the ghosts is analogous
to the fear he felt as a boy playing frightening games of hide-and-seek.
Like a child, and in the child's language, he wishes the terrifying game
to end:

Somewhere, in these rooms, hidden in closets, under
beds, those others [the ghosts] waited, filled with
malicious, anticipatory glee, waited to jump out, yell,
make his heart thump. If only he could, if only they
would, let him stop, let him call, "Pax!" (p.37)

As more and more ghosts appear and as Fergus becomes more and more
accustomed to his former familiars, they begin to seem more real than the
actual people around him, particularly Dani and her mother whose American
qualities contrast to Fergus' Irish ghosts. Moreover, Fergus knows that his
apprehension of people from the past is especially keen since they are
people "he had seen, smelled, and sensed with the special strong perceptions
of a very young child." (p.114) It is with the imagination of a child that
Fergus thinks the children's playhouse as "haunted ground," which vividly
recalls "a fear he had last known as a schoolboy when he ventured at night
into the moonlit battlements of Doe Castle in Donegal." (p.121) But just as
fantastically, the playhouse also becomes a confessional where a ghostly
Father Byrne addresses Fergus as, "my child," as he hears Fergus's confession. When Father Byrne abruptly disappears, Dr. Keogh takes his place and begins to cane Fergus as if he were a subordinate student. Fergus, however, canes Dr. Keogh instead, "revenging himself and all other boys." (p.126) And naturally, when Fergus's school chum, Paddy Donlon arrives, they joke about their schoolmasters (Tiny Kelly, Stinks Garvey, Froggy Pusey) like a pair of schoolboys themselves, (pp.176-7) and discuss their childish misconceptions about their parents. (pp.178-9) And so, although Fergus grows accustomed to the ghosts, he never ceases to fear them or to revert to childish language when they appear.

The climax of the novel is a moonlight picnic on the beach arranged by the ghosts for Fergus as formerly they arranged his birthday picnics at the seaside. Fergus assumes that he is finally going to discover why his past has chosen this time and this manner to reappear to him and that some kind of revelation is going to be made to him. He feels that he is once again "the birthday boy, unscoldable", (p.206) but discovers instead that he is being placed on trial for his sins of omission by a crowd of hostile strangers. When he pleads for help from his family, they merely play an obtuse game of Twenty Questions with him. He finally gives up looking to his family for help and accepts Elaine Rosen's verdict: "Don't be childish. You know they're no help." (p.218) And indeed, Fergus' father's final word to him is no more than a warning that unless he finds some meaning in his life, then his life is meaningless. (p.227) By the end of the novel, Fergus' father has ceased addressing him as a child, and Fergus, a much wiser man, has ceased replying in kind.
In the depiction of his two female protagonists, Moore is no less concerned with building up a pattern of language in association with each character which is both meaningful and appropriate. The language which Moore ascribes to Judith Hearne is particularly effective: her speech is a wonderful amalgam of prejudice ("She'd find the commonness in him, quick enough, seeing she had it in hereself." p.76), gentility ("Just a soupçon of cream." p.10), ingenuousness (Bernard Rice is "creepy-crawley and a "slyboots" p.17), and self-deception ("A drink would put things right." p.106). Moreover, Judith Hearne is given to repeating herself -- she always announces herself at the O'Neill's with the same,"It's only me." (p.71) -- and therefore, her speech is easy to parody as the O'Neill children are quick to prove. Judith Hearne's language, then, conveys both the pathetic and ludicrous aspects of her character.

Since Judith Hearne is a practicing Catholic before the climax of the novel, her conversation has a religious strain. She regularly seeks comfort and hope in prayers and novenae. But religion is not her only source of comfort; certain repeated phrases indicate that she finds more solace in her few possessions and the language with which she describes them. Even at the end of the novel when all her hopes have collapsed, she is comforted by the sight of her "familiar things." The photograph of her Aunt D'Arcy and the coloured oleograph of the Sacred Heart reassure her as they did at the outset of the novel, and she thinks, "When they're with me, watching over me, a new place becomes home." (pp.18 and 223).
Similarly, Judith Hearne finds in her buttoned, pointed shoes and her quaint description of them, a sense of security:

She looked down at her long pointed shoes. It was always comforting to look at them when tears threatened. The little buttons on them, winking up at her like wise little friendly eyes. Little shoe eyes, always there. (p.78)

On one occasion, however, the sight of her shoes and the repeated incantation, "little shoe eyes, always there," do not alleviate her sorrow. When James Madden rudely abandons her in the street, she finds that, "the magic didn't work." (p.134) For the most part, however, the magic phrases which Judith invokes in times of distress are more potent than prayers.

The source of Judith Hearne's distress lies, of course, in her utter loneliness, a loneliness which can only be filled by "Mr. Right" and children. (p.114) But men, as Moore points out when Judith is introduced to Bernie Rice, always turn away from her: "He stared at Miss Hearne with bloodshot eyes, rejecting her as all males had before him," (pp.9-10) and the O'Neill offspring, the children Judith knows best, reject her hints of kinship. (p.141) "All men" and "reject" are the litany of Judith Hearne's despair. 22 When James Madden does not leave her, "as all men had gone before him," (p.26) Judith believes that her prayers for a husband have been answered. Consequently, when Madden later comes to reject her, she assumes that God has also turned away:

O God, ... I have renounced You, do You hear me, I have abandoned You. Because, O Father, You have abandoned me. I needed You, Father, and You did not answer. All men turned from me. And You, Father? You too. (p.209)
The final irony for Judith Hearne is that even the door of the tabernacle which she desperately tries to open to reaffirm her faith, "rejects" her. (p.211)

Since men, even a man who like James Madden is "common as dirt," (p.96) provide the path to Judith's salvation, the passages in which she imagines the unknown pleasures she could commit with a man are strikingly and unusually poetic:

Whiteness hers, he seized, revelled in. Virile he, his dark flashing eyes, they lifted beakers of wine and quaffed them, losing themselves in the intoxication of love, homage to Bacchus, lusts of the flesh. (p.124)

Sadly, the moments of sheer poetry in Judith Hearne's life can only be imagined; reality holds no greater charms for her than "the little shoe eyes, always there." That she should derive comfort at all from so slight a phrase, is a measure of the meanness of her fate.

Mary Dunne Lavery, by contrast, is "by all normal standards, a fortunate woman." (p.18) She lives in a well-appointed New York apartment with her successful playwright husband. But even Mary Dunne is subject to paranoia; in a world dominated by men, she feels that her identity as a woman is threatened. For Mary Dunne and Judith Hearne, men are both a source of and a cure for anxiety: while Judith Hearne accuses God of deserting her "as all men had before Him," Mary Dunne refers to her third husband as her Saviour and her new religion. (p.103) Of course, Judith Hearne's dilemma is more substantial, but Mary Dunne's fears do assume "ominous proportions" for her and even lead her to consider suicide.
Mary Dunne is much more the modern woman than Judith Hearne, and appropriately, her first-person account of a day's events reflect her proclivity to analyze and discuss her fears in a more sophisticated manner.

"I am a changeling who has changed too often, and there are moments when I cannot find my way back." (p.109) In thirty-two years Mary Dunne has assumed many different personae and the various names by which she has been known have frequently changed. She has been Mary Dunne, Mary Phelan, Mary Bell, Mary Lavery, other people have called her Mut, Maria, Martha, The Virgin Mary, and she has thought of herself as Big Gertie's daughter or old Dan Dunne's daughter. Mary is filled with panic when she cannot remember her name which is the symbolic representation of herself. For although she often castigates her "mulish, unbiddable memory," (p.170) her memories are, in fact, very precise: people, places, times are always exactly labeled in her accounts of the past. Mary, for instance, recalls the first time she met Janice Sloane in Montreal although Janice has to be reminded, and every name in Mary's story is exact:

I met Janice the time I came to Montreal with Hat to do that first story for Canada's Own. When I think of Montreal at that time, for some reason I remember one winter evening, snow on the ground and very cold, we were all bundled up in winter overcoats, scarves, furred gloves, and overshoes, coming out of a bar called the Blue Chip near the Stock Exchange, walking arm in arm, five of us, coming up a steep, slippery, icy little street toward St. James Street. It was Friday night and Hat and Charles (they'd been to school together at Upper Canada College) had run into each other after work. Janice and I had come down to the Blue Chip to join them, and Eddie Downes, the photographer, was there too....(p.95)

Every character, no matter how peripheral, who is mentioned in this novel is carefully named: Mary's hairdresser, Henri; Mackie McIvor's maid, Gert;
Janice Sloane's mother, Mrs. Dowson, and her former employer, the Duc de Mirepont, all these characters who are mentioned in passing are carefully named. This background of exact nomenclature makes Mary Dunne's uncertainty about her own name all the more bizarre, and her consequent fear, all the more understandable.

"Down Tilt," "Panic," "The Juarez dooms," -- by these recurrent phrases Mary Dunne expresses her depression. At moments of hypertension, "Mad Twin" as opposed to "Sensible Self" or "My Buddy" takes charge and makes Mary say things for which she does not feel accountable. These phrases are, however, not as telling as Mary's reversion to Catholic diction to express her strongest feelings. Consciously, she believes that "the last vestige of being a Catholic was the little part of me which saw [abortion] as murder," (p.131) but, in fact, many vestiges of her Catholic training remain in her speech and affect her behaviour. For example, after she is stricken with the realization that her mother's tumour may be malignant, she beings "to blubber out a plea to the Almighty." Of course, she tells herself that "prayers are charms, they are knocking on wood; " (p.16) but she nevertheless prays. Although Mary Dunne is no longer a true believer, she has not lost a religious habit of mind. Her expletives, "Sweet Jesus our Saviour," (p.45) and "Sweet Mother of God," (p.159) are quasi-prayers as much as exclamations. Certainly her Catholic training affects her attitude towards sexual love, for the language she uses to discuss her relations with men is religious. Before Mary (Moore could not have chosen a more apt name for his heroine whose latent Catholicism is such a powerful
force begins her account of three marriages, she explains that her anxiety over being thought promiscuous stems from her fears that she is like her apparently promiscuous father. (p.15) Following Catholic doctrine, she feels that the sins of her father have been visited upon her. From the outset, then, Moore establishes that in Mary's subconscious, sex and religion are linked.

There is no doubt that Mary Dunne, like Judith Hearne, does not seek her salvation in Christ but in a living man who, in the case of Terence, she then tends to deify. When her relationships with men fail, she immediately identifies herself as the guilty party, just as a Catholic accepts the blame for failing in his duties towards God. Mary is constantly judging herself in her relations with men, finding herself at fault, and suffering from her guilt. She remembers thinking immediately after her marriage to Jimmy Phelan that she has committed the first real mortal sin in her life:

I said to myself, You are a rotten person, Mary Dunne, you've married him, yet you don't even want to kiss him, let alone live with him the rest of your life. Talk about my rotten father, I felt I was twenty times as rotten as he ever was.(p.120)

Later, when Jimmy accuses Mary of being "cold as a bloody plaster saint," she believes him and thinks, "Jimmy's right,...I am cold, it's my fault, there's something wrong with me." (p.163) Mary's sexual relations with her second husband are unsuccessful from their first clandestine encounter, the aftermath of which she describes in religious terms: "Afterwards, I remember, there was a tenderness between us, there were I love you's
and do you love me's and yes I do's, the first prayers for our earthly
kingdom, the first of those litanies I would come to know as the prayers
of failure. . . . " (p. 34) In this marriage Mary feels guilty for not acknowledgeing the truth about her feelings and she expresses her guilt with
words taken directly from the Confiteor:

The tenderness, the I love you's: that was fear. Our
jokes and giggles were mild hysterics. I knew it, yet
I did not want to know it and that was my fault, my
fault, my most grievous fault. (p. 35)

And she feels an even greater guilt for confessing her infidelity to Hat
and telling him the truth at last about their marriage at a time when he
could not cope with these truths:

Gentlemen of the Jury, I remember distinctly that on
that very night... I was not myself. But that
excuse will not satisfy me. I am my own judge, it
is still Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa... (p. 101)

Mary also speaks of her third husband in religious terms. On four
occasions she parodies the Twenty-third Psalm to his praise, "Terence
is my saviour, I shall not want, he maketh me to lie down in green
pastures, he restoreth my soul." (p. 103) Although Mary enjoys good
relations with Terence -- she calls their love-making a "Mass of the
senses" (p. 160) -- even he can make her feel guilty. On one occasion
she regrets comparing him unfavourably to the writers he admires, and
she fears that because he may think that she is going mad, he will be
forced to commit her to an asylum. To save herself from this terrifying
thought, she begins to say an act of contrition, "Oh my God I am heartily
sorry for having sinned against Thee, because Thou art so good. I will never more offend Thee and I will amend my life." (pp.158-59) Of course, the "God" to which she makes this prayer could well be Terence.

Mary's strong sense of guilt has Catholic overtones which she herself does not recognize. She calls the depressions which her guilt inspire the "Juarez dooms," but she then proceeds to describe them in Catholic terms:

Did he know the Juarez dooms were on me, the electric-current dooms which cut me off from everyone else, for in these dooms it is not the world which is at fault, it is me who is at fault, my fault, my most grievous fault, yet I do not know my fault, the Juarez dooms are not about real things, I do not think about Hat's suicide, I do not know what it is I have done, and so, not knowing, I cannot forgive myself. I know only that I have done wrong, that I am being punished, that I will never be happy again. (pp.214-15)

Clearly, Mary Dunne's overwhelming guilt for having committed unknown sins is analogous to the notion of original sin which is equally inescapable for a devout Catholic.

Mary Dunne ends her narrative on a note of quasi-happiness. She has momentarily reassured herself of her identity, but her promise that she will not panic is spoken in a lengthy run-on sentence of the type which throughout the novel indicates severe emotional distress. Similarly, as she prides herself on being able to recall the "thoughts, words, and deeds of today," (p.217) she does not hear the echo of the Confiteor, "I confess to Almighty God, ...that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and deed...," which points again to her strong Catholic sense of sin and
subsequent guilt, or as she would say, to the "Juarez dooms."

Mary Dunne's language illustrates the enduring effects of her childhood training in Catholicism. Her speech, however, has another important dimension which reveals later influences on her character and which is an index of her more modern way of life. She is constantly making references to the worlds of theatre and cinema and seeing herself as well as her acquaintances as actors. Mary senses the insincerity of people like Hat Bell, who, she points out, "acted his whole life." (p.35) until, "at the end, [he was] so caught up in his self-dramatization, that he overplayed his role." (p.217) During her few hours with Janice Sloane, Mary is frequently aware that Janice is playing up her role as the brave, wronged wife (p.41) and enjoying the New York episode in her "great drama." (p.58) Janice's obvious pleasure in taking the part of a heroine makes her remark about actors -- "They're so dumb." -- all the more ironic. The bovine Ernie Truelove also reminds Mary of a character from films: a cow in a Disney cartoon. (p.169) But Mary, a sometime actress, finds even herself guilty of playing roles. When her agent tells her she is the ingénue type, she agrees, adding, "And in real life it's no different, I play an ingénue role, with special shadings demanded by each suitor." (p.31) She even wonders if acting itself was not just another role for her like the other careers she played at. Throughout her account of a day's events, Mary often sees herself as a figure from the entertainment world. She is by times "the triumphant prosecuting attorney," making the Perry Mason point, (p.27) the straight man in a vaudeville act,
(p.87) and even the cat in the movie cartoon who has just been handed a ticking bomb:

The bomb explodes and when the smoke clears there's the silly cat staring at the remains of the bomb in its paw. Pause. Then (quietly) the cat cracks into a thousand pieces. (p.7)

It is small wonder that Mary's sense of identity is also cracking into a thousand pieces since she and the people around her are very busily engaged in acting out deceptions. Mary often sees her past as a film ("Surreal as an early Buñuel film, I saw myself...", p.24) or as a play ("Those events are a play of which I remember every line, stage direction, entrance, and exit." p.65), and this penchant explains again why her memories destroy her sense of identity. She herself points out that when she tries to tell the story of her life, the result is "some false, edited little movie," (p.4) at the same time as she holds that "we are what we remember." (p.3) Obviously, if her sense of identity is based on something as insubstantial as "a false, edited little movie" or memories of a past in which she is never herself but an actress playing a role, she is bound to feel insecure. Mary Dunne's narrative contains many other references to entertainments, in particular to the plays, Marat-Sade (pp.39,177) and Macbeth (pp.100,150), which are both, appropriately, about madness and death. By making Mary Dunne's language reflect the world of acting, Moore is subtly explaining why Mary Dunne feels like a changeling.

I Am Mary Dunne is a novel based on memories. It begins with the proposition, "Memento ergo sum -- I remember, therefore I am" (p.3),
and traces Mary Dunne's memories over a life of thirty-two years. Naturally, the words, "remember" and "memory" and, unfortunately, "forget" and "lose one's memory" recur more frequently than any other words. For Mary Dunne, forgetting is as frightening an experience as it is for Fergus Fadden, especially since she believes that forgetting implies a kind of death ("As now, perhaps, I am beginning to die because some future me cannot keep me in mind." p.3) And yet, remembering can be an equally terrifying experience as Mary's reversion to Catholic diction in times of distress and her many allusions to the deceptive world of stage and film reveal.

Mary Dunne's Catholic remembrances, Judith Hearne's feelings of rejection, Fergus Fadden's anxieties, Brendan Tierney's new religion, Diarmuid Devine's scandal, Gavin Burke's failure, and Ginger Coffey's boyish trust in luck -- these are the themes which Brian Moore elucidates by the special patterns of language which he fashions around each protagonist. Such a pattern, according to David Lodge is "some significantly recurring thread which however deeply hidden in the dense texture and brilliance of local colouring, accounts for our impression of a unique identity in the whole." Because the readily discernible patterns of diction in Moore's seven novels are linked to his protagonists, "the unique identity" of each Moore novel is once again seen to be the result of Moore's overriding concern with the central character.
Footnotes for Chapter III


3. For further references to "gambling", see pp. 14, 47, 72, 180, 195, 242.

4. For further references to "luck" and "the luck of the Irish", see pp. 10, 22, 48, 84, 114, 198, 234.

5. For further references to "his ship would come in," see pp. 50, 93, 222, 242.

6. For further references to "hope," see pp. 22, 52, 80, 166, 186, 230.

7. For further references to "victory," see pp. 78, 152, 161, 174, 179, 243.

8. For further references to Gavin's sense of failure, see pp. 60, 112, 113, 115, 134, 158, 159, 170, 184.

9. For further references to "old Dev," see pp. 49, 61, 78, 109, 115.

10. See, for example, pp. 20, 24, 26, 30, 31-33, 47, 48, 65, 69, 74, 90, 92.

11. See, for example, pp. 17, 21, 39, 86, 164.

12. The word, "ruthless," used to describe Brendan's determination, appears many times. See pp. 11, 48, 49, 50, 80, 82, 83.

13. See pp. 6, 194, 282, 283.

14. See also pp. 4, 46, 49.

15. See also p. 87.

16. For further references to "strange" and "stranger," see pp. 34, 41, 254, 258, 314, 322.

17. See pp. 2, 3, 12, 36, 37, 38, 48, 88, 137.

18. See pp. 6, 17, 25, 109, 130.

20 See pp. 3, 24, 89, 101
21 See pp. 11, 214.
22 See pp. 11, 23, 26, 67, 123, 134.
23 See also p. 125.
25 See also p. 64
26 See also pp. 158, 160, 198.
27 See also p. 150.
28 See also pp. 43, 91, 92.
29 See also pp. 5, 7, 18, 22, 54, 81, 157, 197, 217.
30 David Lodge, Language of Fiction, p. 80.
CHAPTER IV        IMAGERY

Richard B. Sale: When does imagery come in as a part of the writing? I notice in almost all of the books there is a sequence of repeated images. Judith Hearne's button-eye shoes, for example. When does this come in the process?

Brian Moore: If it doesn't come in at the beginning, it doesn't come in. You've got to see that person wearing that kind of shoes -- I don't go back and put it in later. Perhaps I always will write books around a character.

Here is an instance where one can trust the artist as well as the work, for the tremendous wealth of visual detail which gives Moore's fiction an intensely realistic quality centres on the main character. Naturally, Moore is not only concerned with the clear depiction of his protagonist. He also creates an all-important setting, both the place and its atmosphere, which influences the main character, and he vividly portrays the minor characters with whom the protagonist interacts. Beyond creating the desired representation of characters and setting, the imagery of each novel provides psychological insights and makes social commentary when it pertains to the central character. Moore uses several imagistic techniques which recur, with variations, in all his novels. This repetition is in no way reprehensible since the techniques are totally successful in the full visual realization of both the main character and the novel itself.

The most notable visual technique used by Moore in the portrayal of his protagonist is the mirror image. At some point in every Moore novel, his protagonists have occasion to look at themselves in a mirror and to describe what they see. This technique results in part from Moore's desire to avoid authorial comment in favour of a more dramatic rendering, and it is also
particularity suited to Moore's interest in character since a mirror, which encloses the image in a frame, focuses the eye on a single figure while cutting off the surrounding area. The mirror image serves the obvious necessary purpose of telling the reader what the protagonist looks like, and the manner in which the protagonist perceives his own image is of psychological interest as well. Judith Hearne fondly enhances her mirror image to create the Judith Hearne of her illusions, (p.20) but Diarmuid Devine cannot alter the image he sees:

As he switched on the hall light, his face surprised him from the hallstand mirror. Disembodied, framed in that small rectangle, it stared: long, sad, bespectacled. The heavy mustache aged him, he realized. His face was of another species from the handsome men who daily looked down on him from cigarette, shaving cream, and hair tonic advertisements. Wouldn't he look ridiculous in a cinema poster? It would have to be a comedy picture. And his clothes. Old flannels and his father's watch chain in his waistcoat. He looked middle-aged. (p.53)

Similarly, Fergus Fadden finds that neither side of a makeup mirror can hide the fact that he is too old for Dani, the mirror's owner:

Fergus shut his mouth on his loose, magnified teeth and turned Dani's mirror around, hoping that on the other side, in the smaller projection, his face would seem better-looking. But in the smaller projection his face, no longer blurred by magnification, was lined, harder, the face of an aging young man under a false winter tan. (p.105)

Brendan Tierney's initial description of himself, as befits the egocentric writer of a first-person narrative, is self-consciously delivered without the aid of a mirror. "Shall I describe myself and get it over with?" is his introduction to a rather studied portrait of himself. (p.6) The manner in which he describes himself is here more descriptive of his character than
the visual details he vouchsafes. But Brendan, too, is caught and revealed in a mirror image. His lack of sophistication and tact is mirrored back to him as he impetuously barges into an interview with a famous writer who lives in an elegant New York apartment: "As I crossed the mirrored foyer I saw, reflected, an untidy, big-handed farmer in his best blue Sunday-go-to-meeting-suit." (p.291)

Generally, Moore as author does not make overt comments about the mirror image his characters reflect. He either lets a character comment on his own appearance, as Ginger Coffey does when he castigates the childish man he sees in the mirror, (p.93) or Moore adds a tell-tale detail which is eloquent in itself. When, for example, Gavin Burke who is most eager to be an adult, is convinced by his appearance that he has finally achieved manhood, at least part of what he sees gives the lie to his conviction:

...Gavin walked toward the mirrors, admiring the sight of himself, a grown-up stranger in his first dinner jacket... and marveled how a simple thing like a rented dinner jacket made one, at last, the compleat grownup. He eased the white handkerchief a little farther out of his breast pocket, and then, his main worry, fiddled with the black tie -- tied for him by his mother -- which had an ugly trick of twisting lopsidedly, one bow up, one bow down. (p.157)

That lopsided black tie, inexpertly arranged by his mother, does detract from the image of "the compleat grownup."

What each character sees in the mirror reveals a truth about himself which he either chooses to accept as do Diarmuid Devine, Fergus Padden, Brendan Tierney, and Ginger Coffey, or to ignore, as do Judith Hearne and Gavin Burke. In either situation, the way the character interprets what he sees provides an insight into his character, or in the case of Mary Dunne,
into her dilemma. Mary Dunne's problem of finding herself among the many personae she has assumed is exemplified by what she sees in the mirror:

Naked in the bathroom, I stood and stared at myself in the full-length mirror. I had run a bath, and just as I went to get into the tub, I saw myself naked in this mirror. I looked at my face, a mask which looked back at me, at my body, which hid what happens inside it, for this is hell and I am in it,...(p.215)

One knows less about Mary Dunne's actual physical appearance than that of any other Moore protagonist. One does know, however, that she is beautiful and that other people who are attracted by her good looks fail to know the real Mary Dunne who, as she says, is hidden behind her pleasing exterior. Mary Dunne's difficulty in establishing her real identity is compounded by people like Mackie and Jimmy, who, in the past, forced her to fill an image they created which was not herself. As she explains,

I remember in the cab this morning I thought of Jimmy, who said he loved me but who in reality wanted a face and a body which happened to be mine. Sad as it sounds, Mackie was the same. For she loved a girl she invented, a girl she called Maria. There was no Maria. There was only me. (p.166)

Ernie Truelove also loves a version of Maria he has created which, as Mary understands, is distorted by the mirror of his memory:

In the carnival hall of mirrors which is our memory we distort what we see. In Ernie's mirror image of me, I am magnified, elongated into a girl who led him on, the object of his great, unhappy, unfulfilled love. While he, in the equal of opposite distortion of my mind's mirror is reduced to a squat mannikin from my past, a dull stranger, remembered only for his minor quirks. (p.185)

And so, it is less important in I Am Mary Dunne that one knows exactly
what Mary Dunne sees reflected in her mirror than that one understands how her good looks encourage her admirers to create other Marys in her image that nullify her own sense of herself.

Clothes also form part of the visual image of Moore's protagonists and his description of their attire is both rich in detail and in nuance. Judith Hearne's long pointed shoes with the button eyes have often been commented on, but equally revealing is her penchant for red clothing which Moore uses to illustrate the discrepancy between the image she feels she creates and the way other people see her. As she dresses for her first breakfast in her Camden Street boarding house, she wonders,

Now, what to wear? A touch of crimson, my special cachet. But what? Reds are so fickle. Still, red in my colour. Vermilion. Yes, the black dress with the vermilion touch at collar and cuffs. (p.21)

To complete her outfit she adds her garnets and her ruby ring, as later she puts on her red raincoat and red hat with wax flowers. Unfortunately, other characters do not appreciate her "special cachet." The cashier at her bank thinks Judith Hearne is "a sight:"

On the wrong side of forty with a face as plain as a plank, and all dressed up, if you please, in a red raincoat, a red hat with a couple of terrible-looking old wax flowers in it. And two, it's the mortal truth, two red rings on the one hand. (p.176)

Miss Friel is equally sarcastic about Judith Hearne's brazen, as she sees it, appearance in red:

"Well, you should have seen her. She had on a red dress, bright red, you've never seen the like of it. And a red hat, I tell you, it was comic." (p.181)
Even Moore describes Judith Hearne as, "Bizarre and faltering in her crimson raincoat and her waxen flowered red hat," when she walks to the bus stop with Shaun O'Neill. (p.79) Judith Hearne's resistance to aging into a drab spinsterhood as represented by her red clothing is both valiant and pathetic, especially in the last portion of the novel when, with her red raincoat unbuttoned and her red hat awry or tumbling off her head, she makes a final effort to assert her illusions. (pp. 197, 198, 202, 204, 205, 208.) When Judith Hearne has faced the truth of her situation, she is reduced to wearing a grey, institutional dressing gown, all colour gone. Her final mirror image, she admits, is of an old woman. (p.219)

A change in attire also attends Ginger Coffey's change in status and even symbolizes his change in outlook. Unfortunately, Ginger believes that clothes make the man. (p.6) Moreover, as Hallvard Dahlie explains, Ginger's exalted view of himself as a "Dublin Squire," who wears a Tyrolean hat and a sheep-skin-lined coat, constitutes the major obstacle in Ginger's progress toward self-knowledge. In order to reach a true understanding of his abilities, Ginger must first strip away the cloaks of identity he has assumed. Ginger's gift of the Alpine buttons and brush from his hat, is, according to Dahlie, "the first step in divesting himself of the external manifestation of his assumed poses." And later, Ginger's decision to accept the position of diaper delivery man forces him to complete "the denuding process begun earlier."  

Off went his Tyrolean hat, his hacking jacket, his gray tweed trousers and brown suède boots. On the bench they lay, the last remains of Ginger Coffey. On went the uniform, anonymous and humiliating. (p.114)
The hated anonymity is momentarily essential for Ginger since it is, as Dahlie points out, "a necessary stage between the discarding of his false identity and the assumption of his true one."\(^6\)

Gavin Burke's hated uniform symbolizes for him his humiliating association with the failures who people the Air Raid Precautions Unit. His uniform is also an object of derision for his family and relatives who jeer at him for looking like Charlie Chaplin (p.10) or a detested Black and Tan. (p.11) But the fact that Gavin's uniform does not fit him properly indicates that he, in truth, is not an A.R.P. misfit and that his family's dire predictions for his future will not materialize. At the end of the novel, Gavin's uniform actually gives him a new-found authority,\(^7\) just as the yellow slicker which had caused him much embarrassment during decontamination drills acquires a grisly usefulness during the coffining of the dead which is the job that establishes Gavin's manhood once and for all. (p.231)

Moore's portrayal of Gavin Burke presents an interesting contrast to his depiction of Diarmuid Devine. On the one hand, Gavin can see himself as an adult, who drinks in pubs, looks like Ronald Coleman, or who sits with an older woman, Lili, on his knees, but Moore constantly shows that Gavin's outward appearance does not match his adult pretensions. On the other hand, Diarmuid Devine thinks that changing his old mis-matched clothes for newer, sportier togs will somehow effect a rejuvenating change in his character. But the change is all exterior. Unlike Gavin, Diarmuid has no interior self-image to match the younger man he tries to appear.
The Emperor of Ice-Cream is not the only novel in which the apparel of the younger generation symbolizes the rift between parent and child. In An Answer from Limbo, Mrs. Tierney finds Brendan's appearance in dark glasses disturbing. She wonders, "What was he doing wearing dark glasses, looking like some Dago Dan you wouldn't trust your girls with?" (p.32) When Brendan accuses her of not knowing him -- they haven't seen each other for several years -- she replies, "How would I know you?...Is it a tin cup you're earning your living with?" (p.32) Her astonishment at his North American habit of wearing sun glasses would be unimportant, were it not the occasion of her first, irremediably damaging remark to Brendan's wife, Jane, who is one quarter Jewish. When Jane asks Mrs. Tierney if she finds Brendan changed, Mrs. Tierney's innocent but tactless reply symbolizes the inevitable division which will characterize their ensuing relation:

"Sure, I didn't know him at all, when he met me,""she said, smiling." "With those dark glasses on him, I took for for some Jew Man." (p.38)

It is small wonder that all three Tierneys continue to regard each other as strangers.

Similarly, Fergus Fadden's ghostly father cannot imagine that the older, foreign-looking ("I'd say he's a Yank!") Fergus is, in fact, the son he last saw twenty-one years ago in Ireland. Dr. Fadden comments on Fergus' odd clothes and in particular on his "damn awful shoes...Gutties, we used to call them." (p.19) Before they even begin to speak, Fergus' father has established himself as a distant authoritarian figure who still criticizes his son's clothes, although his son is an adult.
Just as Moore uses the mirror image differently in *I Am Mary Dunne* from all the other novels, so he also takes a differing approach to Mary Dunne's clothes. She is the only protagonist whose clothes are not described in any detail, although she herself describes what other characters wear. Terence, for example, she remembers wore a "black and white houndstooth jacket, tan corduroy trousers, blue workshirt, red kerchief, suède boots, " to their near-disastrous luncheon before Mary left for Montreal. (p.47) When Mary does make a point of describing what she wore on a particular occasion, it is only because she feels guilty about her choice of clothes. After Mary has become involved with Terence, she does not dress up for her husband:

I picked out the green and lilac silk, which was expensive and okay for a good restaurant but not something I'd ever liked. After all, I was going out with Hat, only Hat. I was not in love with Hat,...Yet when I remember picking that green and lilac dress I did not like, it makes me want to cry for Hat. (p.67)

Many years later, Mary still feels guilty for this sin of omission.

In addition to presenting a vivid description of the central character in terms of their dress, Moore also includes in each novel a scene in which the protagonist is revealed either partially or completely disrobed. Such scenes involve a certain loss of dignity for the character in question, but it is this slipping of the public mask which also lays bare their humanity. Judith Hearne, for example, often appears foolish, pathetic, or even comic, but nowhere do her failings appear more humanly forgiveable than the moment when she presents hereself in drunken dishevelment to Moira O'Neill,
a woman Judith has always half hated and half admired. Mrs. O'Neill is embarrassed to see the neck of a gin bottle sticking out of Judith Hearne's bag: "Somehow, it was like seeing Miss Hearne with her clothes undone." (p.197) The scenes which have the same effect in Moore's other novels do involve some degree of undress. There is Diarmuid Devine, squatting naked behind the bed to hide his "white, unpublic" body from Una. (p.148) The picture he presents in this humilitating scene epitomizes his inexperience and modest circumspection. There is Ginger Coffey whose boylike attitude to his wife is revealed when, afraid that she will discover he has slept in his clothes, he hurriedly undresses and hops into a makeshift bed in his underpants, closing his eyes as his wife passes the door. (p.41) There is Fergus Fadden who blushes at the image of Mrs. Sinclair finding him making love to her daughter because this image reminds him of being similarly caught by Peggy Sanford's "Mam," and even reminds him that his ghost-parents may also catch him in flagrante. Fergus' parents, like Ginger's wife, can still make him feel like a guilty child. (p.130) And there is a humiliated Gavin Burke, naked in a shower during decontamination drill in which he, as a supposed victim, must endure the application of bleach paste by the "lunatic sadist," Post Officer Craig. (p.76) It is not surprising that this experience causes Gavin to reflect that his present life is degrading him. In all these scenes, Moore is pointing to the vulnerability of his protagonists when they, as Fergus Fadden would say, are seen in "a state of nature." (p.16)
In *An Answer from Limbo* and *I Am Mary Dunne*, Moore uses the image of his protagonist as naked and defenseless to special effect. Naturally, Brendan, in his autobiographical account, never places himself in such an exposed position; Brendan is always carefully wearing the mask of the artist. He does humiliate himself in his interview with Sol Silver, but then, in Brendan's view, Sol Silver is a compromised man whose opinion does not count. Moreover, Brendan's brash behaviour fits his portrait of the artist temporarily deranged, and, again in Brendan's view, genius is pardoned everything. It is precisely this narcissism which Brendan reveals in such an episode, that victimizes Brendan's wife and his mother. Therefore, they are the characters whom Moore presents as frail and mortal in their nakedness. First Jane, who has concluded that her marriage is a failure, is pictured sitting naked in a chair, "hugging her breasts as though she cradled a baby." As she watches her sleeping husband, she realizes that he represents no more to her than a figure, "without whose protection and help, life would be uncertain and difficult." (p.308) At no other point in *An Answer from Limbo* does Jane appear so totally defenseless. Secondly, Mrs. Tierney is pictured by Moore as she lies injured and dying on the floor of a strange apartment. This description, unlike any other portion of the novel, is printed in italics:

She lay, just inside the door of the sitting room, on her left side, her arms raised as though she had been shot down in the act of putting her hands up. She had moved her head clear of the vomit on the rug and her face rested on the floor boards. Her hair fell over her eyes, her nightdress was rucked up, baring her buttocks and lower abdomen. (p.270)
The voice one hears in this passage is apparently Moore's, as he calls attention to the cruel neglect of Mrs. Tierney's children who cause her naked suffering.

In *I Am Mary Dunne*, Mary Dunne alludes several times to her doom dreams, "when naked is panic; when naked is the dooms, the glooms, the nightmare in which I see myself in unknown hotel rooms with nameless men;..." (p.160) She recognizes that this dream stems from her irrational fear of being thought promiscuous, but she is nevertheless unnerved by its recurrence. To her greater distress, Ernie Truelove surprises her when she is only half-dressed and later uses the incident to insinuate that Mary Dunne is one of the "so-called actresses" who appear naked on stage, "just like a whore." (p.178) Ernie's cruel insult reinforces Mary's guilty fear which has already inspired her "doom dreams." Moore uses the image of Mary *en déshabille* and the incident based on it to illustrate that Mary Dunne is a victim of both masculine insensitivity and of an over-active sense of guilt. In all of Moore's novels, the image of the protagonist as naked and vulnerable gives the reader a sense of his human frailty, while in *I Am Mary Dunne* and *An Answer from Limbo*, the image relates to major themes of the novel as well.

Mary Dunne's "doom dreams" are an example of another imagistic technique which Moore uses to reveal the psychology of his protagonists. The dreams, nightmares, and daydreams of Moore's main characters are so vividly rendered that they literally become part of the imagery of each
novel. Dreams or nightmares, like Mary Dunne's, generally elucidate the fears of the dreamer: Mary Dunne fears she is the promiscuous daughter of a promiscuous father; (pp. 15, 64, 160) Mrs. Tierney fears for the salvation of her immortal soul; (p.211') Brendan Tierney fears that a boyhood boast of becoming a great writer will not come true; (p.6) and Fergus Fadden fears that his hallucinations of the day are a sign of impending madness. (p.160) Ginger Coffey experiences a waking nightmare when he is afraid that his wife really does love Gerry Grosvenor. (pp.148-49) Waking fantasies are even more prevalent than dreams in Moore's novel since he is frequently concerned with recounting how a character's illusions prevent him from accepting the realities of his life. Moore lavishes considerable detail on such fantasies which make his characters' desires abundantly clear. Brendan Tierney, for example, enjoys a highly flattering and dramatic vision of his resignation from his position as a magazine writer:

I used to have a dream in which I, the lowly editorial slave, walk down the corridors of my place of employment for the last time. There is a murmuring in the cubicles as I pass the receptionist's desk and enter the office of Mackinley Downes, editor-in-chief. There is further murmuring as Downes's voice is heard, first reproachful, then entreatying. He offers me a raise in salary; he paints a vivid picture of my possible future with the magazine. Finally, in a last effort to keep me, he proposes a year's leave of absence. All his offers are ignored. I resign. Envious eyes follow me as I walk to the elevators, my parting bonus check in hand.

But yesterday fact did not fit fantasy. (p.58)

For most of Moore's main characters, fact does not fit fantasy, but their fantasies, important visual elements in each novel, are nevertheless a gauge of the illusions which the characters harbour. Judith Hearne's
fanciful daydreams grow increasingly divorced from reality as she approaches her final breakdown, in apparent compensation for her many disappointments. Her domestic fantasies of being married to Madden (p.29) are less inconceivable than her erotic daydream of being sexually assaulted by her doctor's assistant. (p.125) This fantasy is followed by an even more incredible daydream in which she imagines herself first ill and then dead, to everyone's chagrin, especially Madden's. (pp.165-66) In Judith Hearne's grandest illusion of all, she sees herself possessed of wealth, beauty, dignity, important friends and admirers, when in fact, she is approaching her greatest humiliation. Driving in a taxi to Earnscliffe Home, Judith pictures herself as,

_A grande dame, Miss Judith Hearne of Bellavista, Malone Road, Belfast, relaxed among the soft cushions as her Daimler purred politely past lesser cars. Musical, she thought of the musicale she would give that evening. Gieseking had promised to be present and there would be a small recital...The butler would announce the guests, yes, they were all there, the handsome soldier she had admired so much in the advertisements for The Greys' cigarettes. A diplomat, French,...an old lady who wore a strange sash, Maude Gonne MacBride,...And in a corner, dressed properly in evening clothes; affable in the manner of his race, James Madden, impressed, hardly daring to speak to her. Gracious, she smiled at him over the Lord Bishop's hand...Father Quigley, the bishop said, Oh my dear Miss Hearne, I don't seem to recall his name.... Princely, the bishop passed, made way for Moira O'Neill gushing, Oh Judy dear, what a wonderful evening! Eyebrows slightly lifted: Oh, did you enjoy it, Moira dear? And how are the children? So long since I've seen them, yes, it was Paris this time, the Duc de Guise simply insisted I stay another week. I've been so terribly rushed. Yes, I must try to get over some Sunday._ (pp.187-88)
What sweet yet innocent revenge Judith Hearne enjoys in this, her last and best fantasy, before she is confined to Earnsliffe Home as a patient.

Ginger Coffey also seeks revenge in dreams against the people who, in his opinion, have wronged him. When his wife berates him and his daughter nags him, he enters a world where "no man was saddled with grinning wives and ungrateful daughters, there were unlimited funds to spend, the food was plentiful and non-fattening, there were... no sneerers and mockers waiting to see you fail, no rents to pay, no clothes to buy, no bank managers." (p.40) And again, when his wife and daughter leave him, he imagines himself living a happy, dignified, and solitary life without them as "a mystery man, the hermit of the Y.M.C.A." After many years of isolation, he tells a female singer that her voice has been his sole companion:

Would she pause, the tears coming to her eyes, would she put out her gloved hand, leading him towards her limousine, saying Take me to your room and tell me all about yourself? What is your name? Why is a handsome, intelligent man like yourself living this hermit's life. Why? Ah, it was criminal of that wife and daughter to abandon you. You gave them up? Why? Because you had your pride, you refused to stay where you were no longer wanted. Ah, you are a saint, James Francis Coffey. A saint to have put up with them so long. (p.106)

But Ginger can also reason himself out of his fantasies: he soon recognizes that the "Hermit of the Y.M.C.A." would have no one to applaud his sacrifices, and after all, "What good was it, doing something, if nobody in the whole world knew you were doing it?" (p.106)
Ginger's emigration to Canada was based on a dream of the adventurous possibilities of the New World. While still in Ireland he had decided that although it was too late to do the things he had once dreamed of, "paddling down the Amazon with four Indian companions, climbing a peak in Tibet or sailing a raft from Galway to the West Indies," it was not too late "to head off for the New World in search of fame and fortune." (pp.13-14) He discovers, however, that the New World does not automatically offer him opportunities for success and that Montreal is a city of cold realities. It is not until the end of the novel that he has a vision of the city as promising, and this only after he has been released from prison: "The city, its roofs and cornices crusted with snow, its rushing inhabitants muffled in furs, seemed a busy, magical place, a joy to be abroad in." (p.235) The mature Ginger, however, realizes that his vision is but part of a fleeting moment of happiness.

Diarmuid Devine in *The Feast of Lupercal* is far too self-demeaning to permit himself flattering or promising daydreams. Still, on one occasion, Diarmuid does allow himself to dream of a future possibility, but even this dream is a measure of Devine's self-deprecation. Because of his mistaken notion that Una is pregnant, he is overjoyed by the prospect that she will have to marry him:

...his face grew suddenly excited as though he had received an inspiration too startling to control. He began to walk, more quickly now, as though his body must respond to this new and powerful stimulus.

Supposing the worst were true? Well then, the Dublin fellow could not marry twice, could he? A husband would have to be found, a husband who would take the child and breed legitimate brothers and sisters to keep it company. She would not refuse him. She could not. (p.121)
Devine is further delighted by the thought that Una, a girl in her position, would not laugh at his lack of experience on their wedding night. (p.25)

This pathetic, self-sacrificing vision, so unlike the romantic daydreams of Judith Hearne and Ginger Coffey, fails to materialize, for Una does not need a husband after all. And as Devine apparently senses, she would not have him unless it were necessary.

Aside from the occasional outright fantasy -- "Maybe they'll name a theatre after me. The Burke." (p.72) -- Gavin Burke is also not given to harbouring elaborate daydreams. Like Diarmuid Devine, his visions of the future are generally connected with a possible eventuality, in his case, World War II. Gavin's apparent lack of concern for his future which his parents infer from his job with the A.R.P., stems from his reading of particular modern poets who have prophesied the utter destruction which war necessarily entails. Hence, the war produces in Gavin "a vision of the grownups' world in ruins:"

It would not matter in that ruined world if Gavin Burke had failed his Schools Leaving Certificate. The records would be buried in rubble. War was freedom, freedom from futures. There was nothing in the world so imposing that a big bomb couldn't blow it up. (p.7)

Gavin's notion of the war is highly romantic. He sees himself, "wearing his steel helmit, dashing into the house across the way to carry the typist downstairs, she half-naked and hysterical in her relief." (p.8) This romantic notion is abruptly amended, however, when Belfast is bombed. The people Gavin carries are seriously injured and the only naked females he touches are corpses.

Gavin's vision of the grownups' world in ruins is fulfilled, but to an altogether
different effect than Gavin had imagined.

Irony, which attends the unexpected consequences of dreams or visions which are fulfilled as Gavin's is, is the dominant mode of *An Answer from Limbo*, in which the dreams of all three characters are realized. While most of Mrs. Tierney's dreams are of the past, one of her truly frightening dreams is a vision of the future in which she imagines herself after death being judged by God (in her dream, her father) on Judgment Day. As she stands at the foot of a great staircase, dressed in a white nightgown stained with filth, she is accused of having acted out of self-interest. None of her relatives comes to her defense. Just as she feels the flames of hell at the back of her neck, she awakes in the stifling heat of a New York apartment. (pp. 211-13) Mrs. Tierney's sole dream of the future is actually prophetic: the pain at death, the absence of relatives, even the stained nightdress all become realities. Jane Tierney's daydreams of "potent, hairy Latins" also materialize when, as George Woodcock points out, she becomes the appalled mistress of a sexual acrobat named Vito Italiano. The adjective, "appalled", exactly describes Jane's amazed reaction to the unpleasant realization of her daydreams. Brendan is also appalled by the person he becomes when his dream of becoming a writer comes true. At his mother's funeral, he sees himself not as a feeling human being, but as a mere observer and recorder of events, —a writer. The dreams of all three characters become fact and always with the same ironical twist.

Moore's use of dreams as part of the visualization of his fiction is different in *Fergus* from his other novels. Here the visions are so realistic
that Fergus, himself, apparently accepts his hallucinations as phenomenal, or even "more than phenomenal, for a phenomenon in the Kantian sense could be an illusion..." (p.77) Fergus finds it virtually impossible to distinguish between real people and the vivid figures of dead or distant relations and friends from his past who shoulder into his present. When Boweri appears unannounced in Fergus' house, Fergus' first thought is that he is a hallucination too:

He saw Boweri in his ice-cream suit, royal blue shirt, orange-and-black scarf, white alpargatas. He saw Boweri laugh at his own joke, heard the stress of his breathing, even noticed a small pulse beating in Boweri's temple. Yet there was seemingly no difference in the reality of Boweri, who could be here in this place at this time, and these others, who could not. Thus a new anxiety was added to the day. From now on, how would he know who was real? (pp.67-68)

Certainly, Fergus' hallucinations of his ghostly visitors are as realistically rendered as any other characters in the novel. His sister, Maeve, for example, appears just as she must have looked as a school girl in her uniform with her hair done up in a thick braid, "and on her right breast was the school badge, showing a heart, a cross, and a wreath of thorns." (pp. 52-53) Like the other apparitions, she walks, talks, and even eats some food which she takes from Fergus' refrigerator. The realism of these ghostly visions is justified for, as Fergus explains to Maeve, he is the writer in their family, the person with the imagination to invent her. (p.54)

Yet another highly suggestive imagistic technique which Moore uses to exemplify the fears of his characters is the vivid portrayal of another character with whom each protagonist identifies; generally, Moore's
main characters see this character as a forboding image of their future. In *Judith Hearne*, the image of Edie Marrinan, sick and abandoned in a hostel run by nuns, is, indeed, prophetic. "You'll see, Judy, you'll see," Edie warns her, and she does. Eventually as a patient in the same hospital, Miss Hearne looks for Edie Marrinan during chapel, but cannot distinguish her among all the women clad in grey dressing gowns. "We all look the same," she concludes. (p. 220)

Most of Moore's other main characters see the forboding characters in time to avoid their situations. Ginger Coffey does not become Billy Davis, who, an emigrant like Ginger, is actually living the meagre role of "the hermit of the Y.M.C.A." which Ginger had once romanticized. (p. 207) Brendan Tierney does not become Pelardy, "the living Christ of all [his] own fears." (p. 61) Gavin Burke does not become a permanent A.R.P. misfit, a drunkard like Captain Lambert, (p. 62) or even, one supposes, an "arty homosexual like Matthew and Maurice. (p. 95) And Mary Dunne does not become,

...one of those drear wan women who wander the supermarkets, aimlessly pushing wire shopping carts up and down the aisles of merchandise at three in the afternoon, their minds muzzy with Muzak, while up front on the shopping cart some infant slobbers and pees in its snowsuit and farther up the aisle its boily brother, aged three, noisily upsets a soapflakes display. (p. 130)

Mary Dunne paints another vivid picture of her possible future self:

...I will get worse, I will lose not only my memory but my mind, and at the end, I will be that vegetable squatting on the floor of the asylum's disturbed ward, unable to say its name, any of its names, for it has forgotten, therefore it is not, it has no name, it cannot even clean itself. (p. 215)
Again one assumes that because Mary has momentarily coped with her depression at the end of the novel, she will not, in fact, become permanently disturbed.

The technique is slightly altered in The Feast of Lupercal when Devine sees in the loving behaviour of a young couple in a bar both what he expects to enjoy ("He had a right to live too.") and what he has never enjoyed ("Yes, that was what he had missed up to now."). (p.125) And, of course, in Fergus, the technique is completely reversed. Fergus' attention is focused on the past, and therefore, instead of seeing a character who is the image of his possible future, Fergus imagines his younger self who takes his place among Fergus' other ghosts:

Fergus, his eyes clearing, turned to peer, startled by the familiar in that voice. In the center of the room, pale, skinny, a thick lock of hair falling over his right eye, looking young and foolish in an ill-advised suit of cheap Prince of Wales checks, with a badly tied polka-dot bow tie and a straight-stemmed pipe which he held, like a child playing a detective in a school play, the familiar of Fergus' first passport photograph pointed at Fergus, as though indicating to the others in the room the man he would one day become. (p.88)

Very little mutual admiration is exchanged by the two versions of Fergus Fadden. His younger self is disgusted that Fergus, at the age of thirty-nine, has not accomplished more, and that no one can guarantee that his writings will be read in fifty years. Fergus finds his younger self childish, and posturing. He stares with revulsion at "this greedy young smoker," and since Fergus has been ordered by his doctor not to smoke, he even considers reprimanding him. Fergus' younger self is, however, a lesson to him that
the past cannot be undone. The technique of introducing a possible alternate image to the central character is double-edged in Fergus where the alternate image is his own. Fergus realizes that at present he has not lived up to the expectations he formed as a younger man, and he also sees that from his present point of view, his past life is not admirable. In Moore's other novels, the technique is a simple yet effective way of bodying forth the hopes and fears of the protagonists in the most realistic and convincing manner possible -- the image of another person. This technique along with the mirror image, the detailed description of clothing, the inclusion of the denuding image, and the vivid depiction of dreams constitutes the several artful ways in which Moore visualizes his protagonists both physically and psychologically.

The visualization of the other aspects of each novel -- the interior and exterior settings, the atmosphere, the symbolic scenes -- is not as open to categorization of technique as the depiction of the main character. Each novel is a visual entity which depends on the special nature of the individual protagonist whose character dominates events and their outcome. The remaining imagistic techniques must therefore be discussed novel by novel.

Many critics have commented on the pervading gloom of Judith Hearne which they attribute to Moore's vision of Belfast. Outside the designated centre of the city which is Belfast's ugly white City Hall, writes Moore,

...everything that was Belfast came into focus. The news-vendors calling out the great events of the world in flat, uninterested Ulster voices; the drab facades of the buildings grouped around the Square, proclaiming the virtues of trade, hard dealing and Presbyterian righteousness. The order, the neatness, the floodlit cenotaph, a white respectable phallus planted in a sinking Irish bog. The Protestant dearth of gaiety,
the Protestant surfeit of order, the dour Ulster burghers walking proudly among these monuments to their mediocrity. (p.90)

Add to this description of the city, the dinginess of individual places such as Miss Hearne's shabby boarding house on a university bywater (like Miss Hearne, herself, once accustomed to a more genteel existence), the grey façade of St. Finbar's, the ugly brick pavilions which stretch out "like crucified arms" from Earnscliffe Home, (p.188) and the individual nastiness of such Belfast citizens as Mrs. Rice, Mrs. Brannon, Miss Friel, sundry surly waitresses, even Father Quigley, and the sordid picture of life in Judith Hearne's Belfast is complete. The importance of this grim atmosphere and setting is, as Hal Dahlie explains, that Miss Hearne cannot escape it. Dahlie refers to the climax of Judith Hearne's anticipation which occurs as she is waiting with James Madden, not so much for a bus home, as to go off to something better. "But," writes Dahlie, "there are no buses out of Belfast for the Judith Hearnes of that world, so effectively are they locked within its unyielding confines." In the dismal settings which Judith Hearne comes to call home, her only consistent comfort comes from two representations of people -- a photograph of her aunt and a coloured oleograph of the Sacred Heart. In her loneliness, Judith Hearne invests these images with life, and although their eyes often seem to look at her with sorrow or reproof at her behaviour, their images, at least, are familiar.

The repeated images of eyes, as John Stedmond points out, provide "in Joycean fashion, a unifying leitmotif running through the novel." This pattern of imagery is most appropriate since Judith Hearne is learning
to see the discrepancy between illusion and reality. Moreover, at the climax of the novel, Judith Hearne, who is afraid that her religious beliefs have no basis, demands visual proof of God's existence. "What she receives," writes Stedmond, "is a revelation of her human plight in all its sordidness." 15

Just as significant in terms of seeing is the counterplay of dark and light imagery in the novel. Judith Hearne feels comforted and secure in the darkness where she is able to nurse her illusions without the disturbance of light which is here associated with revelations of truth. At night she feels that the photograph of her Aunt D'Arcy watches over her, but in "the frozen light" of the following morning, Aunt D'Arcy is once again the tyrannical relative who says good day "in silver and sepia-toned arrogance." (p.19) Similarly, Judith Hearne enjoys romantic fantasies under the cover of darkness at the cinema, (p.85) and she finds herself at peace in the obscurity of her church: "This quiet, this gloom, this immense repose, soothed Miss Hearne as she stood in the deep shadows at the back of the church." (p.122) Again and again, however, a sudden blaze of light signifies the end of a delusion for her. When she returns home through the night streets of Belfast with James Madden, she is full of unfounded hopes for their future together. "But as he opened the door of the house in Camden Street, her pleasant thoughts were stopped by a light which flashed bright in the hall." (p.91) Judith Hearne's ensuing conversation with Mrs. Rice, after she has first fled to the darkness of the scullery to avoid the distressing sight of Bernie Rice, half-dressed, brings to light her first major disillusion about Madden. And again, as Miss Hearne prepares to make a general confession to Father Quigley, she is certain that he will help her. Her certainty, however, is
shattered when, "Plock! Light filled the dark box as he slid the wooden door aside," and Father Quigley begins her confession by reprimanding her and totally failing to understand the urgency of her desperation. (p.170)

Judith Hearne's self-delusions often lead her to misinterpret "the light" for her own purposes, to see it as representing something it is not. She overestimates a sudden burst of sunlight in church as a sign from God, (p.66) as later she interprets a near accident ("A car, headlights like yellow angry eyes, brakes screeching in rage.") as a warning from God. (p.126) She forms an incorrect impression of Father Quigley's abilities when his white and gold vestments made him appear to shine out in the dark church. (p.62) And most deceptive of all, she believes that the red-gold glow from the small light of the hanging sacristy lamp signifies that God exists in the tabernacle. (p.122) When she makes a direct assault on the tabernacle to establish God's presence, she is first blinded by a red light and then mercifully carried off "to darkness, all darkness, all forgetting." (p.211) This patterning of dark and light imagery which merges into the gloom of Belfast, obviously complements the repeated images of eyes, both of which elucidate Judith Hearne's agonizing growth in perception.

A gloom-ridden Belfast is again the setting for Moore's second novel, *The Feast of Lupercal*. Judith Hearne's dingy boarding house is matched here by Devine's basement flat which has iron-barred windows, yellowing wall paper, and stacks of dusty periodicals, and which is also located in a failing street, once prosperous. (p.11) The drab institution, Earnscliffe Home, has its counterpart in St. Michan's School with its long
grey façade, its drafty classrooms, and its cold bare refectory. The dour Protestant rigidity as symbolized by City Hall and its environs in Judith Hearne, also affects the atmosphere of Lupercal where, however, Devine has at least a momentary urge to shock and even to defy his joyless fellow citizens:

When Mr. Devine left the teashop that afternoon, he was filled with an outrageous joy. He smiled into the shocked faces on strangers, walked across Donegall Street against a red light and stopped to kick an apple core in the formal flowerbeds of City Hall. As he boarded his bus, the conductor decided he was lit up. (p.50)

For the most part, however, Mr. Devine's travels through Belfast are staid and forlorn. Moreover, the dreariness of Belfast is intensified in The Feast of Lupercal by the omnipresent rain. If in any scene it is not raining, then it has either just stopped or is about to begin. Even the above scene is quickly followed by the information that "a cold damp, the beginnings of fog, misted the houses across the road." (p.50) The rain and bad weather are as inescapable for Devine as the inimical establishment which controls his life in Belfast. Almost the last remark Una Clarke makes to Devine before her departure is, "It's going to rain." (p.245) Following the numerous other rainy scenes in which they have met, this apparently off-hand remark alludes significantly to the cold and dismal environment from which Devine cannot escape.

Like Judith Hearne, Devine also furnishes his lonely "digs" with photographs, both religious and secular. He too imagines the shock of his parents who are represented in a large wedding picture which is witness to Una's unseemly conversation with Devine. (p.142) He is equally abashed
when his landlady's daughter surprises him in the act of taking down his religious icons, a picture of the Divine Infant of Prague and a reproduction of Guido Reni's Ecce Homo. (p.55) This scene is typical of many others such scenes in the novel, the characters of which are constantly catching each other in flagrante or eavesdropping on supposedly private conversations. First Devine overhears Connolly and Turvey discussing him in the lavatory. (p.5) Then Devine and Heron are overheard by three students hiding in the masters' cloakroom, (pp.85-87) who are in turn overheard discussing their daring adventure by Father Creely. (p.96) Eamon Heron catches Devine saying goodnight to Una in the back entry of his home, (p.107) and on a later occasion, Maeve Heron catches Una climbing in the back window early in the morning. (p.158) (She has also been seen leaving Devine's flat on the same morning. p.154) Devine's second stormy interview with Heron is overheard by his entire class, (pp.160-61) and thus a scandal grows. The gym master finds graffiti about Dev and Una in the students' lavatory, and as he goes to fetch material to remove the insult, Devine catches three students trying to erase it. (p.169) Later Father Creely and the President of St. Michan's happen to see Tim Heron caning Devine in the street in front of the President's house. (p.224) And unbeknownst to everyone, the school porter, old John Harbinson, who is ostensibly deaf, has been spying on everyone, acting as the President's informer on all aspect of school life, even the actions of the Dean of Discipline. (pp.196-97) The repressive atmosphere created by scenes such as these in which even photographs have ears, makes victims of the innocent. As Devine explains,
Practiced voluptuaries would have hidden all traces of last night, they would have sinned undetected. But she and I, innocents the pair of us, are found out the first go off. And who'd believe us, if we told the truth? (p.175)

There is no doubt that Devine is trapped by the over-vigilant and self-righteous authorities of church and school as well as by the inhospitable atmosphere of Belfast itself, both of which Moore pictures brilliantly. Moore's final image of Devine, in which his condition is likened to that of a dray horse, illustrates most powerfully and most pathetically Devine's silent subjugation:

Beside him, in the avenue, a horse and cart waited idle, as their owner offered wood blocks by the bag at a front door across the way. The horse's head moved like a mine detector along the gutter, reins slack over the strong back. Mr. Devine, watching as Una turned the corner, absently put out his hand and fondled the horse's neck. The powerful muscles fluttered at his unexpected touch and the horse swung its head up, looking wildly down the avenue in the narrow focus of its blinkers. Horse and man looked down the avenue, and there was no one there. The horse, harnessed, dumb, lowered its head once more. The man went back into the house. (p.246)

Another powerful image which symbolizes the stern order of Devine's world is, of course, the cane. Masters in The Feast of Lupercal are never without their canes; they begin each class by putting the cane in the trough of the desk, near at hand. Students picture their masters as stick men wearing mortar boards and carrying canes. The novel contains many scenes in which students are caned, of which by far the most horrifying is Father McSwiney's sadistic flogging of the three boys who overheard Devine and Heron. (pp.93-96) Even Devine canes students, (pp.8,78,207) but he, at least, realizes that the cane has limitations:
What use was the medicine though? It was the Dean's medicine, the school medicine, which made this kind of boy. When he himself had been a pupil at Saint Michan's, he had not loved his masters. That was the rule of teaching: boys respected the cane, the cane was what got results in his day, and still did, But if a master showed a weakness, he was paid back. (p.163)

The cane has yet another symbolic meaning in The Feast of Lupercal. After Devine's singular confession to Heron -- he had not violated Una because he could not -- Heron, an old and angry master, instinctively uses the cane on Devine. Devine sees this caning not only as evidence of Heron's uncontrollable temper, but also as a kind of expiation. Like the barren women of ancient Rome who thought the flogging of the Luperci would remove the reproach of barrenness from them, Devine feels that Heron's caning is penance for his failure to make love to Una. (p.244) Heron's ritual use of the cane on Devine, therefore, points to both the implacability of the authorities for whom the cane is all too apt a symbol and to the power of the same authorities who have rendered Devine incapable of loving.

Montreal, which is the setting for The Luck of Ginger Coffey, is no more hospitable than the Belfast of Moore's two earlier novels. In this novel, it is the snow and cold which typify the city's lack of cheer and friendliness. Most of the time Ginger considers Canada as "this land of ice and snow, this hell on earth," (p.217) and Montreal, far from being the "Frenchy" place he expected, strikes him as a cross between American and Russia:

The cars, the supermarkets, the hoardings; they were just as you saw them in the Hollywood films. But the people and the snows and the cold -- that woman passing, her head
tied up in a babushka...—wasn't that the real Siberian stuff? (p.5)

After Ginger has spent several disappointing months in Canada, the filmed America he views at the cinema no longer seems true. It has nothing to do with the facts of life "in a cold New World." (p.171)

Ginger's disillusionment with the New World must stem in part from his experience of the small apartments and dingy rooms in which many people live. The duplex he rents on a shabby street is "dark as limbo, jerry built fifty years ago and going off keel ever since." (pp. 4-5) His room at the Y.M.C.A. is tiny and spare, (p.103) Veronica's room, located in a slum, is even smaller, and, as Veronica says, "filthy". (p.183) Billy Davis's room over a clothing store is equally small and miserable. (p.204)

Ginger's shock at Billy's poverty-stricken existence is intensified when he discovers that Billy is an Irish emigrant like himself, who came to America at the age of twenty, "looking for the streets that were paved with gold." (p.205) But in his old age, Billy is reduced to living on a pension of forty dollars a month. Money, as Ginger's fellow proofreaders devine, is also Ginger's problem. To make Ginger's lack of money as clear as possible, Moore constantly describes his exact financial condition in precise dollars and cents. The novel begins with an image of Ginger counting out his worldly goods. "Fifteen Dollars and three cents," is the sum Ginger pockets that morning, (p.3) and, as he later confesses to Veronica, they have only eighty dollars left in the bank. (p.35) Although he can ill afford it, Ginger spends fifty cents on candy for Michel, (p.6) for he could not disappoint him. When he has only "nine dollars between
him and all harm, he gives one to Paulie for skating. (p.97) Ginger's generosity to children illustrates his off-hand confession that he is "no great hand with money." (p.10) But he soon realizes the importance of money for him:

Money, oh those proofreaders were right. Money made this world go round. If he had enough money Veronica wouldn't be leaving him. If he had enough money he could have wooed Paulie to come with him, promised a housekeeper, promised her treats. Money, that was Our Saviour. Not love, mind you, not good intentions, not honesty nor truth. Because if you couldn't make money, they would leave you, wife, child, friends, everyone. (p.97)

When Veronica does move away with Paulie, she leaves Ginger a ten dollar bill but no message, (p.100) and so, after he has paid the rent at the Y.M.C.A., Ginger is left with "exactly seven dollars and forty-five cents until his first pay day." (p.103) This amount dwindles to nothing well before pay day, and Ginger has to ask his employer for an advance. This conversation leads to the best offer of employment Ginger ever receives ("'I'll make you my personal assistant at ninety bucks a week.'" p.198), which Ginger foolishly turns down because he dreams of becoming a reporter. When Ginger is not made a reporter, he realizes that all his dreams are ill-founded and that he will probably die in "humble circs." (p.243) "Money," the proofreaders told him, "is the Canadian way to immortality," (p.70) and Ginger, as Moore's detailed accounting graphically illustrates, fails to make it.

The figure Ginger cuts of a rushing energetic man certainly suggests that Ginger does try to succeed in the New World. Although his problems prompt him to identify with "Cripple Mate" (pp.15, 271, 117, 119) in the headlines of a sensational news story, the image Ginger presents hurrying through the streets of Montreal is able-bodied and vigourous. Ginger is
only crippled psychically by his dream visions of the future. In real life, Ginger shanks’ mares it, he hurries, he runs, he rushes "from pillar to post," (p.147) as he works at two full-time jobs. To Ginger, life is a constant struggle in which he is "running uphill, his hope in his mouth, his shins kicked by people with no faith in him." (p.39) Once at the Y.M.C.A. ("For the first time in fifteen years, he had stopped running," pp.103-4), and again on the courthouse steps after his trial ("No longer was he a man running uphill against hope,..." p.235), Ginger has some respite. And by the end of the novel, Ginger feels he has changed into "someone who had stopped running uphill in hopes." (p.241) Yet it is hard to imagine his jaunty figure still, so successfully has Moore portrayed Ginger's Sisyphus-like efforts to make money, "the root of all good in Canada." (p.70)

If Montreal is "hell on earth" to Ginger Coffey, New York is limbo, according to Mrs. Tierney in An Answer from Limbo. Mrs. Tierney has a dream vision of limbo as "a quiet place like an airport lounge with green plants that were not real and food on a buffet that was not real food." (p.212) This dream obviously recalls Mrs. Tierney’s arrival in New York when everything appears as futuristic to her as an H.G. Wells film (p.33) and her visit to a cafeteria in Times Square with Frank Finnerty, her cousin:

The cafeteria was air-conditioned and had rows of green plants which were not plants and tables and chairs which seemed to be made of wood but were some plastic stuff. Finnerty told her he often ate here. The food, he said, was first-class. But as she bit into the cake she suffered a familiar disappointment. American food was for show, not for taste. Like the false wooden tables and the plants which were not plants, it was as though no one remembered what the real thing had been like. (p.183)
Life in New York implies a limbo-like state of oblivion to Mrs. Tierney who is appalled by the city's inhuman aspects. Even London she feels is human "compared with this huddle of great upended cartons, a man was like a fly beside them." (p.37) Brendan, however, feels at home in New York. He knows it is "this world he cares about, this world of moving staircases, electric eyes, efficient loudspeakers." (p.30) In Mrs. Tierney's opinion, the Americanized Brendan is well on his way to losing his soul.

Another aspect of the setting which images precisely the differences in personality of the three main characters is the room Jane prepares for Mrs. Tierney in their apartment. Jane is an artist (her enormous paintings of potato-headed creatures astonish Mrs. Tierney, p.45) who is proud of having her own style; "it was her." (p.25) She feels creative and inspired as she sets about redecorating the spare room for Brendan's mother:

The thing to do was make it seem larger than it was by creating a feeling of space and light...She painted the walls white. She bought a Japanese bamboo blind on Fourth Street, a single unboxed continental bed (where else but Macy's?), a rectangular mirror from a Second Avenue junkyard and a small, unpainted dressing table and chair from Bloomingdale's. Over the bed, a Noguchi rice-paper lamp, and for color and contrast a gay red cotton bedthrow with black Chinese characters on it and just one print, a little Hokusai. (p.23)

Jane is pleased that the result besides being attractive and functional, is cheap. Brendan sees at once that the room, which lacks even a comfortable arm chair, will not suit his elderly, Irish mother:

When I saw that room, Japanned by Jane, I began to feel afraid. Anyone who can conceive of that Zen shrine as suitable for my mother will never understand my mother's world. (p.26)
Brendan does understand his mother's world, but he makes no effort to help his mother adjust to a new world. Naturally, she is appalled by the small "hospital ward" assigned her. (p.46) To her, their whole flat is the same: modern, skimpy, cheap. Mrs. Tierney concludes that Brendan and Jane must be short of money. Yet later on, when she investigates their possessions, she revises this opinion. They are not short of money, just compassion:

There in the bedroom, looking at the closets stuffed tight, the jammed drawers... Mrs. Tierney felt a bitterness rise in her; they were not hard up at all; they did not go wanting for one blessed thing. She thought of the little bungalow on Dromore Estates; she thought of the saving it would cost her to buy one pair of black shoes... Oh, and when she remembered the presents these ones had sent her... when she remembered that, it was hard to be fond of them. (p.68)

Brendan never views his situation through his mother's eyes, for his own are directed upward to the successful world of the famous writer, Sol Silver. "Why," Brendan wonders in Silver's opulent apartment, "should he have everything, while I have nothing?" (p.296) The imagery of the various settings illustrates that Brendan's ambitions have made him selfishly oblivious to his mother's plight, while Jane is simply insensitive.

Several other images point to the dehumanizing effect of their environment and egocentric way of life on Brendan and Jane. After Jane has been rejected by Vito, she clearly sees an image for herself in the garbage being churned up in the huge maw of a sanitation truck. ("Things no longer wanted were tossed out." p.245) The inhumanity of her comparison
of herself to garbage does not occur to her. Nor does Brendan hesitate to compare himself and Jane to two cockroaches stranded in a basin: "... lost, blinded, two small, stupid creatures, terrified by this brightness into which they had blundered, this white stark world from which they might never escape." (p.266) In both images, Brendan and Jane reveal a loss of human feeling for themselves which is all the more pathetic for being unconscious. Brendan, however, has gone a step further in this reversal of human attributes, for he pictures his books as his "true children," in apparent contrast to his actual offspring, Lisa and Liam. (p.194) When Brendan's editor suggests that his novel needs some revision, Brendan feels as if a spinster has just told him his child is deformed and needs surgery to the eye and nose. (p.282) These images, in which people are compared to garbage or insects while books are likened to people, illustrate the truth of Mrs. Tierney's judgment of both Brendan and Jane. Because they live for their own selfish desires, they have lost the capacity for altruistic love which she regards as a defining human trait. In her view, the limbo which is New York has already claimed their souls. Mrs. Tierney passes the same judgment on Frank Finnerty, and the image with which she compares him applies equally well to Brendan and Jane:

On a huge billboard, a painted face advertised Camel cigarettes. Every five seconds, through the hole of its mouth, a large, wavering smoke ring floated across the square. Like Frank, the billboard face stared out through eyes that did not see, it blew out smoke, simulating life. It felt nothing. It would go on blowing smoke until the day when, dirty, showing signs of age, it was passed over and replaced by a new billboard face, which, in turn would simulate life but feel nothing. Frank lived for his own self. Was that life? (pp.185-86)
Such images of New York and New Yorkers comprise most of the imagery of *An Answer from Limbo* which, particularly insofar as it is seen through the innocent eyes of the outsider, Mrs. Tierney, provides a vivid commentary on the dehumanized life of the characters of the novel.

Mrs. Tierney is at once an innocent abroad and a representative of an orthodox Catholic tradition which, to Gavin Burke in *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, implies a corrupt authoritarianism. Gavin is in revolt against this establishment, typified for him by the traditional nuns' parlour in the Catholic hospital where Gavin waits for Sally Shannon, a student nurse. A date on a photograph of the medical staff which hangs in this room makes Gavin aware that the room has not changed since 1930, nor ever will change despite what happens in the outside world:

Nothing would change. The care of this room would continue, as would the durnal dirge of Masses all over the land, the endless litanies of evening devotions, the annual pilgrimages to holy shrines, the frozen ritual of Irish Catholicism perpetuating itself in *secula, seculorum*. Even Hitler's victory would not alter this room. Armageddon would bypass Ireland; all would remain still in this land of his forefathers. (p.136)

As Gavin makes these depressing reflections, he is momentarily convinced of the powerful immutability of the orthodox Catholic authorities.

Gavin is to discover, however, that even the influence of the authorities can be altered as the parallel image of Gavin's family's sitting room indicates. Gavin feels that this room, which has remained unchanged since his childhood, is part of him because he has grown up in it. (p.9)

But when Gavin returns to this sitting room after Belfast has been bombed and his house, condemned, he finds a difference in the "looking-glass Room."
Like Gavin, himself, the room has been changed at last by the war. (p.248)
In fact, Gavin actually fears his condemned house from which all life has fled. Exhausted after a day of coffining the dead, Gavin hallucinates the image of corpses in the empty sitting room: "The dead, their faces dirty and pale, dried blood on their lips, their bowels loose in the final spasm, sat on his mother's sofas and chairs, moved in the shadows, lay out on the landing in a stiff jumble of arms and legs." (p.249) In the middle of Gavin's lurid imaginings, his father arrives in the house looking for Gavin. The implication of this scene is clear: the sitting room has changed, Gavin has changed and grown up, while "his father was the child now; his father's world was dead." (p.250)

Gavin has been looking forward to the destruction of his father's world since the beginning of the novel. His anticipation of this event explains his inappropriate glee as the bombing of Belfast begins, in what is one of the most memorable scenes of the novel. From the roof of the Nurses' Home where they have been posted to look for incendiaries, Gavin and Freddy have a clear fire-lit view of the city which is bursting into flames all around them. Gavin, who is filled with a tumult of joy, dances a Cherokee war dance, and they both shout out the names of people and institutions they would like to see destroyed:

"Blow up a few capitalists," Freddy shouted, suddenly.
"And the Bishop of Down and Connor," Gavin yelled.
"And Stormont Castle and Lord Carson's statue and the houses of bloody Parliament."
"Not with a whimper, but a bang." (p.201)
At last, the prediction of a future holocaust by poets such as T.S. Eliot has come true.

Although Gavin and Freddy apparently welcome the war in this scene, they are later to realize its terrible human toll which they experience, as no one else does, when they coffin the dead on the following day. During the night, Gavin and Freddy help with the injured and the dying, but they are still not prepared for the horrific reality of numberless corpses:

The dead he had seen last night had not stiffened into rigor mortis and seemed like actors, shamming death. But now, in the stink of human excrement, in the acrid smell of disinfectant, these dead were heaped, body on body, flung arm, twisted feet, open mouth, staring eyes, old men on top of young women, a child dying on a policeman's back, ... Forbidding and clumsy, the dead cluttered the morgue room from floor to ceiling, seeming to stage some mass lie-down against the living men who now faced them in the doorway. (p.231)

As Gavin and Freddy begin their grisly work with the body of a mill girl in her twenties, Freddy alludes to the ludicrous idea that this war is a good idea because it means that capitalists kill capitalists. They both realize that the bombs do not discriminate, that both the mighty whose power they hoped to see destroyed and the weak have become victims. Moore's vivid portrayal of the horrors of the war which brings Gavin to a sudden adulthood, makes Gavin's change in character totally believable.

The holocaust which envelops Belfast is seen entirely in terms of Gavin's experience of it. Other people's experiences are mentioned only if Gavin hears about them. In I Am Mary Dunne, the whole novel is not only seen from Mary's point of view, but pictured by her as well. The novel is, as she says, her own "false, edited little movie," (p.4) and like a film, it
uses many flashbacks and a stop frame technique which is a particularly vivid method of summing up whole episodes in Mary's life. Mary Dunne's language, which reflects the worlds of theatre and cinema, points to her highly visual cast of mind. She herself describes the stop frame technique during her dinner with Ernie Truelove:

There, in the dining room, amid the wreck of dinner, glasses, dishes, wine bottles, there settled on all three of us an instant of total immobility, as though the film of our lives had jammed. We sat, frozen in stop frame until suddenly Ernie's head jerked forward...

Mary uses the single image of the stop frame to describe her childhood relationship with her mother ("I can remember scolding my doll in your voice, standing beside you in the kitchen, learning to bake johnny cakes the way Mama did." p.11), and with her brother ("I know him as my big brother, Bat, who carried me on his shoulders up a cliff face in the Bay of Fundy, twenty-five years ago." p.13) The single image is also an effective way of characterizing people such as Mary's first husband, Jimmy ("When I am an old woman, Jimmy will remain unchanged for me, a twenty-one-year-old boy with a big Adam's apple, laughing with a nervous bark, inhaling his cigarettes the wrong way and coughing as though he will choke." p.16).

Most of Mary Dunne's recollections involve more than a single image and are, as she points out, more like a play or a film. (p.24) In either case, her memories are intensely visual, and very often the stimulus for a memory is visual as well. The sight of Mr. Peters fingering the tassel on a sherry bottle brings back the memory of Nancy Almond's party where
he was a bartender; (p. 24) a glimpse of a waiter's suspenders straining against the bulge of his thickening middle-aged back reminds Mary of a Shriners' Parade in Montreal when Hat could not comprehend her tears for "those failures in foolish hats;" (pp. 78-79) the face of a little Puerto Rican girl recalls the three Mexican girls who stared her into the "Juarez dooms" (pp. 105-8). At other times, the stimulus which revives memories is verbal. Janice's cruel reproach, "Look what you did to him," reminds Mary of the night she left Hat Bell, a memory she is compelled to relive once it enters her mind. (p. 98) The scene ends with Mary's last sight of Hat which she describes exactly as if a camera were filming this dramatic finale of her second marriage:

The last time I ever saw Hat Bell he was standing in the bare kitchen of that house he had hoped to buy. He'd taken a glass from the cupboard above him and was pouring Scotch into the glass. He must have heard me open the front door, but he did not look up. He raised the glass. He drank. I left. (p. 104)

Similarly, when Mary wonders whether Terence wants her to go to the movies, the word, "movies," reminds her of her first husband, Jimmy Phelan ("Movies. Jimmy was the one who started me going: ..." p. 116), their elopement from Nova Scotia with the idiot they were to drive to Toronto, their life in Toronto at the Blodgett's rooming house and later in Mackie's mansion. Both of Mary's accounts of her past marriages have a cinematic quality, not only because each is a complete and dramatic narrative on its own, but also because of the flow of images which one usually associates with films. Mary's visual associations with both images and language result
in a continuum of imagery which complements the stream-of-consciousness technique of the novel itself. In a typical passage, she makes an easy transition from brooding on an idea to resuming her narrative of the day by means of associations:

Hat in Kingston under a stone. My father's grave in the snow in the military cemetery in Halifax, the little stone cross so packed around with soft wet snow that it no longer was a cross but a phallus. Old Dan Dunne. "We will all die soon enough without us dwelling on it," my Aunt Maggie used to say. She was my father's older sister and like old Dan Dunne she too is dead. I remember that she had a mustache. And that she was very tall, nearly as tall as old Mrs. Dowson, Janice's mother. It's funny, I haven't thought about Janice since we said good-by today. She phoned this morning at the very moment I went out into the hall... (p. 35)

Thus the narrative moves with the flow of associated images exactly like a film with, as one critic says, "no seams showing."  
Mary Dunne's recollections of the past are interwoven with scenes from a single day in the present for which the setting is New York. Her New York is considerably different from Mrs. Tierney's New York in An Answer from Limbo. More like Brendan Tierney in her appreciation of the modern, Mary Dunne feels at home in New York, and she realizes that she would not like to exchange places with friends from the provinces, "still coming down to New York, like Janice, a kid to a party." (p. 38) Mary is obviously able to enjoy the excitement of New York with its elegant beauty salons, (p. 5) fashionable plays (p. 39) and important art exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim, (p. 5) expensive French restaurants, (p. 40) Central Park, (pp. 84-94) and Mary's own tastefully furnished apartment which she describes in some detail to
a potential lessee. (pp.19-23) New York also means it inhabitants to Mary, principally her successful husband, (" 'You mean the Terence Lavery, the British playwright, that one?' "p.113) but also composers and choreographers who work with her husband, polite doormen, and even talkative taxi drivers. Mary, however, also has occasion to feel threatened by the people she encounters. During the single day she describes, four men whose approaches vary from the blatantly obscene to the apparently inadvertent, make suggestive gestures or remarks to her. (pp.7,49,83,100) She is also, like most New Yorkers, terrified of burglars. The atmosphere of Mary Dunne's New York, the tension of which she both reflects and encompasses, is at once more exhilarating and more threatening than the limbo described by Mrs. Tierney.

New York as the principal setting provides unifying background images to I Am Mary Dunne which is visually very complex. Another unifying motif of images results from Mary's exact description of food and drinks, and especially, as Richard B. Sale points out, "the distasteful drinking of Bloody Marys" (pp.24,33,38,41,42,43,46,48,49,50,63) which stresses the psychological and religious complexity of Mary Dunne's character. In addition, Mary Dunne catalogues with considerable precision meals with Mackie McIver, (pp.137-142) cocktails with Hat Bell, (p.70) luncheon with Janice, (p.44) and the dinner she serves Ernie Truelove, who, in spite of his disclaimer, does behave like "a professional hick," (p.169) braying over the caviar (" 'Let me say it's not something which I've had enough of to allow me to become tired of it.' " p.171) and the red-currant jelly served
with lamb ("...I prefer mint jelly. That's the Canadian thing to have with lamb." p.181). The consumption of sophisticated foods provides a most telling image of Mary Dunne's present life in New York, just as her recollection of dinners of Campbell's soup and Heinz spaghetti sums up an episode of her past. (p.137) Although Mary Dunne refers to her story as her own "false, edited little movie," the precise imagery of the people, objects, events, and settings which compose her film-like account is more reminiscent of the Cinéma vérité of the foreign films her husband admires.

Brian Moore's seventh novel, Fergus, also invites comparison with films, especially surreal films like Fellini's "Juliet of the Spirits." The surrealism of Fergus results principally from the intrusion of the ghosts whom Fergus entertains not only when he is alone but also in the company of other people who are oblivious to their appearance. The patent reality of Fergus' hallucinations only increases the surrealistic quality of the novel. Yet the ghosts are at their most bizarre in the final portion of the novel, during a moonlight picnic on the beach when they behave like actors in an avant-garde play (p.185) or mass together in an anonymous and threatening mob. Later the mob moves over the enchanted sandbanks, "seeming less like a desert caravan than a collection of small beach creatures, scurrying sandpipers, perhaps, or now, becoming smaller as he watched, a dark swarm of insects, smaller, smaller, then, at last, disappearing around the headland of Point Dume." (p.221)
One would expect the surrealism of the ghost episodes to stand in contrast to scenes from the "real" California which Fergus inhabits and which Moore pictures as brilliantly as the actual settings of his other novels. But the reality Fergus encounters in California is, itself, bizarre. First he is struck by the unreality of Los Angeles and especially of his efficiency apartment which, he concludes, is designed "to deny one's existence." (pp.132-34) Similarly, Fergus is convinced that he could literally disappear in a town like Oxnard, California, which he sees as "a living tomb, ... a wasteland of shopping centers, tract houses, trailer camps, marinas, ... a town where you could never in twenty years meet anyone you had known." (p.75) Everything about his life in California is unreal and unbelievable to Fergus. Even after living with Dani, "young Miss California in a miniskirt," (p.11) for four months, Fergus still cannot believe in their liaison. (p.136)

Fergus is also impressed by the incredible aspects of his employers Boweri and Redshields. When he visits Boweri's Bel-Air mansion, which looks to him suspiciously like the Royal Palace in Madrid, Fergus suspects everything and everyone of being "stagemanaged." (p.66) And indeed, Boweri has only to press his finger against the spine of a book in his library and "a wall of books moved, to reveal, behind them, a three-hundred-bottle bar." (p.65) Redshields is also a dealer in deceptions. Fergus thinks he is a director by avocation, but, in reality, "like many of his kind, a salesman, a carnival barker," (p.28) whose preferred mode of communication with other people adds yet another unreal quality to his life:
Direct conversation was, to Redshields, a secondary form of communication. When he moved from the orbit of his house..., his telephone-answering service tracked his progress, keeping him always in touch... Calls, local, long distance, intercity, intercontinental, endless talkings to New York and London, telephone receiver jammed between ear and hunched shoulder, greeting, cajoling, advising, shouting, laughing, kibitzing, ...a nonstop performance,... for almost all of his calls produced no tangible results, they were lottery tickets, part of a gamble which one in a hundred ploys might show some return. The telephone was, quite simply, more real to Redshields than anything that happened outside its circuits. (p.30)

Given the unreality of the life in California Fergus describes, it is not surprising that the ghosts from his familiar and believable past strike him as real in comparison.

The actual setting for Fergus' day of encounters with the past is a house on the Pacific coast, supposedly isolated from the unreality of Hollywood, Oxnard, and Los Angeles. But even this house and the mountainous background behind it have an ambivalent reality for Fergus:

Behind the house were mountain slopes,... a landscape existing continguously in his mind as a real range of mountains and also as a fantasy backdrop from which, rearing out of the film screens of his childhood, Hollywood cowboys might clatter through a mountain gulch. The house, like this landscape, existed both in the present and in his past, as this real house by the sea in California and as the house he now imagined it was, that house overlooking Belfast Lough,... the house he was born in. (p.37)

In front of Fergus' house lies the Pacific. To Fergus, it, at least, is what it seems: the eternal sea. His descriptions of the sea, like the following, always stress its timeless quality:

...he turned toward the glass doors, and there, as always, was the sea, the long Pacific breakers beginning their run two hundred yards from shore. Thalassa, Thalassa, the loud resounding sea, our great mother, Thalassa. (p.4)
At the end of the novel, after Fergus has apparently suffered a heart attack, Moore contrasts his mortal protagonist to the eternal sea:

In the east, dawn came up. Breakers slammed on the morning shore, monotonous as a heartbeat. He walked toward the house. (p.228)

Moore's symbolic placing of Fergus between these two aspects of the setting -- the unreality of the shore, the timeless reality of the sea -- exactly images Fergus' philosophical position in the novel. Fergus is caught between the demands of the "real" world, which he recognizes as often unreal and ambivalent, and his desire to give his life a more significant meaning. His ghost-sister, Maeve, who is actually voicing his own opinion, says that Fergus thinks his writing provides his chance to cheat the grave. But the other ghosts, visitors from a timeless world, will not even assure Fergus that his writing will be read in fifty years. And so, like the bird which beats helplessly against the glass window of his house trying to fly through it towards the sea, (p.36) Fergus struggles against an invisible barrier, an illusion that no barriers exist for him, to reach a higher existence. Again it is Maeve who outlines Fergus' problem to him:

"Your trouble is, you can't be sure of anything. You have no laws, no rules, no spiritual life at all. You have to make up your own rules of conduct. You have to become your own ruler, and found your own wee religion. You are your own god." (p.55)

The imagery of the novel provides an explicit parallel for Fergus' dilemma. On the one hand is the unreality of California which Fergus obviously recognizes as a denial of human nature, and on the other hand is the sea which is the perfect image for that greater reality to which Fergus aspires.
is set between the two, dissatisfied with the first alternative but unable to reach the second because of his illusion that he can be his own god. At the end of the novel Fergus' father chastises him for not achieving a higher purpose (and indeed, Fergus does not enter the sea during the novel), for living a meaningless life. (p.227)

From gloomy Belfast to the great Pacific Ocean, Brian Moore has travelled a considerable distance with his characters, visiting an exciting but threatening New York and a cold, Montreal en route. Yet no matter what the setting, Moore's pictorial powers are always equal to creating vivid backgrounds against which his equally vivid protagonists enact special roles, the result being an intensely visualized reality in each novel. The centre for all this visual richness is the protagonist whose unique character is the source of the special aura of each novel.
Footnotes for Chapter IV


2 See Chapter II, p. 45.

3 See this chapter, p. 90.


5 Dahlie, p. 54.

6 Dahlie, p. 54.

7 See Chapter III, p. 63.

8 See also pp. 15, 64.

9 The sight of her own naked body also fills Mary Dunne with panic since it too seems to be a mask which hides her true identity. See the quotation, supra, p. 93.


12 Hallvard Dahlie, Brian Moore, p. 20.

13 Judith Hearne's photographs are not the only images of people which are invested with life in Moore's fiction. Devine's photograph of his parents, (p. 12) Paulie Coffey's photographs of popular figures, (p. 29) Frank Finnerty's photo of his father, (p. 267) and Terence Lavery's gallery of great men (p. 154) all take on living qualities when viewed by Moore's protagonists. Similarly, Gavin Burke finds that his statue of the Divine Infant of Prague is "a desperate little preacher," (p. 3) and, of course, Fergus Fadden's mental photographs of the absent living and dead have literally come to life for him.


15 Stedmond, p. viii.

16 See pp. 34, 63, 53, 88, 89, 125, 129, 172, 190.
17 See Chapter III, pp. 85-86.


22 See supra, p. 108.
CHAPTER V  THEMATIC DEVELOPMENT

All of Brian Moore's central characters, each one magnificently realized by means of plot development, focus of narration, and patterns of language and imagery, are involved in a search for personal identity. At the end of each novel, the protagonist has achieved a new and more realistic self-image as the result of losing his illusions either through painful experience or by recalling and reordering his past. Moore remarks on this constant theme while discussing *I Am Mary Dunne* in an interview with Hallvard Dahlie:

> She has reached a point in her life at which she begins to wonder who she really was, who she really is, and who she is going to be.... And if you know my work, you'll know that's been the theme in my books -- Brendan wonders if the old writer he will be will ever know the young boy he was. I feel that gap between the different selves we are at different times of our life very strongly because I have been such a wanderer myself.

By focusing on his characters at a critical moment in their lives, Moore is able to dramatize the insights which allow them to see themselves as changed, as having acquired a new identity. Moore says of his first two novels that he wished to depict the two or three crisis weeks in the lives of Judith Hearne and Diarmuid Devine, "when all the things they were and have become rise up to confront them--...." Both Miss Hearne and Mr. Devine forfeit the illusions on which they had based their hopes for the future: Judith Hearne sees that she is, in fact, an unloved old woman who does not even have faith as a comfort; Diarmuid Devine discovers that he has become an "old woman" of a different sort, one whose inability
to love is a subject for lavatory gossip.

The crucial weeks in Ginger Coffey's life bring him a revelation about himself which is not so completely dejecting as the revelations in the first two novels. Ginger sadly realizes that he will die "in humble circes," that he is not a Dublin Squire or even "Coffey of the Tribune." But on the positive side, he finally achieves a more mature notion of himself: he is able to accept responsibility, to say mea culpa. Similarly, Gavin Burke's new sense of himself as "a compleat grown-up," achieved through his independent and mature behaviour during the bombing of Belfast, provides a hopeful conclusion to Moore's fifty novel, The Emperor of Ice-Cream, which, as Christopher Ricks points out, "is the first of Moore's novels to be about the creation of a self."³

The crisis in the lives of Jane and Brendan Tierney is precipitated by the introduction into their home of Brendan's mother, Mrs. Eileen Tierney. During the weeks she is with them, the beliefs of all three characters are put to the test, the tragic results of which reveal the utter vanity of Brendan's conception of himself as a true writer (he sees in the end that he has actually resigned from the human race to become an insentient recorder of events), and of Jane's view of herself as the modern woman whose style is a raison d'être (Jane loses all her self-assurance when she realizes that neither her family nor her career has given her life meaning). Mrs. Tierney's faith protects her from such self-annihilating experiences; she is the one character whose sense of self does not change.
But the price she pays for her beliefs is high: she dies because her baptism of Brendan and Jane's children prompts them to abandon her.

In *I Am Mary Dunne* and *Fergus*, Moore focuses on a single day in which his protagonists are troubled by questions about their identities: Mary Dunne wants to discover who she really is, while Fergus wishes to ascertain why he exists. Both characters achieve at least partial answers to their problems. In the act of remembering her past, Mary Dunne, as Hallvard Dahlie points out, attains "the identity spelled out by the book's title: the identities she had temporarily assumed ... cannot obscure the only unchangeable fact about her, that she is, and always will be, Mary Dunne." Similarly, by encountering and evaluating his past ("A man is what he does, not what he says he does." p.89), Fergus makes the necessary admission of the meaninglessness of his present life, an admission upon which he can subsequently build a set of beliefs to justify his sense of himself. Clearly, the recognition of one's true identity and of the beliefs which sustain it, is a major theme of these seven novels in which the protagonist is depicted at a moment of crisis which is also a moment of truth.

Having said as much, several of Moore's critics go on to imply a broader theme in the totality of Moore's work. There is, for example, the view held by critics such as Hallvard Dahlie that the increasingly emancipated lives of Moore's protagonists and the movement of his settings from the Old World to the New World implies a more hopeful outlook on Moore's part. While reviewing Moore's first six novels, Hallvard Dahlie maintains,
There is in Moore, as in Joyce, a movement from despair to affirmation, spelled out most strongly perhaps in the passages which conclude *Mary Dunne* but implied in the totality of his work. The direction in Moore's fiction has clearly been towards a progressive emancipation of his characters: from *Judith Hearne* and *Lupercal* with their characters locked in the stifling environment of Belfast, to *Ginger Coffey* and *Limbo* with their immigrant characters caught up in the flux and uncertainties, but also the possibilities, of the New World, and finally to *Emperor* and *Mary Dunne* whose protagonists are triumphant and emancipated.

In contrast, other critics point to the pessimism inherent in Moore's work. After discussing the "horror void" which underlies the activities of successful Americans such as *Mary Dunne*, Richard B. Sale states, "The irony of the search for identity is that it may end successfully." A convergent view is expressed by the critic of *The Times Literary Supplement* when he compares Moore's recent book, *The Revolution Script* to his earlier novels. In this critic's opinion, Brian Moore has been "writing himself into a corner."

Mr. Moore's later novels show the vistigial religious conscience straining to give depth to North American life. Faith itself is unacceptable, making unreasonable demands on the behaviour of anyone who is sporadically forced to be honest with himself. Yet, bourbon, bedrooms and success do not content the soul: in this, at least, the priests were always right. This potentially suicidal situation has clearly caused Mr. Moore much anguish, and his restatements of its miseries have been becoming increasingly bleak. At the end of *Fergus*, in fact, he finds himself on the brink of non-statement. "If you have not found a meaning," says Fergus's [sic] ghostfather, "then your life is meaningless."

But to expect Brian Moore to produce a revelation about the meaning of existence in the course of his novels is to require him to be more than a novelist. Moore, himself, argues that if he were working towards some kind of solution, he would be writing treatises, not novels. His concern,
as he maintains on several occasions, is to depict the lives of ordinary people: their strengths and weaknesses, their crises and resulting insights. At times the vision inspired by the life of a particular character is tragic (as in *Judith Hearne*), and at other times, this vision is comic (as in *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*). But in either situation, the thematic impulse of Moore's novels derives directly from his protagonists and their experiences. An examination of just one of the recurring themes in Moore's fiction -- the theme of the father, which is particularly appropriate for this discussion because it is related to the search for self and because it subsumes many of Moore's minor themes, -- illustrates Moore's awareness of the paradoxes of ordinary human life which is his subject and not his message.

Judith Hearne's tragedy has its origins in her father:

A pity, her aunt said, that Clodagh, Judy's mother, married a bit unwisely in that respect. Family, she meant, but of course it's not your poor dead father's fault that he was born a Hearne. And then, speaking of great beauties, you'll never have a quarter the looks of your poor mother. No, you take after the Hearnes, more's the pity. And they were nothing to write home about. Plain. (p.108)

And, of course, it's not poor Judith's fault that she is born a plain Hearne, that she has no dot, and that when she is orphaned, she is taken in by her harsh Aunt D'Arcy who is as exacting as any stern father. The second and deciding act in Judith Hearne's tragedy takes place during the years she sacrifices for the care of her selfish aunt who, like a jealous father, drives away Miss Hearne's only suitor. (p.96) As Christopher Ricks asserts, Judith Hearne chooses "not only her lonely passion, but also her lonely Passion, ... in that foolish, honourable moment when she lets herself be persuaded not
to commit her desperate aunt to an asylum." The third act of her tragedy, which the novel dramatizes, finds her too old, too poor (her Aunt D'Arcy has lived off her capital), and too plain to lure even James Madden, a rejected father returned from America, into marriage. This act involves two more fathers, who fail her just as her own father and her surrogate father, Aunt D'Arcy, did in the past. Judith Hearne has faith in God, her heavenly Father, who, she believes will answer her prayers for a husband, and in God's intermediary, Father Quigley. Her faith, however, is shaken by God's apparent lack of concern for her and by Bernard Rice's rational arguments against her religion:

"I think, Miss Hearne.... I ask myself a few simple questions. Perhaps you can answer them for me. Your god is omniscient and omnipotent. That's what the Church says.... Then how can we hurt Him? Why does He allow all this suffering in His world? Why doesn't He answer your prayers....? Has He ever repaid your faith in Him? Has He some secret reason for behaving the way He does, some reason He can't tell us? All right! Then why should I be expected to know his secret reasons? Why should I be expected to understand Him when an omniscient, omnipotent God can't give me the answers?... Why are you alone tonight, if it isn't for your silly religious scruples? Answer me that, Miss Hearne." (p.159)

Miss Hearne can only make stock Catholic replies to Bernard, just as, later, Father Quigley can only offer clichés in answer to her earnest questions about religion, but the clichés no longer satisfy her. Judith Hearne, then, is a novel about "an ordinary person who loses the faith" through the failure of all her fathers.

The fathers in The Feast of Lupercal are representatives of the same religion which fails Judith Hearne, but in this novel it is their role as school authorities which is deplored. Diarmuid Devine's own father, who is dead
when the novel begins, was also an educational authority, principal of a large public elementary school. (p.14) But neither he nor the teachers and directors of St. Michan's where Devine was a student taught Devine the necessary social graces by which to relate to women:

It was the education in Ireland, dammit, he had said it many a time. He had been a boarder at this very school, shut off from girls until he was almost a grown man. 

It was a matter of ignorance, pure and simple. (p.9)

The novel clearly demonstrates that the same school authorities who now control Devine in his role as a master are largely responsible for Devine's inhibitions which render him a "ninny, incapable of getting a girl." (p.8) In particular, Father McSwiney and Father Keogh represent two powerful methods of paternal control: the former is a vicious, punitive man who uses the cane to terrorize; the latter, a milder but Machiavellian man, is, as Moore says, "the very spirit of authoritarianism and Catholicism at its worst. He is Realpolitik all the way." A third father in the novel, Tim Heron, who canes Devine, is yet another example of the brutal authoritarianism of Catholic educators. As Una's guardian, he believes that he is protecting her from sin by forbidding her to live her own life, but she constantly defies his strictures and eventually escapes his authority completely. Una, whose own father is dead and who is a Protestant, stands in obvious and telling contrast to Devine. Hers is a liberation which Devine, a puppet of the fathers of Catholic education, will never know.

In the first two novels, the children are more sinned against by their various fathers than sinning. Yet it is a measure of Moore's breadth of vision
that he is capable of writing a novel from a father's point of view as well.

In *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, Moore dramatizes the struggle of Ginger Coffey to keep the loyalty and respect of his wife and daughter who are gradually being alienated by his immaturity. Since his childhood, Ginger has ignored the warning of his confessor, Father Cogley, that he must recognize his limitations and curb his boylike schemes of romantic adventure. Therefore, in his middle age, Ginger is forced to go "hat in hand to younger men" (p. 39) to find employment, for he knows that he cannot keep his family together unless he can support them. Finally, he is employed by two men who epitomize an authoritarian paternalism (Mr. MacGregor is dictatorial and Stanley Mountain is militaristic), and his lowly jobs reflect both his humiliation as an inadequate father and the sacrifices he is prepared to make to regain his family. Later, Ginger makes two more important steps to preserve his family: he refuses to go through with the charade adultery scene which would enable his wife to divorce him and he lies about his true identity in court to spare his family from his disgrace. The judge's decision to give Ginger a suspended sentence again points to Ginger's role as a father:

> I am dealing with you leniently, Coffey, because I am sorry for your family. To be alone in a new country, with their breadwinner in jail, seems to me a fate which your wife and child do not deserve. (p. 233)

Ginger's selfless act in court restores his family to him and is expressive of his regeneration as a father.

*An Answer from Limbo* depicts a father who, in contrast to Ginger Coffey, willingly gives up his domestic persona to become a writer. Brendan
recognizes his own transformation when he remarks,

We change. Scout Tierney is dead in me, as Brendan Tierney, the wage-earning paterfamilias is dead. The man I am become in these past weeks is kin only to that old writer who, someday, sitting on a balcony in Nice or San Francisco, will try to think back to this year and this place, to the moment when he was truly born. (p.130)

Moore treats every aspect of Brendan's birth as a writer and especially his motivation. His ambition, Moore shows, is clearly linked to his need to prove to his own father, Dr. Charles Grattan Tierney, a successful Belfast surgeon, that he should not have written off Brendan as a failure:

I know only that if I were granted the wish to bring back to this world for one hour any human being I have known or read of, I would put in the call tonight for my father. We would not be friends. I might be shocked at his bigotry, his vanity, his platitudes. But there, standing in the kitchen, holding his signet ring, I suddenly, desperately, wished that he were with me. I wanted to prove to him that he was wrong, that I, of all his children, will do him honour. O Father, forgive me as I forgive you, Father, I am your son. (p.67)

Mrs. Tierney confirms that Brendan is his father's son. Like his father's, Brendan's determination nourishes his ambition and makes him "ruthless and dedicated," entirely capable of sacrificing his loved ones "ad majorem Brendan gloriam." (p.50) After Brendan learns that his novel will be published, he reflects that his own son, who is too young to understand this news, is "innocent of his future, of the father he must surpass." Brendan is obviously alluding to the inevitable rivalry which occurs between a son and his successful father, the same rivalry which has sparked his own ambition. Moore shows that this rivalry, however productive outside the family, is destructive to a
filial relationship, not only because it sets son against father, but also because it leads a father to sacrifice his children by elevating his work above their needs.

A second related theme of *An Answer from Limbo* is the contrast which Moore has said he wished to illustrate between Irish Catholicism and "the rootless wasteland of North America." Hallvard Dahlie discusses the wasteland imagery of *An Answer from Limbo* which obviously complements the images of limbo since both conditions imply an absence of God. Mrs. Tierney alone in this novel has faith in God, her heavenly Father, who marvelously resembles her own father in her dream of Judgment Day. Her faith in God, Moore suggests, enables her to act disinterestedly and for the good of others, while Brendan and Jane, who lack a spiritual father, sacrifice even those they presumably love best in the selfish pursuit of their own desires. Faith in one's heavenly Father is evidently preferable to faith in oneself. Moore's treatment of this theme is further evidence of his comprehensive point of view, for he is able to point out the positive values of the same Catholicism which he criticizes in his first two novels.

While *An Answer from Limbo* treats the destructive rivalry between father and son, *The Emperor of Ice-Cream* examines Gavin Burke's alienation from his authoritarian father. Mr. James Burke, like most of the influential fathers in Moore's novels, is a successful professional man, whose very success tends to daunt his impressionable son at the same time as it creates a desperate need in Gavin to succeed. Moore reveals the pompous bigotry of
Gavin's father for whom Hitler is preferable to the British, his establishment orientation which makes him insist that Gavin attain a profession, and his self-righteousness which prompts him to tell Gavin that in view of Gavin's failure in exams (Mr. Burke was a scholarship winner), he will not waste more money on him. All of these qualities as well as Mr. Burke's religiosity (Gavin has renounced his faith) illustrate why Gavin is in revolt against "the grown-ups," his father in particular. The novel also illustrates, however, that Gavin's alienation which leads him to take his A.R.P. job to enjoy "independence from his father's do's and don'ts," (p.8) is the necessary preparation for Gavin's eventual growth to manhood. At the end of the novel, the new adult Gavin is able to view his penitent father with compassion.

Gavin's father's admission of error in his political views is related to a minor theme of the novel, that of the undying hatred for the British on the part of Irish Catholics. Moore shows that nationalistic Catholics such as Mr. Burke and that other unfortunate father, Mick Gallagher, actually made a dramatic volte face when the Germans bombed Belfast. But before this event, the political attitudes of the older generation are anathema to Gavin, a less prejudiced member of the younger generation who did not experience "The Troubles." Consequently, Gavin sees politics along with religion and education as an important area of contention with his father.

While Gavin is freeing himself of the authority of the older generation, he comes under the influence of several other men. While Freiddy Hargreaves, who is slightly older than Gavin, and Captain Lambert are not quite father figures, they certainly initiate Gavin into aspects of the adult world, "undreamed
of in the St. Michan's school philosophy." (p.97) But as Gavin grows in maturity, Freddy becomes less an esteemed adult than a friend who admittedly has weaknesses. Gavin sees that Freddy and Captain Lambert both suffer from a lack of will power which, Gavin recognizes, is his own besetting problem. Gavin also shares Freddy's intellectual persuasions, and together they defy a priest's injunction to pray during an air raid. The image of Gavin and Freddy standing among the other kneeling figures symbolizes their adult independence from the fathers of religion. At the end of the novel, Gavin's father (depicted with his head on Gavin's shoulder), Freddy Hargreaves, priests, and even Post Officer Craig who nominally held sway over Gavin, have all been deposed, leaving Gavin lord of the moment, an "emperor of ice-cream."

In _I Am Mary Dunne_, the theme of the father is broadened to express an indictment of the influence of all men on women. Moore illustrates this theme in his portrait of Mary Dunne whose psychological complexities relate directly to her various "fathers." While Mary Dunne has consciously rejected her faith in God, The Father, the religious training she has not wholly forgotten explains her need for a dominant male figure to give meaning to her life. Consequently, she defies her third husband who, she claims, is her resurrection and her life, (p.160) so that, in a sense, Terence becomes both her husband and her god. But her love for Terence is troubled by her fear that she has inherited the promiscuous character of her own father whom she execrates in the mock-prayer, "Our father who art in hell, cursed be thy name." (p.16) Again it is Terence who takes her father's place in her life
especially insofar as he plays the role of her protector, the one who rescues her from an unhappy marriage to yet another father figure, Hat Bell.

The sexual and religious complications of Mary Dunne's character with their Freudian links to a father figure also relate to her fear of having no identity in a world dominated by men. Specifically, she blames this fear on her three husbands:

And in real life..., I play an ingénue role, with special shadings demanded by each suitor. For Jimmy I had to be a tomboy; for Hat I must look like a model: he admired elegance. Terence wants to see me as Irish: sulky, laughing, wild. And me, how do I see me, who is that me I create in mirrors, the dressing-table me, the self I cannot put a name to in the Golden Door Beauty Salon?

When I think of that I hate being a woman, I hate this sickening female role-playing, I mean the silly degradation of playing pander and whore in the presentation of my face and figure in a man's world. (p.31)

Mary Dunne's general condemnation of the way men treat women which she frequently articulates in the novel, is also illustrated by the deleterious effect of role-playing on her own character. She begins to fear that the numerous roles she has played are destroying her essential being, that the "me" she creates in response to various men is not herself. But her eventual recognition that she still is Mary Dunne is evidence that she cannot separate herself from her past actions any more than one can "know the dancer from the dance." Moore's epigraph to this novel from W.B. Yeats's "Among School Children," is well-chosen.

Moore's epigraph to Fergus from Wallace Stevens' "The Auroras of Autumn" exactly describes Fergus' former harmonious life:

We were as Danes in Denmark all day long
And [we] knew each other well, hale-hearted landsmen
For whom the outlandish was another day
Of the week, queerer than Sunday....

Presiding over this unified and happy culture was Fergus' father, a well-known and respected surgeon. Fergus is the son who questions his father's supreme and contented trust in God; Fergus dares to think "the outlandish," -- that there may be another day of the week aside from the seven which terminate on the Sabbath Day, that there may be other reasons for living than are conceived of in his father's faith. Consequently, Fergus leaves his home and his homeland and ceases to enjoy the stability of a code, of being a "Dane in Denmark."

Like the mythical Irish king of the same name who renounced his throne to become a wanderer and a dreamer, Fergus travels to North America where he lives as a writer. But when a position as a script-writer takes him to California where the way of life is antithetical to the life he knew at home, Fergus' belief in himself as arbiter of his own life is strained. At this moment of crisis, the wish that Brendan Tierney had formulated for the return of his dead father is mysteriously granted Fergus Fadden. Dr. James Fadden appears from some undefined world to counsel Fergus. He admits that he is pleased with Fergus' writing, but not about his present life. (p.25) Fergus naturally takes advantage of his father's special knowledge of life and death to ask if there is an afterlife. His father replies that any world he could describe would necessarily be inconceivable to Fergus. The ambivalence of his reply gives Fergus grounds to argue that if there is no afterlife, then his father's faith was "a farce:"
"All the things you taught us, the things you believed in, your prayers, going to Mass and Confession and Holy Communion, your devotion to Our Lady, the whole thing! Your obedience to the rules of the church, the ten commandments, mortal sins, plenary indulgences, the lot! Just think of it! A sham, a fraud, a complete waste of time!" (p. 226)

But Dr. Fadden counters Fergus' argument with the significant comparison that whereas faith gave his life a meaning while he lived it, Fergus' life has none. (p. 227) The notion that Dr. Fadden can return from the dead is, itself, outlandish, but as the representative of a happier time when men were "as Danes in Denmark," he is an appropriate spokesman. Moreover, as Fergus' most revered ghost who is both the first and last to appear, and as Fergus' real and spiritual father, Dr. Fadden and his views are given great prominence. In this novel which contains many echoes from the earlier novels, it is altogether fitting that the father who has been both reviled and pitied in the preceding novels, should here be restored to a more sympathetic and even admirable position.

The theme of the father, then, as it is developed in conjunction with the theme of the search for personal identity in these seven novels, encompasses most of the ideas which Brian Moore's novels communicate about religion, education, the Irish character, the special problems of Northern Ireland, life in North America, the problems of the writer, the values of faith and the difficulties involved in living without a faith, the conflict of the generations, and the oppression of women. In Moore's fiction, all these ideas are presented through the experiences of the protagonists who are always children and occasionally fathers as well, and who must all encounter
an essential paradox of human life -- that it is impossible to live without a father, but often impossible to live with him as well. The fact that this paradox is experienced by all men supports Brian Moore's claim that his writing like the work of James Joyce is a "celebration of the commonplace."
Footnotes for Chapter V


2 Ibid., p.18.


6 Hallvard Dahlie, Brian Moore, p.119.


8 Brian Moore, The Revolution Script (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971). For a discussion of this work, see Appendix A.


13 Moore has said that he gave Bernard Rice his own opinions about God's omniscience and omnipotence. See Hallvard Dahlie, "Interviews Brian Moore," p.15.


15 A minor character, Professor O'Neill, who is also a father figure, similarly disappoints Judith Hearne. He avoids her company and also answers her questions with cliches such as, "Being an artist does not absolve a man from his religious duties, Judy." (p.145) But Professor O'Neill at least gives Judith Hearne financial support after her breakdown.
The public aspects of Ginger's private struggle comprise a related minor theme of the novel. Moore stresses the difficulties faced by immigrants in a new country, especially a country like Canada where a man's success is gauged by his ability to make money.

Moore often illustrates the positive value of behaviour which is not selfish. Mrs. Tierney's unselfish motivation is applauded and Mary Dunne declares, "If there is a hell, it should be for selfishness." (p. 140)

Judith Hearne and Mary Dunne are the only protagonists whose fathers are not only unsuccessful but also deceased during their respective childhoods; their lack of a strong father in youth no doubt underlies their subsequent need for a powerful male companion.

In his dress, his scholastic and professional success, his religious beliefs, and his dominating role as a paterfamilias, Fergus' father is an amlagam of Professor O'Neill, Dr. Tierney, and Mr. Burke, fathers in Moore's earlier novels.

The critic of The Times Literary Supplement notes of Fergus: "There is some evidence that the book (The Seventh Novel) is meant to contain all the other books —......" "How to get on with your ghosts," TLS, No. 3, 606 (April 9, 1971), p. 413.

In an interview with Richard B. Sale, Brian Moore describes his method of work as "frighteningly unprofessional:"

I start with a character; then I try over a period of a year or more to do something with that character. The story changes all the time as the character changes for me. However, "unprofessional" Moore's methods of composition may be, the resulting novels are certainly successful and decidedly revealing of his primary concern with character. In every respect, his novels bear the imprint of the central character. The plot describes his growth in perception, while the narrative concentrates on his point of view. The patterns of language are related to his special character and diction, just as the imagery is concerned with his vision of the setting and events. The themes which inform these events are always relevant to the protagonist's personal situation and seen from his unique perspective. Both in structure and in content, then, the fictional worlds of Brian Moore's novels belong to the protagonist.

"I believe," said Virginia Woolf, "that all novels..., deal with character, and that it is to express character -- not to preach doctrines, sing songs, or celebrate the glories of the British Empire, that the form of the novel, ..., has been evolved." But Virginia Woolf also recognized, as Iris Murdoch does with special reference to the modern novel, that some novelists are better at creating characters than others: Virginia Woolf criticized Wells, Bennett, and Galsworthy for failing to deal directly with their characters and Iris Murdoch finds that most modern novels lack such
characters as one finds in Victorian novels. These criticisms cannot be leveled at Brian Moore whose special talent for fashioning his novels around a central character is unmistakeable.


3See supra, "Introduction," p.ii.
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While this thesis was in progress, Brian Moore published The *Revolution Script* which concerns the activities of the two Front de Libération cells, the Libération Cell which kidnapped James Cross and the Chenier Cell which kidnapped and murdered Pierre Laporte. The book focuses on the Libération Cell, the members of which, as Moore points out, "by appearing into Cuba, had, in a sense, become fictional characters, moving into history and legend." Moore has described his motivation for writing a book around these people:

> I had a tale which contained murder, terror, suspense, heroes, villains, and the Machiavellian use of political power. By using novelistic techniques to portray these events, I could try to show these young people, not as faceless "terrorists" but as what they are: young brave, dangerous, confused revolutionaries. I decided to risk writing it in this form. I knew that I was, and am, taking liberties. But then, that is what any writer takes when he tries, through fictional techniques, to tell a truth.

The events, therefore, are seen chiefly through the eyes of James Cross's kidnappers: Marc Carbonneau, Jacques Cosette-Trudel and his wife, Louise, Yves Langlois, Jacques Lanctôt and his wife, Suzanne. But many other points of view are added including those of the Chenier Cell, of the police, and of various political figures.

The *Revolution Script* differs from the seven novels discussed in this thesis principally because it is not a wholly imagined work of fiction. It has been variously described as a "non-fiction novel," (surely a contradiction in terms) and as a "documentary novel." And despite Moore's claim that the members of the Libération Cell are "in a sense," fictional
characters, for most people they remain real-life participants in an actual crime. Moreover, because Moore elects to treat them with equal attention, no one character is sufficiently developed to capture the reader’s imagination.

The sheer number of the characters, aside from the Libération Cell itself, gives the book a diffuse quality which is never the case in Moore’s novels, centered as they are on a single character who is intensely realized. In addition, the documentary style of various sections which are interspersed with the many passages narrated by the people involved, marks a significant departure from Moore’s usual highly personal style of narration. Because of these differences, The Revolution Script cannot be included in this thesis which treats Moore’s methods of characterizing his fictional central characters.

As the critic of The Times Literary Supplement points out:

It hardly seems like a Brian Moore book at all; and though one has no right to disappointment on that score, for it is not a writer’s duty to be predictable, it must be said that books of this kind have been produced by writers without a fraction of Mr. Moore’s talent. There is almost no opportunity here for Mr. Moore to get inside the minds of his characters, to watch them interpret the present in the light of their own personal histories, or to put over his narrative in the particular idiom of the individual witnessing events. Thus he casts his greatest gift aside.

Moore’s choice of a less imaginative and more documentary style in The Revolution Script is certainly puzzling, for in his preceding fiction, Moore has effectively treated similar themes and characters. The plight of Belfast’s Roman Catholic minority is described in Judith Hearne and The Feast of Lupercal, while the character of political extremists is examined
in *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*. It is significant that whereas Moore set out to develop the characters of people who actually exist in a documentary work, he has, in fact, been more successful in portraying similar characters who are purely invented. The contrast between *The Revolution Script* and Moore's earlier novels illustrates that Moore's "greatest gift" is undoubtedly his ability to create fictional characters.

1 Brian Moore, *The Revolution Script* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971)


3 Ibid., p. 68

4 Ibid., p. 68


6 Ibid., p. 57.