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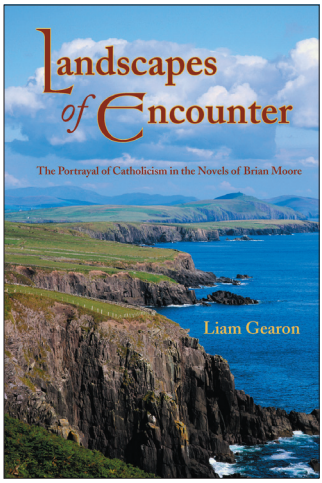

LANDSCAPES OF ENCOUNTER: THE PORTRAYAL OF CATHOLICISM IN THE NOVELS OF BRIAN MOORE

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Part III
Fictional Portrayals of Vatican II Catholicism and Beyond

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Chapter 4

Catholicism Reappraised: Ireland Revisited

(*Catholics*, 1972; *The Mangan Inheritance*, 1979; *The Doctor's Wife*, 1976; *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes*, 1981; *Lies of Silence*, 1990)

Introduction

TRANSFORMATION in Roman Catholicism resulting from the Second Vatican Council provided Brian Moore in subsequent post-Conciliar times with an extraordinary range of literary material. The resultant portrayal of Catholicism within Moore's fiction thus mirrors theological change within the Church itself. However, this relationship between Catholic theology and literature, already discussed in earlier chapters, becomes more complex in the post-Vatican II era. Moore's fictional portrayal of a largely monolithic, pre-Vatican II Church reflected the inherent simplicities of an ecclesiastical and theological outlook in which hierarchy and authority defined the boundaries between Church and world so clearly. After Vatican II, Catholicism redefined itself, and in particular its often antagonistic and divisive relationship with the world. It was the range of theological and ecclesiological re-definition within Roman Catholicism (a range in large part charted by the sixteen documents of the Second Vatican Council and subsequent post-Conciliar publications) which ensured a greater plurality in Moore's fictional portrayal of Catholicism, a plurality which became part of Catholicism's modern understanding of itself and integral to its theological redefinition.

Moore's fictional-theological intertextual range is thus extended in those novels which deal most fully with post-Vatican II times and themes. Where, for instance, the early Irish and American fictions allowed for the predominance of a European canon by way of intertextual reference (Flaubert, Gide, Joyce, and Proust have all been noted), Moore's post-Vatican II fiction

achieves greater theological as well as literary intertextuality.[1] Thus, with an early example in this important phase of the novelist's work, *Catholics*, Beckett, Synge, and Yeats form part of the novella's literary self-consciousness. But this novella, Moore's first text significant for its portrayal of post-Vatican II Catholicism, deals explicitly too with the texts of liberation theology and strongly implies an ongoing Catholic commitment to interfaith relations, matters which were only publicly evident in Catholicism since the publication of documents such as *Gaudium et Spes*,[2] *Lumen Gentium*,[3] and *Nostra Aetate*.[4] Post-Vatican II themes such as liberation theology become increasingly evident in later fiction such as *The Colour of Blood* and *No Other Life* and interfaith relations, or more properly interfaith conflict, is developed in *The Statement*. Even historical novels such as *Black Robe* and *The Magician's Wife* deal with the cultural confrontations of the past with the theological eyes of the post-Vatican II present.

This chapter is an exploration of the beginnings of such theological intertextuality which will extend from *Catholics* through to Moore's final fiction, *The Magician's Wife*. Thus, where Moore's novels reflect issues of historical and contemporary theological concern within the Church, especially as demonstrated in Vatican II and key post-Conciliar documentation, these are manifestly integral to Moore's literary preoccupations. In addition, the notion of Moore's novels as a landscape of encounter achieves pre-eminence in his portrayal of post-Vatican II Catholicism. Where place as much as Catholicism defined the early Irish fictions and North America provided a space of secular opposition to Irish Catholicism in the early American novels, Moore's post-Vatican II fictions provide a sense of secular and theological space within a transnational Catholic Church where the particularity of place and cultural difference grow in theological significance. Of particular significance here was a distinct and explicit shift in the Catholic ecclesiology, the Church's redefinition of itself: not only was there a new emphasis in ecclesiology from Church as hierarchy (we have seen the "Church Militant" in Moore's earlier fiction[5]) to the Church as "People of God" in *Lumen Gentium*, but this, combined with the democratizing effects of a shift from Latin to vernacular usage within the Church inevitably gave priority to laity and as a consequence to individual cultures.[6] Arguably, it is this move, especially the heightened awareness of cultural plurality within the universal Church, that allowed Moore not only

to diversify the geographical settings for his portrayal of Catholicism but to reflect too that cultural plurality inherent within such physical, geographical difference: Moore's landscapes of encounter—the fictional and metafictional meeting of Catholic and the non-Catholic "other"—eventually extend, then, beyond Ireland and North America to eastern Europe (*The Colour of Blood*), the Caribbean (*No Other Life*), and North Africa (*The Magician's Wife*).

Moore's later fictions, from *Catholics* through to The *Magician's Wife*, also reflect, though, internal conflicts within Catholicism itself. Just as tendencies towards either stasis or change over a great many issues were marked and obvious during the Council, so too in the Church similar tensions remain evident over a range of doctrinal and pastoral issues.[7] For instance, if recent tendencies within the Church have been marked by a reversal in the inherent radicalism of Vatican II to a more conservative contemporary tone in many areas of Church life (Pope John Paul II being widely regarded as a conservative[8]), tension and conflict within the Church in post-Conciliar times can be attributed to conflict between conservative and more revolutionary elements within Catholicism.[9]

Geography and cultural particularity are again marked factors here: simplistically put, the Church in Africa, Asia, or South America may often reflect different pastoral priorities than the European Church.[10] By far the most notable instance of such differing priorities is in the area of Catholic social teaching.[11] Here liberation theology is both the most notable instance of such geographical diversification as the post-Vatican II Church worked to emphasize the needs of local churches and that area most contested by a re-centralizing papacy in the post-Vatican II Church.[12] If the beginnings of Moore's preoccupation with post-Vatican II themes represents an increased theological intertextuality, then it is the Second Vatican Council itself which provided the impetus for such literary preoccupations. We certainly see elements of the Church's new theological thinking reflected in Moore's portrayal of Catholicism. Still, those tensions between conservative and more radical elements within Catholicism, determined as much by geography as cultural difference, are part of Moore's portrayal of Catholicism just as much as they are part of the Church's ongoing theological history.

Moore's re-evaluation of post-Vatican II Catholicism begins, though, with an imagined Church Council and a fictional revisitation of Ireland; and it is with Ireland that this chapter remains after an examination of Moore's

portrayal of Catholicism in theological conflict in the novella *Catholics*. Thus, from an analysis of the historical antecedence of aesthetic and ideological alternatives to Catholicism and Irish nationhood in *The Mangan Inheritance*, this chapter examines variously an increasingly secularized Catholicism in an Ireland of the North which is becoming simultaneously more liberal and more violent. The theme of love as both an erotic and sublime alternative to Catholic belief in *The Doctor's Wife* and *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes* is developed against the ideological backdrop of a Catholicism marginalized by the modernity it sought to accommodate through the Second Vatican Council and which is simultaneously centralized through its politicization by sectarianism, a process which reaches its peak in *Lies of Silence*.

Catholics (1972)

If a key defining moment in twentieth-century Catholicism was the period marking the Second Vatican Council between 1962 and 1965, the direction of Moore's fiction in the post-Conciliar period can be said to be equally marked by his own consideration of subsequent changes which had taken place in the Church as the century drew to a close. Thus, with a mixture of fiction and "faction," the futuristic *Catholics* essentially charts key developments in the post-Vatican II Catholic Church. The radical changes in the Church's thinking, both in its view of itself and its mission of salvation in the modern world, become projected onto *Catholics*, a shift from grandnarrative to the smaller, more contained world of the novella; thereby partly allegorizing the historical (theological and ecclesiological) aftermath of the Second Vatican Council with the imagined future of a post-Vatican IV scenario.

Less theological prediction than historical reflection on a theological present (that is, the 1970s), Moore's *Catholics*, if it were to be taken as predictive of future ecclesiology and theology, is a failed prediction of the 1990s Church: in the late 1990s present, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church has not instigated any abandonment of metaphysical and theological realism nor opted instead for a radical program of liberation theology. Yet the Church in the 1990s *does* reflect an ongoing tension between conservative and radical[13]; and, indeed, beyond Catholicism there are many Christian thinkers who do reflect a strong religious anti-realism.[14] In terms of predictions of a theological future, then, Moore's literary expectations of a

radical Rome may have been misconceived, but his portrayal of the future global importance of liberation theology was not. Kinsella's recall of his superior's words are nevertheless full of irony if read in contemporary theological context (Europe certainly reflecting a hierarchical conservatism): "You must show them that while you are the Revolution and they are Tradition, the Revolution is the established faith and will prevail" (89). The importance of *Catholics*, at least in terms of Moore's portrayal of Catholicism, thus rests primarily on the manner in which it reflects the theological preoccupations of the time (the immediate aftermath of Vatican II) and for its seminal treatment of so many themes in post-Vatican II theology in the global Church.[15]

That Moore chose to portray such revolution in Catholic thinking in the context of Ireland is also significant. Moore's early Irish fiction used geography, the physicality of place, to enhance the portrayal of cultures in encounter, especially religious and political culture. In those early works, the proximity of opposition in a limited space often heightened such encounters by the inevitability of contrast, difference, and otherness permeating them: Northern British Province and Southern Irish Republic; urban Irish cityscapes (of Belfast and Dublin) and Irish rural landscapes (of Ulster and Republic). In these early Irish fictions, there was also the widening of geographical and ideological (if not yet theological) context with encounters between Ireland as an island and the more distant continent of America, encounters between Ireland (as colonized) and British Empire (as colonizer), and also the juxtaposition of Ireland's neutrality with a wider world in conflict during the Second World War.

In such instances, Irish Catholicism is linked strongly to Irish nationalism, an interrelation of religious and ideological grandnarratives which Moore maintains in *The Doctor's Wife*, *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes*, and, of course, *Lies of Silence*.[16] Less obviously, there is an identity between the grandnarratives of Irish nationalism and Irish Catholicism in *Catholics* itself, the novella arguably presenting a time in which political conflicts have been resolved to leave only theological and ecclesiastical struggles. Thus Moore presents a partially sympathetic view of pre-Vatican II–pre-Vatican IV Catholic tradition in this novella against the forces of institutional and doctrinal change within the ranks of a modernizing Church. Moore's fictional defence of Catholic tradition in Ireland heightens our awareness of a major development in

literary-theological thinking in his novels, not only about the Church but about the Church's role both within contemporary society and, given the post-Vatican IV setting of *Catholics*, the society of the future.

As in the early Irish fictions, then, integral to the portrayal of theological tradition is the presentation of Ireland's landscape; the island's name alone, "Muck," having an earthiness which implies a rural groundedness, a cultural heritage which stands in contrast to the urbane (and urban) theological sophistication of Kinsella, the American-trained ecclesiastical visitor from Rome. The novella is thus dependent on geography for a representation of the nuances of religious and secular culture in encounter. For Muck Abbey, "founded 1216, rebuilt 1400–70," it is process contextualized by the "out of print" *Weir's Guide to Religious Monuments*, that is, by centuries of conflict which mark Ireland's colonial history from the Norman conquest through Cromwellian Catholic persecution (which the Abbey avoided) to the post-Vatican IV "present."[17] Vatican IV represents the community's most difficult theological challenge, no less for the implied abandonment of ecclesiastical tradition which the abbey's historical legacy helped maintain; after so many centuries of conflict from external aggressors it is the internal reform of the Church itself which is the source for the deconstruction of tradition.

Significantly, then, the Ireland of *Catholics* is geographically and theologically indeterminate, representing a recalcitrant but threatened Irish Catholic tradition whose theological isolation is heightened by its geographical position between a progressive Europe and the radical Americas. As the Father General of the Albegensian [*sic*] Order points out to Kinsella in Rome:

> "It is a cliche to say that it was expected. Even Vatican IV can't bury two thousand years in a few decades. But I'd have thought Spain. Or, perhaps, some former Portuguese possession." The General sighed. "We are so infallibly fallible, aren't we? Wasn't it Chesterton who said something about a thing being too big to be seen? Ireland. Of course." (16)

And it is Ireland, the land itself identified with the maintenance of tradition, which becomes the focus of "Ferry tours from Liverpool and Fishguard, charter flights from Leeds, Boston, New York—pilgrimage from France—even bella Italia" (16). And just as the Father General demands of Kinsella to "Get that old fool down off that mountain" (17), it is the geography

of Ireland, the physical landscape, which simultaneously suggests spiritual ascent and religious dissension.

It is also the geographical which engenders and develops Moore's literary and theological intertextuality. Thus, in *Catholics*, identity between religion and nationalism develops through inherent reference not only to the Conciliar and post-Conciliar textuality of theological change from Vatican II onwards (the critically all-but-ignored theological intertextuality of this pivotal work) but also to the political aesthetics of ideology and specifically Irish nationhood within the novella, often cited as being Synge's Aran Island diaries and Yeats' prophetic poetry, "What rough beast, its hour come round at last" (13). What is of key interest here is that Moore's literary and theological intertextuality has developed an almost "about turn." Thus, Moore's typical early Irish and American characters, especially the writers, often cite the canon of European and particularly Irish literature (Yeats, Joyce, Synge) in opposition to theological orthodoxy; the aesthetic a challenge to the theological. Here, in *Catholics*, such intertextuality becomes, in a post-Vatican II–post-Vatican IV era, the opportunity for a literary and theological realignment; away from the opposition between Irish literary canon and Catholic religious orthodoxy to an identification between both literary and theological tradition, between religion and nationhood.

Significantly, therefore, Muck Island is set off the Kerry Coast, Moore's strong, poetic portrayal of Irish rural landscape and Atlantic seascape marking his first literary journey into a reappraisal not only of Catholic theological thinking but also for a re-examination of place, the emphasis shifting from the city of Belfast, where the rural Catholic worlds of the Province and the South are a geographical and cultural unconscious to a Protestant, colonial North, to a world in which rural Catholicity predominates.[18] With an ambivalence typical of Moore, though, landscape and theology are also subject to intertextual encounter with secular and *a*theological literature in a world now de-sacralized:

> ... this lonely place, a place which now, in its noon darkness, made him [Kinsella] think of a Beckett landscape, that place in which Vladimir and Estragon might have waited for Godot. The rainbow had seemed to end, down there, in the centre of the white cross formed by two concrete ribbons of road. In such phenomena people once read signs of God's hand. (24)

Kinsella's encounter with Abbot O'Malley is thereby marked by the skeptical ambivalence inherent or apparent in both revolution and tradition which finally belies the ecclesiastical certainty which both men supposedly represent.

Appropriately, though, and for all its brevity, *Catholics* most crucially provides a literary overview of many major areas of theological (liturgical, doctrinal, pastoral) and ecclesiastical (organizational) transformation within Catholicism. These key transformations from the Second Vatican Council (liturgical change, ecumenism–interfaith relations, social teaching and ecclesiology) are all subsequently addressed in Moore's other fictions with post-Vatican II preoccupations and further reiterate the pivotal importance of this short work.

The first and most prominent of this novella's themes, that of liturgical change, was also, if incidentally, the first and most prominent of the statements arising from the Second Vatican Council in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.[19] The most obvious of transformations in the public face of Catholicism understandably marks the fiercest defence of tradition by Father Matthew in *Catholics*:

> And if the Mass was in Latin and people did not speak Latin, that was part of the mystery of it, for the Mass was not talking to your neighbour, it was talking to God. Almighty God! And we did it that way for nearly two thousand years and, in all that time, the church was a place to be quiet in, and respectful, it was a hushed place because God was there, God on the altar, in the tabernacle in the form of a wafer of bread and a chalice of wine. It was God's house, where, every day, the daily miracle took place. God coming down among us. A mystery. Just as this new mass isn't a mystery, it's a mockery, a singsong, it's not talking to God, it's talking to your neighbour, and that's why it's in English, or German or Chinese or whatever language the people in church happen to speak. It's a symbol, they say, but a symbol of what? It's some entertainment show, that's what it is. And the people see through it. They do! That's why they come to Coom Mountain.... (47–48)

The linguistic issue here of the shifting importance of sacramental signifiers and divine signified reflects issues of substantive, theological

concern for a Catholic community, as it did for the post-Vatican II Church.[20] Thus, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*'s changes to Catholic liturgy predominantly affected the rite of Mass, most notably the shift from Latin to vernacular, but it also made the sacramental life of the Church more accessible to a lay Catholic populace. This increased democratization (by implication) evident in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* in turn reflected broader changes in ecclesiology evident in documents such as *Lumen Gentium* with a decisive shift in self-definition from Church as "hierarchy" to "People of God." Demonstrably indicating how even the most systematic aspects of Catholic theology impinge on the lived experience of Catholic community (at least in Moore's Ireland), the reaction against the *aggiornamento* which suffused the Council and the post-Conciliar world finds its voice in Father Matthew and its focus on the liturgy: "You can all see what is being proposed here. It is a denial of everything the Mass stands for" (100).

If liturgical changes in the novella relate to ecclesiological re-definition (indicated in the latter statements by Abbot O'Malley and Father Matthew), transformations in liturgy are also inextricably linked to ecumenism and interfaith relations, the second main theological theme of *Catholics. Unitatis Redintegratio*, the Vatican II document on ecumenism, thus provided a statement of Catholicism's willingness to unify a Christianity so divided since the Protestant Reformation.[21] Still more radical were Vatican II statements like *Nostra Aetate*, on interfaith relations, which encouraged dialogue between Catholic Christianity and other world religions.[22] The instructions to the Abbot from the Father General of his Order explain the delicacy of ensuring liturgical reform in relation to interfaith dialogue, neatly mirroring Moore's intertextual literary theology:

> While the needs of your particular congregation might seem to be served by the retention of the Latin Mass, nevertheless, as Father Kinsella will explain to you, your actions in continuing to employ the older form are, at this time, particularly susceptible to misinterpretation elsewhere as a deliberate contravention of the spirit of aggiornamento. Such an interpretation can and will be made, not only within the councils of the Church itself, but within the larger councils of the ecumenical movement itself. This is particularly distressful to us at this time, in view of the apetura, possibly the most significant historical event of our century, when

> interpenetration between Christian and Buddhist faiths is on the verge of reality. (43–44)

It would be many years before the outline agenda of these new statements on soteriology would progress in the Catholic Church's actual, historical relations with other faiths, the Jewish faith in particular, and prominent theologians have received Vatican censure for extending the relations either too speedily or too far, tensions which Moore develops in later works, especially in *The Statement*.[23] Again, we can see the pivotal importance of this short work, *Catholics*, which substantially initiates Moore's literary treatment of post-Vatican II Catholicism.

A third important focus in *Catholics* is that of pastoral theology, which reflects Catholicism's greater concern with social justice in the late twentieth century, the theological voice of which was the Vatican II document *Gaudium et Spes*. Moore, though, directly links the theme of Catholic social teaching in *Catholics* with its most radical embodiment, liberation theology.[24] The latter's pastoral origins from the 1950s onwards can be identified within Latin American "basic ecclesial communities," as characterized by the Dutch theologian Carlos Mesters, and this significantly (if incidentally) aids Moore's presentation of an increasingly culturally plural, theological geography, which itself reflects the developing historical awareness of such plurality within Catholicism itself. Thus, while *Gaudium et Spes* provided a public theology which encapsulated the concern for social justice within the Church, the meeting of South American bishops at Medellin in 1968 is often regarded as important for the translation of the largely European theological preoccupations of Vatican II into a Third World socio-economic setting.[25] Foundational post-Vatican II theological writings are Gustavo Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation* (1971),[26] Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972),[27] and Leonardo Boff's *Jesus Christ Liberator* (1972)[28]; but what is of particular literary interest is the historical proximity of Moore's presentation of liberation theology in *Catholics* to the publication of these key (if in 1972 un-translated) South American texts.

Ready to leave for Muck, Kinsella is reminded of his now-crippled spiritual mentor ("the Brazilian militaires broke his back" [40]), a continent and an ideological world away: he "thought of Hartmann in the rain forest of Brazil"; Hartmann who had argued that the Church "despite its history

and its dependence on myth and miracle, exists today as the quintessential structure through which revolution can be brought to certain areas of the globe" (20–21). Kinsella's apparent certainties, those of the new ecclesiastical order, a challenge to rather than a support for social hierarchy, are set now to upset the order of the island community, as, at the novel's close, Kinsella's new theological and political assuredness is contrasted with the abbot's metaphysical uncertainty. When the Abbot asks Kinsella if Hartmann "talks much of God," the Abbot has to refine his question to make it accessible to the young priest, "No, what I mean is ... is it souls he's after ... or the good of mankind?" (41). Sympathizing with both the popular and monastic attachment to the Latin Mass, the Abbot's skepticism is revealed as bleaker, more all-encompassing than Kinsella's; and he is equal to if not more advanced than Kinsella in the (albeit contradictory) "contemporary" thinking on a "theology of atheism":

> "Are you asking me what I believe?"
> "Yes, if you wish. There is a book by a Frenchman called Francis Janson, have you ever heard of it? An Unbeliever's Faith it's called."
> "I have not read it."
> "It is interesting. He believes there can be a future for Christianity, provided it gets rid of God. Your friend, Father Hartmann, has mentioned Janson in his own writings. The idea is, a Christianity that keeps God can no longer stand up to Marxism." (67)

Following Hartmann, Kinsella emphasizes Christianity's social, rather than metaphysical, teaching. With reference to Yeats, and open allusions to Synge's Aran Island diaries, Moore's novella thereby provides an intertextual space which is literary, political, and theological. It is the inherent critique of Kinsella's post-Vatican II–IV theology to which Moore returns most explicitly in a later novel, *The Colour of Blood*, dealing with secular and ecclesiastical politics in the late stages of the Cold War.

Ecclesiology is the final and probably the most subtle of all Moore's treatments of theological themes in *Catholics*, though there is one particularly clear exchange between Kinsella and the Abbot which reflects the disconcerting effect of increased responsibility brought about ecclesiastical democratization. Abbot O'Malley makes the point well to Kinsella about

the parishioners from Cahirciveen and pilgrims from elsewhere who are attracted to the old Latin rite of the Mass:

> "They haven't changed. They want those old parish priests and those old family doctors. Sheep need authoritarian sheepdogs nipping at their heels from birth to funeral. People don't want truth or social justice, they don't want this ecumenical tolerance. They want certainties. The old parish priest promised that. You can't, Jim." (12–13)

Indeed, this passage provides a coda for the theological themes at the heart of the novella. In Moore's portrayal of Catholicism here, we are some fictional distance from Ginger Coffey's "boredom of the Mass," the (indirectly humorous) persecutions of Father Quigley's sermonizing for Judith Hearne or Brendan Tierney's confident dismissal of the Church.

For all the Church's published statements of increased democratization in ecclesiology, though, Moore presents the irony of Kinsella's task as the promulgation of an essentially progressive militancy to rival the older model of the Church Militant.[29] For all its apparent abandonment of the trappings of office—"cardinals went shabby in mufti, hirelings of all kinds had increased their false panoply of rank" (27–28)—the Church retains a strong hierarchical authority which is potentially all the more pernicious for its denial. At a minor level, this is symbolized by Kinsella's "ecumenical" clothing, his mother even commenting, "You don't look like a priest, I just can't imagine you are one" (20). Yet Kinsella's appearance marks a more covert militancy, his clothing resembling less the nondescript or nonprescriptive conventions of contemporary fashion than a member of a church army, carrying as he does "a paramilitary dispatch case, a musette bag, and wearing grey-green denim fatigues" (12). More broadly, this is shown to demonstrate the deceptive surface change of the Church's ecclesiology, its (supposedly) radically altered model of itself, which in actuality retains much of its pre-Vatican II–pre-Vatican IV authority and dependence on hierarchy as a means of ecclesiastical control; Kinsella's mission, direct from Rome, is an illustrative case in point.

The ecclesiastical and doctrinal certainties of the past are most marked in the community's nickname for Kinsella: "the inquisitor," an uncomfortable and here also ironic historical reference to a period in Church history when

theology's enforcement was through physical authority at its most extreme. However, it is a term and a label which Kinsella dismisses as absurd at the end of the twentieth century: "How can we even define what heresy is today?" The Abbot's response enforces the perceived irony of change within the church: "Yesterday's orthodoxy is today's heresy" (83). While on a personal level, the Abbot dates his crisis of faith to his visit to Lourdes, within the context of Church history he wonders if, "Aggiornamento, was that when uncertainty had begun?" and whether doctrinal instability and theological doubt have roots in, or are at least linked to, declining institutional control over the individual, his own last bastion of identity with ecclesiastical authority: "Changes of Doctrine. Setting oneself up as an ultimate authority. Insubordination" (83). However briefly hinted at, Moore aligns these changes in theology and ecclesiology in Catholicism with those adopted during the Protestant Reformation four centuries earlier, with a revolt against Catholic authority that was as much institutional as it was doctrinal and theological: "He looked at the tabernacle. Insubordination. The beginning of breakdown. And, long ago, that righteous prig at Wittenberg nailing his defiance to the church door" (84).

Stepping out from the enclosure of the abbey guest house, standing on the island shore on the last morning of his visit, Kinsella's meeting with a "rush of breakers" and the "long retreating roar of water" is reminiscent of Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" and the withdrawing tide of religious faith; the dominating physical presence of land and sea highlighting at the twentieth-century ending of *Catholics*, as for Arnold in the nineteenth, the absence of faith. Indeed, plausibly, Moore's strong, naturalistic presentation of environment here hints at a metaphysical emptiness, the "null" which the Abbot enters when he finally leads the community in the Our Father—now "Prayer is the only miracle" – in order to heal division, "relieved their voices echoed his" (101–2). What is left when "prayers seemed false or without meaning at all" (78) is obedience. Devoid of supernatural context, in a reversal of Moore's literary persistence of theological consciousness in a secular world, the emptying of theological meaning, O'Malley sees his role as "a sort of foreman here, a sort of manager," the role of the Abbot as "not a lot different from a secular job" (58).

Catholics, with its Vatican II–Vatican IV parallels, can be seen as an enduring theological allegory which presents in seminal form many of the

themes to which Moore returns in later novels. Portrayal of environment is crucial to the presentation of Catholicism in the narrative here, as it is in both earlier and later fiction. Conceivably too, then, the landscape of Muck and the Atlantic seascape convey in physical terms, by way of Moore's naturalistic technique, that empty mental state the Abbot encounters when capitulating to Kinsella and Rome, "not from an excess of zeal" but from "a lack of it" (94), which leads him to "the hell of the metaphysicians: the hell of those deprived of God" (78).[30]

The Mangan Inheritance (1979)

If *Catholics* presents a post-Vatican IV Irish Catholic future, *The Mangan Inheritance* presents an Irish Catholic past with the eyes of a post-Vatican II present. The latter shares with *Catholics* too a tripartite narrative structure. In both narratives, the graphic preoccupation with the landscape and culture of Ireland is accentuated by Ireland's placement in the centre of the text. At the heart of both works is an idyll of west coast Irish life, the cultural at one with the environmental, textually enclosed by the outside world: in *Catholics,* it is the arrival and departure of the American Kinsella from Rome which marks the invasion as well as the enduring insularity of Muck; in *The Mangan Inheritance,* it is the New Yorker Jamie Mangan's departure from and return to North America (both the United States and Canada) which highlights and simultaneously deconstructs the rural Irish ideal so beloved of the Irish Literary Revival.[31]

In both books too is the implied unity of the island of Ireland; aesthetically, politically, and religiously: Ireland is a free state, and Catholic. In neither is there any sense of a North, nor any hint of political Troubles; only the history of colonial conflict marks the landscape, and does so strongly, but not in terms of any present actuality. The religious, political, and artistic coordinates of an Irish national consciousness reflect internal tensions—theological, ideological, and aesthetic—but these are matters of detail which do not threaten the sense of an overall unity. If *Catholics,* though, reflects a period of religious and theological adjustment in a post-Vatican II–IV world in which Ireland's political nationhood and aesthetic (especially Yeatsean) consciousness is determined and accentuated by its west coast setting, thereby stressing the religion and theology, then *The Mangan Inheritance* gives priority

to the political and the aesthetic over the religious while acknowledging Catholicism as integral to nation both as concept and as place. It is thus the genealogy of the Mangan family Bible which provides the textual key and inspiration for the physical and spiritual journey from Canada to Ireland, but it is a residual Catholicism, a Catholicism in which the literal traces of Catholic ancestry are contained within a sacred text which no longer functions as a religious guide to the secularized, Mangan émigrés.

Mangan's aesthetically rarefied journey begins with of the marital abandonment of a mediocre journalist and one-time poet by an acclaimed film star wife, Beatrice Abbot. Jamie Mangan's move from New York to visit the remote Canadian retreat of his father and the latter's youthful second wife is the means for the introduction of the family Bible, reopening the story of the Mangan line, the "inheritance" of the novel's title. Crucially this leads to Jamie Mangan's recognition of his *doppelganger* in a mid-nineteenth-century daguerreotype supposedly of the *poete maudit* James Clarence Mangan. This discovery is Jamie Mangan's "resurrection": "To Mangan the poet ... To my resurrection. To my life!" (57). This is the now not-uncommon motif of the theological persisting in the secular consciousness of a Moore protagonist. The death of Beatrice Abbot with her new lover in a drunken road accident three weeks after the married couple's separation provides, with increasing implausibility, the means for Jamie Mangan to explore the Mangan inheritance in Ireland with some ease and without financial inhibitions since the late Beatrice Abbot, it is discovered, had not changed her will. Jamie Mangan's significant financial inheritance is, however, seemingly more assured and, as it happens, less burdensome than the ancestral poetic inheritance he is to discover in County Cork.

Jamie Mangan the New Yorker, then, in moving to Canada, "cruel landscape, its settlement a defiance of nature" (18), and to Ireland, retraces the novelist's steps in intertextual return to Ireland: a path which had seen Moore's novels dwell initially in Ireland and move into North America via the Canada of *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*. The description of Canada and its inhospitable landscape indicates a literary throwback to American frontier literature, even to the first settlement of Canada but provides too a breadth of intertextual self-reference to Moore's own canon of North American fiction. Moore's fiction here thereby looks back to the Canada which had become home for characters such as Ginger Coffey and Mary Dunne but,

for those of us with an overview of Moore's entire oeuvre, forward to the landscape of Canada's past so vividly created in *Black Robe*. Jamie Mangan's childhood spent on the edge of the Canadian wilderness and his subsequent journey to an ancestral Ireland is traced and prefigured in the bedroom of his childhood, "a Laurentian landscape in pastels ... replaced by The Doors of Dublin" (24). It is a journey which the daguerreotype rekindles too as it romanticizes a fictive Irish idyll with the re-presentation of national self-image which early photography allowed:

> Often the name and address of the photographic studio, scrolled in elaborate curlicues, adorned the bottoms of the photographs, and as Mangan read off the names of Irish cities—Galway, Cork—it came to him that these long-ago kin of his were members of the first generation in human history to see themselves plain, not in a lake's reflection or in the ephemeral shimmer of a looking glass, or distorted by the talents or whim of a portrait painter's brush, but fixed forever as they were in life. (47–48)

"My Dark Rosaleen" is celebrated by Jamie's father as the Mangan poem which characterized Ireland and the anti-English nationalism of the Famine years; "the poem that made him Ireland's greatest poet," that and "a few others he wrote at the time of the famine." Dismissing Jamie's call for the pre-eminence of Yeats, Jamie's father insists on the polemical force of Mangan as poet and nationalist, an aesthetic of violence which made "for the common people of Ireland" his poetry "the stuff that sent men out to kill the landlords" (57).

Catholicism's presence in *The Mangan Inheritance* is subtle but the links between national and religious consciousness are evident, and it is Father Burke who leads Jamie Mangan to the graves of his predecessors:

> Mangan turned and mounted the stepping stones on the cemetery wall, coming down on the other side, inside consecrated ground. He moved through shin-high wet grass, past gray stone plinths and lichened Celtic crosses.... Almost at once, a greening stone loomed before him and he saw his name writ large.

MANGAN
PATRICK JAMES MANGAN
Departed this life
1 January 1899

> There in the cloud-darkened field Mangan took out his notebook and compared the dates he had written down from his family Bible and the parish register. This was the grave of his great-grandfather....
> He moved on to a nearby grave and read the headstone.

FERGUS MANGAN
Erected by his loving family
1919–1972 (160–61)

The Father Drinan biography of James Clarence Mangan that Jamie Mangan reads in Canada (57–58) indicates too the historical Irish Catholic identity for the nationalist aesthetic of the nineteenth-century poet.[32]

The once-aspiring poet, however, finds the land of Ireland different from its idealized literary landscape: "That sense of familiar unfamiliar which he had felt earlier now deserted him. Here his readings of Joyce and Yeats and O'Casey were no help. He felt he did not know Ireland at all" (97). The abandoned cottages that litter the pages of the text are signs of Ireland's famine history written into the landscape. Later, the deconstruction of this rural, post-Yeatsean idyll (made self-conscious by the early appearance of the Norman tower which Mangan sees off the Drishane headland) is accomplished by the juxtaposition of physical beauty with human cruelty and violence. Here place as human settlement and physical environment is both scarred and left fundamentally unmarked by the turmoil of Irish colonial history: "... he looked at the tower and thought of the broken-roofed cottage he had seen earlier, relic of emigration or famine. Abandoned, castle and cottage were co-equal in neglect, testament to the way in which this country, more than any other he had known, seemed to master time and history, rejecting men's effort to make their presence felt" (161). From the cottage the estate agent Feeley mistakenly gives Mangan, his stabilizing reference point (through a cultural geography) is the invisible America he has left behind: "that landscape, still as a medieval painting, unchanged and

unchanging, the sea, the great headlands circling the bay like outstretched arms. Far off on the horizon the Fastnet light house flashed its secret message. It came to him that he was looking toward America from a point of land which was the most westerly part of Europe" (106).

Here the cultural reference points are centred upon a faith which is alien, from the "large photograph of Pope John," symbol of transition to a post-Vatican II era, on the mantelpiece of the cottage to a seemingly more distant theological history, itself reflected in the Irish landscape, the "distant vista of fields, the church spire and the slate roofs far below, all of it was like a world long gone, still as a Poussin landscape, unchanged and unchanging" (105): "The Church, like most others he had seen in Ireland, appeared unconscionably large for the village which surrounded it. Enclosed by a graveyard of Celtic crosses ..." (112). The transition to a post-Vatican II era was held in the balance of a Janus-like political and devotional history in the living room area where hung "variously, lithographs of Pope Paul, John F. Kennedy, and our Lady appearing to Saint Therese at Lisieux" (123). Here too the parish priest, Father Burke, is one of Moore's most innocuous ecclesiastical characters to date. A willing assistant to Jamie Mangan in the latter's quest for a poetic and decidedly irreligious ancestry, it is the priest who identifies Holy Cross Parish, Dublin, as the possible link to James Patrick Mangan, and, as importantly, to the beauty of a landscape which belies the political violence of its history: "Dunmanus Coos. A beautiful spot. Two of the Fenian leaders, killed in '98 are buried there ... O'Bofey and Sean Rahilly" (157).

A major part of *The Mangan Inheritance* is Moore's development of the parallels between the nineteenth-century James Clarence Mangan and the twentieth-century Jamie Mangan: the latter feels at home when he meets the youthful Kathleen and her criminal brother, binge drinking and falling for the younger woman; Jamie is attacked in Bantry, as his ancestor was, and loses too a tooth in the fight, a disfigurement matched in the daguerreotype. The absentee landlord motif of Irish colonial history in the early nineteenth century is also mirrored in Jamie Mangan's illicit sojourn in Gorteen, the large house that had come into possession by Conor and Kathleen but which had been lost through neglect and dissipation. This is an inversion of the "big house" narrative of Protestant Ascendancy; here the specific post-Partition context of the Anglo-Irish and predominantly Protestant symbols

of English political and cultural domination.[33] In Gorteen, the name of the old Mangan house now sold to an Englishman abroad, Jamie Mangan is, then, "a squatter in some English absentee landlord's bed" (199), mirroring not only the *poete maudit* lifestyle and physical image of the daguerreotype but reflecting too the social and economic structure of the Irish nineteenth century, "the famine days when half of Ireland walked the road without a home" (192).

Jamie Mangan's eventual meeting with his more contemporary *doppelganger*, the incestuous poet and sex-offender, his Uncle Michael Mangan, confirms that religion is less influential here than the aesthetic: "Our strain of the Mangan family are all without the consolations of religion. Hell fire isn't what we're afraid of .... We're afraid that we'll be forgotten" (284). We see the poetic aspirations of many a Moore prototype from both the early Irish and American novels surfacing here at their most grotesque. Jamie is led to the castrated poet and uncle by Dinny Mangan who had facilitated his father's escape from justice to a life of harsh isolation, the always-close reality of the myth of west coast Irish idyll—like in *Catholics*, but here without the interaction of religion and national identity suffused by landscape, leaving a secular aesthetic as a supposed ideal of human consciousness. It is a move with which many characters in Moore's early Irish and American novels are familiar, but here portrayed at its most disturbing.

So Eileen Mangan recounts to Jamie Mangan the history of family sexual abuse at the hands of the internal exile, Michael Mangan—her husband and Jamie's uncle—including the molestation of his daughter Maeve, and later Kathleen, the daughter of Michael Mangan's deceased brother. It was Michael Mangan's castration by Maeve that led to his internal Irish exile, facilitated by his son Dinny, to a place "lonely as a Hopper landscape" (273), suffused with the marks of the earliest conquest of Ireland ("lookout point and stronghold by long ago Norman conquerors"). The land here was now "abandoned to sea birds, rabbits, and, here and there, high on the rocky ground a few black-faced sheep" (275).

Michael Mangan's books in Latin are the texts of classical imperialism, both religious and political, and the works in the Irish language the supposed means of their resistance: "Here at land's end, a man amid his books in a ruined Norman tower, living like a hermit writing verse" (283). The German's farm, which precedes access to Jamie's contemporary (and yet Gothic)

doppelganger, combined with the phallic ruin of the Norman (and yet Yeatsean) tower allows Moore to both draw together and deconstruct two of his key secular alternatives to religion, the aesthetic and the psychoanalytic. Jamie thus initially sees and approves of the books in Michael Mangan's library:

> Marvell, Donne, Hopkins, Yeats, Eliot ... There were paperbacks of Dostoevsky, Gogol, Tolstoy, Turgenev. There were histories of Ireland, books on the Irish language, Joyce's Portrait, Camus's The Plague. There were novels by Lawrence and Hardy and the collected essays of Swift, all of them titles he would be pleased to see on his own shelves. (282–83)

Michael Mangan, himself a mutilated "ruin" is an unrepentant victim. Such lack of moral regret is compounded by his aesthetic vanity. He thus inhabits and proudly boasts of a link to Yeats. He claims: "I live in a Norman tower, like Yeats himself, thirteenth century this one is, and with a far grander view than ever Yeats looked out from his at Thoor Ballylee .... Some day this place will be like Thoor Ballylee" (305). The post-Yeatsean myth of the Literary Revival, culture and nationalism intertwined against imperialism, all permeated by a consciousness of the land itself, is, though, further deconstructed, again literally and metaphorically, a building and an ideal unceremoniously dismantled: "In another country this ruined castle on its splendid promontory of land would be a tourist sight, a national treasure ... in Ireland it was a sheep pen" (277).

And so Jamie Mangan, outraged at the historical image and contemporary embodiment of the *poete maudit*, returns to Canada, a journey made urgent in the narrative by the appropriately Oedipal theme of a father's death. So little does Jamie Mangan actually escape his "inheritance," though, that in the deathbed scene the overbearing Freudian overtones are brought to forestalled libidinal conclusion by Jamie's unconsummated desire for his father's young wife. Displaced desire is finally transferred into a peculiar relationship by the father's deathbed revelation of his pregnant wife's monetary dependence on the son. As in Ireland, though, the physical environment making human struggle small by the dismissal of human achievement into ruins which litter the landscape, so too in Canada: the death of a father and the desire of the son for the mother are contextualized by the "smoking Arctic air: a landscape of death" (332).

The Doctor's Wife (1976)

Moore's novels have a strong sense of generational difference which is often used to depict social and cultural transformation, a theme well illustrated by *The Mangan Inheritance*, and which is developed in Moore's portrayal of Catholicism in the North of Ireland, the focus of the remainder of this chapter. The parents of many of his protagonists feature prominently in his fictions, and it is often this older generation which represents, through a familial focus, differences in understandings or perceptions of Catholicism, a worldview which was consciously muted in *The Mangan Inheritance*. In earlier fictions, though, the mother (the mothers of Brendan Tierney and Mary Dunne, for instance) or the father (of Gavin Burke) or the mother and father (of Fergus) represent a stalwart pre-Vatican II Catholic belief whose certainty often contrasts strongly with that of their more liberal, more skeptical offspring; though, as we have seen, in these fictions the theological often permeates even the most apparently secular of consciousnesses. In *Catholics*, however, Moore somewhat modifies this sense of generational difference. James Kinsella reflects on his mother's lack of faith and, indirectly, his late father's commitment, as "Agnostic herself, his mother had continued her son's religious education after her husband died" (20). Moore thus shows there is no easy correlation between belief in the past and doubt in the present, yet simultaneously demonstrates how forms of Catholic belief have altered; Kinsella's mother, "a Liberal, born in the nineteen thirties ... did not believe in the combination of Holy Orders and revolutionary theory" (21). Of course, the absence of easy correlation between a believing older generation and a more skeptical younger one is explored perhaps most notably when Moore treats the deathbed skepticism of Father Michel's mother as a central motif in *No Other Life*.

As in the earlier fictions so it is in Moore's later Irish novels: Ireland is a nation where intertwined political and religious history continues to unify and/or divide the generations—*The Temptation of Eileen Hughes, The Mangan Inheritance,* and *Lies of Silence* all cases in point. Moore's portrayal of Catholicism in all cases unifies as a theme, whether it is a source of familial or wider social concord or, as is more often the case, discord and conflict; and theme for Moore transcends literary form. Thus a Catholic consciousness permeates the full experimental range of Moore's early narrative forms: from

the grim naturalistic realism of *Judith Hearne* through the tragic-comic tones of *The Emperor of Ice-Cream* to the mixture of realism and Gothic fantasy of *The Mangan Inheritance.* In all, though, the landscape of Ireland (understood in the widest sense—Northern city, Southern village, Atlantic seashore) is the enduring presence. It is place which contextualizes the diversity of cultural (aesthetic, political, and religious) encounter. In Moore's Ireland, the physical takes on metaphysical qualities: ideological and aesthetic, theological and spiritual.

In *The Doctor's Wife,* political and religious difference has too a marked intergenerational flavour and this is well expressed by Sheila's brother late in the novel as he travels to Paris in order to remedy the crisis in his sister's marriage:

> Dr Deane walked out toward the waiting plane, thinking of his father and his father's great friends, Dr Byrne and Chief Justice McGonigal, remembering their arguments about Shaw and Joyce, about Mussolini's policies vis-à-vis the Vatican, and the morality of Ireland's neutrality during the war. Not intellectuals, but men who read a lot, who loved discussion and despised golf, who never cared about the size of their house or the make of their motorcar. That older generation, passionate, literate, devout, still seemed to him more admirable and interesting in their enthusiasms and innocence than the later generation that claimed him as its own.... His father would never have put pleasure before principle as Sheila did, especially in an *affaire de coeur.* But then, as Sheila said, that older generation lived in the certainty of their beliefs. That was the point, exactly the point. If this were 1935 and Sheila were my father's younger sister, the whole discussion would have been conducted in the context of sin. I can talk of it only in the context of illness. My father would have talked of the moral obligations involved. I can only surmise the emotional risks. (158–59)

Indeed, here are some of the major themes of the Moore's novels to date (1976): pre-Vatican II Catholicism ("Mussolini's policies vis-à-vis the Vatican"); an understated treatment of Ireland's ambivalent political status on the world stage, indirectly vis-à-vis Britain ("the morality of Ireland's neutrality during the war")[34]; an undercurrent of the psychotherapeutic culture of modern society ("I can only surmise the emotional risks")[35]; and, of course,

writing ("their arguments about Shaw and Joyce"), used variously to uphold or subvert Catholic values as part of both Irish national identity and Moore's theological and literary intertextuality.[36]

In ways which parallel Moore's structural use of North America to open and close *The Mangan Inheritance* to focus more tellingly on Ireland in the main body of the text, so too in the cross-cultural narrative of *The Doctor's Wife*, Moore's use of France for the setting of Sheila Redden's affair with the American Tom Lowry and Sheila's ambiguous last days in London are secondary to his fictional reflections on Belfast in the early 1970s, as well as the antecedence of political and religious struggle in Ireland. Certainly for Sheila Redden, reflections on Ireland, both North and South of the border, form part of a persistent unconscious throughout the novel, as early on in France: "Into her mind came the view from her living room at home. The garden: brick covered with English ivy, Belfast's mountain, Cave Hill, looming over the top of the garden wall, its promontories like the profile of a sleeping giant, face upward to the grey skies" (16). Such memories of place, Mary's Irish unconscious, serve to highlight rather than lessen Irish realities of religious and political life. Here the violence of Ulster naturally dominates, particularly the bomb in Clifton Street near Kevin Redden's surgery—the "soldiers had warned him in time"—and the political conflict invades the Paris flat of her friend Peg: "but now, in the half-dark hall, Mrs Redden saw, not Peg, but that other woman, blond, with dust in her hair, blood on her face, running out of the Queen's arcade, shaking her fist. 'Fucking Fenian gets!'" (34). The vision returns as she recalls holding a priest's hat as he gives a dying man the last rites, the woman again shouting "Fucking Fenian gets!" as if Mrs Redden and the priest and the old man "had set the bomb off and were not victims like herself" (42). An inconsequential Paris barge also draws comparisons with Ireland in less troubled but for Sheila Redden no less unsatisfactory times:

> She looked at this passing barge, at this man who sailed his floating home through inland waterways to cities like Brussels, Amsterdam, and Hamburg, cities she had never seen, might never see. To sail away from all of the things that hold and bind me, to sail away, to start again in some city like Brussels or Amsterdam. Into her mind came the place Kevin always took them to for their summer holidays, a Connemara village with a fishing

> dock at the end of the single street, the fishermen's boat coming in from the sea at dusk, sailing into that postcard view of the sea bay under the Dolmen peaks of the Twelve Bens .... (38)

Although Tom Lowry was not like those other "Yanks," "those desperate loud double knits who went around Ireland in tour buses," he sees Ireland with the eyes of the American (New York Greenwich Village) "other." (Kevin Redden's view of Tom Lowry, "some Yank just out of Trinity, with his PhD in James Joyce's Laundry list," is less positive.) The contrast with her view of Ulster as a geographical and cultural desert is telling, university being "four more years of being locked up in Ulster." Taking a year out after doctoral work on Joyce at Trinity (Hugh Greer's "Joyce -Yeats show" [39]), to work in Vermont, he embodies the geographical mobility which Sheila Redden has so craved, but, unlike Sheila, he is able to root himself comfortably in the cultural life of a romanticized Irish Revival. For Sheila Redden, by contrast, the grandnarratives of Irish history reflected in such literature are irrelevant, and Ireland "a tiny nation whose meaningless historical memories were of playing Snap in rainy, rented houses in Portrush in the summer" (149).

The Doctor's Wife, though, is notable for the way such contrary, ambivalent evocations of place (especially Ireland as defined by the geographical and cultural "other") are integral to a dynamic, often generational, shift between a pre- and post-Vatican II (and indeed pre- and post-Troubles) portrayal of Catholicism. While *Catholics* suggests similar oppositions and transitions in a fantasy of a Catholic future based on the realities of an historical post-Vatican II present, *The Doctor's Wife*, for all its lack of fantasy, allegory, and theological projection, still deals (though with a more self-conscious realism) with changing post-Vatican II worldviews.

Three major themes emerge here. The first, sexual liberalization (Sheila Redden's affair with Tom Lowry) is common to Moore's pre- and post-Vatican II novels, being a motif shared with all the early American (though not with the early Irish) fictions. The second and third themes might easily be viewed as one: the secularization of a post-Vatican II clergy in Ireland through politicization, and in France through existentialist philosophy. Both latter themes, though related, develop in Moore's later fiction and might therefore be treated separately. Indeed, it would be easy to see a common thread in Moore's portrayal of Catholicism here as that of hierarchy

(specifically minor clergy), and there is something of this in the novel when Sheila Redden compares the Catholic priest in Paris, "A priest should be poor. Irish priests were not" (134). But the politicization of clergy is very particular to both the Irish question in general (especially relations between Catholicism and nationalism) and Moore's later Irish fiction in particular, especially *Lies of Silence*. Further, Moore's treatment of priest as existentialist thinker is his most significant venture into Catholic encounter with a developed and systematic atheism rather than the more apathetic agnosticism, or atheism by default, of Moore's earlier, particularly American, protagonists (and largely characteristic of Sheila Redden too). The latter is also a significant theme arising from Vatican II (especially *Lumen Gentium*) and prefigures the increasingly wide-ranging treatment of Moore's portrayal of Catholic encounter with Marxist-inspired ideology in *The Colour of Blood* and *No Other Life*; indeed, as it also prefigures Catholic encounter with non-Christian religions (as opposed to simply the Protestant "other") in *Black Robe* and *The Magician's Wife*.

Moore's anti-heroine, then, is a woman whose affair with Tom Lowry brings only very temporary release from middle-class Belfast life. She eventually declines into North London anonymity where she shares nothing with the London Irish that she is encouraged by her boss to meet. Here the well-intentioned "You want to join one of those Irish clubs. There's an Irish club over in Camden Town" is followed by the inane "I like Irish songs" (229) and emphasizes Sheila Redden's alienation from class, politics, and religion. In the end, she cannot follow Tom Lowry, nor follow her variation of an Irish dream of exilic alternatives to join "that Other Place," America, whose flag in the passport office "impeccably clean, impressively displayed ... seemed more like the symbol of a religion than a national banner" (236). Renunciation of both American emigration and Irish home leads in London to her implied confrontation with the only serious question, raised in the novel's earlier discussions of Camus, indicated euphemistically by the motif of the suddenness and ordinariness of urban disappearance: "She went through the gates and walked off down the street like an ordinary woman on her way to the corner to buy cigarettes" (236). London is here a geographical and metaphysical limbo, it is a desperation with (and fundamental alienation from) urban culture which many of Moore's women of rural origins often suffer.[37]

For many Catholics, as for Sheila Redden, the last semblance of ecclesiastical credibility in the liberal times of the 1960s, after the promise of Vatican II, was lost with Paul VI's pronouncements on birth control and sexual morality in *Humanae Vitae*, matters explicitly ridiculed by Fergus Fadden. Thus, only after sexual intercourse with Tom Lowry does she "remember the diaphragm," worrying if she is pregnant by him, but thinking too of the "awful guilty feeling of first using it on Kevin's advice" and how once "it had seemed so sinful; now so safe" (78) that she wonders how she could have forgotten it, the Catholic teaching of *Humanae Vitae* set, now even unconsciously, aside. (Interestingly, the major concern of lay Catholics in the post-Vatican era, birth control, was neatly sidestepped in *Catholics* through the use of a celibate community.) The liberalization of sexual attitudes, which had by the early 1970s suffused Western society, affected too a large part of the Church: that the world of Belfast is so affected (Sheila Redden's extra-territorial as well as extramarital affair) adds to the sense of social transformation since Moore's early portrayal of pre-Vatican II Catholicism in *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*, *The Feast of Lupercal*, and *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*.

Sheila Redden's freedom is characteristic too of that liberal, or more often lapsed, Catholicism that was so strongly engendered in the post-Vatican II era, undoubtedly by accident rather than design, and which, characteristic of so many of Moore's lapsed Catholics "when was the last time I knelt in church and prayed" (87), is expressed with some theological astuteness:

> She had thought the word "God." The word usually came to her lips these days as a meaningless ejaculation. She no longer prayed. She remembered when all that had changed, at the time of Pope John. It had all begun when people lost their fear of hell and damnation. If you no longer feared damnation, you no longer had to believe in heaven. (87)

Liberation from Catholic morality leads Sheila Redden, then, not only to a rediscovery of self through sexuality but also to a self-conscious replacement for Catholicism as worldview, a sort of sexual humanism evident also in Mary Dunne's narrative. Again, in the early American and now the later Irish fictions, this supposedly secularized consciousness is expressed in theological, even sacramental terms:

> ... tonight, in the quiet of this moonlit room, that feeling came back to her, that pure Sunday communion peace. It filled her, shocking her, for wasn't this sin, here in this room, committing adultery with this boy, how could this be that same state, that pure feeling of peace? Yet it filled her, it possessed her totally. It was as though wrong was right. Her former life, her marriage, all that had gone before, now seemed to be her sin. These few days with Tom were her state of grace. (88)

Yet in Ireland, it is typically the restraints of sectarianism which help sustain the importance of a public Catholic identity as a front for residual, privatized faith: "... of course, if anyone asked her, she would still say she was a Catholic. In Ulster today, to declare that you were no longer a Catholic was to risk being thought a turncoat. But she did not think of herself as a Catholic. Not any more" (88).

The political, especially IRA, violence is then the major backdrop to Sheila Redden's Belfast social unconscious while in France, and this is part of an apparently sectarian, rather than religious, ascendancy. The Troubles have in their own way highlighted religious difference, but such difference existed before and is reflected in Moore's earlier Irish fictions. Now, no longer politically and religiously subservient, the Catholic minority, still in a physical ghetto, is politicized by violence. It is, of course, a matter of historical chance that the rise of the Troubles in Ireland coincided with the beginning of a liberalized post-Vatican II Church. If Moore's early Irish novels portray the Church's power beginning to wane (Father Quigley is no Joycean Jesuit), then the post-Vatican II Church in his later Irish novels has lost all semblance of moral authority, and this to an extent represents the irony of Vatican II's key failure: in adjusting finally, after a century and more of resistance, to the forces of the contemporary world in such modernizing documents such as *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, the Church lost much of its residual authority: "And so they slid out of it, and now they never put their feet inside a church door except on great occasions like a wedding or a funeral" (87–88). Ironically, now they are "just like Protestants" (88).

Of course, in the North, such an identity between Catholic and Protestant is difficult in practice. Kevin Redden, employed at "the Protestant teaching hospital, which, when you considered he was a Catholic, meant he knew his stuff" (122) is himself marginally embroiled in the sectarian conflict to

an extent as surgical consultant to the British Army. If the novel more broadly charts the ascendancy of the sectarian violence of the 1970s, it explicitly charts too the waning of majority belief in either ideology or religion, as Sheila comments to her brother Owen Deane: "The Protestants don't believe in Britain and the Catholics don't believe in God. And none of us believes in the future ... all we believe in is having a good time ..." (154). Still, it was, "she sometimes thought, a bad joke that when the people at home no longer believed in their religion, or went to church as they once did, the religious fighting was worse than ever" (87).

The ineffectual symbols of post-Vatican II authority, here an increasingly less influential Irish priesthood, is evident from Kevin Redden's suggestion that, "twenty years ago I'd have put the priest on her" whereas "nobody heeds the priests nowadays" (178). Seeming Irish precursor of the golf-playing brethren in *Cold Heaven* the politicization of the Irish hierarchy becomes more sinister in *Lies of Silence* when, unable to wield ecclesiastical authority, the priesthood is portrayed as clinging to residual power through the forces of IRA violence; that is, a fuller, fictional identification of Catholicism with Irish nationalism. It is such a later politicized portrayal which, for Sheila Redden, has roots in both her own childhood and Ireland's historically close relationship—post-Irish Free State—between secular and Church hierarchies; as she recalls her Uncle Dan's funeral:

> Everybody who was anybody was at the funeral, the cardinal in his crimson silks, sitting in the episcopal chair at the side of the altar during the Mass, and at the Glasnevin cemetery I saw de Valera: he took his hat off and stood, holding it over his chest as the priest said the prayers for the dead. Lemass, the Prime Minister was beside him.... (20–21)

His death in 1966 (21) marks the effective end of a childhood innocence for Sheila Redden, the beginning of the end of a political innocence for Ireland just prior to the Troubles and, a year after the close of the Second Vatican Council, the increasing decline in both the religious and political authority of the Irish Catholic Church:

> ... it was Ireland that had changed. Belfast bombed and barricaded, while in Dublin new flats and American banks had spoiled the Georgian calm

> around Saint Stephen's Green.... Yet paradoxically, here on the Riviera, nothing had changed ... Belfast, with its ruined houses and rubbled streets, was now, to her, the alien place.... (45)

Yet, even in Paris there are points of similarity and hints of civil disturbance in France to which Moore returns in *The Statement* and *The Magician's Wife* where in a Parisian square "four police wagons filled with French riot police sat, waiting for trouble" and she "thought of home" (32).

Yet if French geographical contrast highlights the post-Vatican II sexual liberalization of a middle-class Irish character like Sheila Redden (no pre-Vatican II Judith Hearne) and serves as a means to highlight a decline in religious adherence but a rise in sectarian violence, *The Doctor's Wife* also treats another area of transformation in Catholicism, the dialogue with atheistic philosophy, already hinted at in *Catholics*. The French location provides, of course, almost stereotypical possibilities for presenting a particular Continental form of existentialism but the vehicle of Catholic priest, sympathetically portrayed, impressively reflects major post-Vatican II developments in the Church's accommodation with the religious and philosophical plurality demonstrated in *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. And we will see this clearly shift towards accommodation, and the tensions that it brings, in *The Colour of Blood*.

Geography is again tellingly used to facilitate an important aspect of Catholic encounter with the atheistic other. Thus Father Brault, the French priest Sheila Redden meets, establishes a conciliatory middle ground, a position of tolerance which contrasts with the exclusiveness of sectarian Irish Catholicism. So too the history and geography of Paris contrast with Ireland for Sheila Redden: "the Seine wound among streets filled with history no Irish city ever knew" (15). While in Notre-Dame's Chapelle d'Accueil, the priest as "principal actor" initially signals for her the theatrical artificiality of belief, and their subsequent conversation marks a theological openness to doubt seemingly unknown in the Irish clergy. Subsequent reflection (and her final anonymous disappearance into London) draws her further into an angst-ridden, existentialist anomie:

> "Did you think, 'God is here'?" No, God is not here. Notre-Dame is a museum, its pieties are in the past. Once these aisles were filled with the

> power of faith, with prayer and pilgrimage, all heads bowed in reverence at the elevation of the Host. Once people knelt here, in God's house, offering the future conduct of their lives against a promise of heaven. But now we no longer believe in promises. What was it the priest said? Camus, suicide, the only serious personal question. (137)

If the priest finally appears as "God's comedian," pen ready at his aide-memoire ledger, an eschatological reminder of God's final judgment, then it is a self-conscious foolishness. Rejecting Sheila Redden's premise that "You can't go on believing, once you think the idea of God is ridiculous," the priest's "I can and I do" is an affirmation of belief through negative theology, with themes of love and religion that Moore further develops in *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes*: "I know .... It doesn't make sense. But believing in God is like being in love. You don't have to have reasons, or proofs, or justifications. You are in love, *voila tout.* You know it" (216).

The Temptation of Eileen Hughes (1981)

The treatment of romantic love and adultery presented in *The Doctor's Wife*—the portrayal of a Belfast Catholic woman distanced if not fully liberated from either country or religion—is developed in *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes.* If the sexual encounter between Sheila Redden and Tom Lowry is at least minimally paralleled with theological notions, for example of grace, in *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes,* then, the married Bernard McAuley's obsessive and seemingly non-sexual desire for Eileen Hughes reflects a theological paradigm of divine love. Aside from Bernard McAuley's use of pornography for sexual satisfaction and his acceptance of his wife's routine unfaithfulness, the interactions between the rich Catholic businessman and the young and far less privileged Catholic woman of the novel's title mark a significant advance in every respect of Moore's portrayal of a liberalized, and especially sexually liberated, Belfast Catholic lay populace. Bernard McAuley's economic success is itself a mark not of change but prejudicial stasis in the Province. Bernard McAuley is "the richest Catholic in Lismore" and distinctive for that, McAuley being "the only Catholic in Clanranald Avenue" (198). Like Kevin Redden he has advanced socially and economically, despite his religious denomination.

More fundamentally, though, the opportunity for the sorts of moral choices open to the relatively underprivileged Eileen Hughes is also indicative of a Catholic Belfast world which has also drastically changed from its early portrayal in Moore's novels. (If Sheila Redden marks, with her husband, a social advance on the down-at-heel class pretensions of an impoverished Judith Hearne, Moore shows with Eileen Hughes a degree of social and economic advance too for the working class of Belfast.) Thus, far from the compromises for the marginalized figures of the early Irish novels (notably Judith Hearne and Diarmuid Devine), Eileen Hughes demonstrates a strength of personality which contrasts with that of the failed, and eventually successful, suicide Bernard McAuley. In the final scenes of the novel, she walks the Irish landscape, alone but independent, in a parkland, a common setting between the urban and the rural which pervades many of Moore's Irish and American works.

As in *The Doctor's Wife*, Moore here uses another country to reflect upon the religious and social portrayal of Ireland, *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes* being set in London as opposed to France. The final return of Bernard and Eileen to Belfast at the end of the novel adds a circularity which confirms this. The geography serves, as it had in *The Mangan Inheritance*, as an interstitial region, a liminal space where physical distance provides for metaphysical reflection. Further, though, Moore now holds in tension a portrayal of a liberalized but severely weakened Catholicism with the presentation of the failures of secular materialism in the form of Bernard McAuley's unsatisfying economic success. In a land transformed by liberalized religious attitudes and further entrenched by sectarian attitudes, the latter's obsessive love is an openly theological paradigm of divine love. But this presents no simple resolution to the now-common religious-secular encounter in Moore's novels, a dialectic established early in the novel:

> "Would you believe that while I was at Queen's during my BSc, I suddenly wanted to give it all up and go away and give myself to God. Yes, the priesthood. But the minute I mentioned this vocation of mine at home, my dear old father came right up through the floorboards like Beelzebub, buying me a brand new car and lashing pound notes for me to spend weekends in Dublin. And I fell. Yes, at the tender age of nineteen, I became a fallen angel. I went over to Mammon." (21)

The sense of rejection by God which McAuley's failed vocation to the religious life engendered and his going "over to Mammon" sets Eileen Hughes in the role of an extension of his devotions from the divine to the human.

Significantly, Bernard McAuley's love for Eileen Hughes is likened in historical terms to a courtly, pre-modern romanticism when he declares: "I love you the way knights fell in love in medieval days .... It was an impossible love for a lady in a tower. Often the lady was married and honor forbade that the lover ever try to possess her. Sometimes he wouldn't even declare his love" (77). Of course, he does declare his love and this moment of "epiphany" appropriately reveals the theological analogy at the heart of his most humanist of obsessions, the human person. *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes*, then, presents a unity of theme which is central to the novel's success as a piece of fiction: the secular substitution for religious belief. *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes* is in very many respects a culmination and refinement of Moore's examination of those unsatisfactory alternatives to Catholicism which are most apparent in the early American protagonists: economics for Ginger Coffey, literature for Brendan Tierney, and sex for Mary Dunne.

If the return to Ireland has led to no easy fictional alliance with the Church there, a theological consciousness persists in the increasingly secularized post-Vatican II minds of Moore's characters. Bernard McAuley presents, for all his obsession-derived faults, an attempt at a self-sacrificing intentness lost to the self-absorbed Irish-Americans. Bernard thus declares the distinction between the physicality of sex and metaphysical refinement of his religion of love which demonstrates the theological method at the conceptual centre of his humanistic worldview—"love is a religion whose God is fallible" (70):

> "Listen, sex isn't love. I know that. It's the opposite of love. Love, real love, is quite different from desire. It's like the love a mystic feels for God. It's worship. It's just wanting to be in your presence, that's enough, that's more than enough, it's everything there is. That's what it's been like for me since the first day I saw you." (57)

Thus, "When you fall in love with someone ... it's a sort of miracle it's almost religious. The person you love is perfect," even "as God is perfect" (76).

There are obvious contradictions here in Bernard's humanistic theology, notably between perfection and fallibility, but perhaps his evident self-pity has interfered with his rational judgment:

> "What do I care? I'm trying to save myself, not the world. I told you when I was twenty I wanted to be a saint, to save my soul, to love God, to do good. But it seems I wasn't wanted in that way. And, until now, I never knew in what way I could make some sense out of my life." (76)

Eileen Hughes becomes, then, for Bernard McAuley the object of such a "religion": "I rejected God then ... now you're my God" (158): "There, working in the shop. I've worshipped you. In silence. In devotion" (57). Morally, as well metaphysically, Eileen as object of devotion and service, represents a typology of and opportunity for sanctity: "It's funny but all those Christian things are true. Better to give than to receive. Giving love without expecting to be loved in return. Doing what will be best for the other person. Easy to see how people become saints. It's not hard, not hard at all" (152). The possibility of a second rejection is more than he can bear and his first attempted suicide, a continuity with the treatment of Camus in *The Doctor's Wife*, delineates a theological exclusiveness, the boundary territory beyond which the humanist Bernard cannot transgress, in Catholicism, "the one sin there's no forgiveness for" (157).

The London hotel where the McAuleys and Eileen Hughes have been staying is the location of Eileen's sexual encounter with the marijuana-smoking American of distinctly cowboy appearance (an uncommon tragicomic juxtaposition for Moore). Eileen, fearing Bernard's death, "thought of calling a priest." Here Bernard confronts his own exclusion from both Catholic devotion and his self-made devotion to Eileen: "A priest? ... Why a priest? I'm ... killing myself. I'm destroying the temple of the Holy Ghost. Right? Didn't you say yourself, that is a sin there's no forgiveness for?"(157). The few days in London are for Eileen Hughes a heady mix of experiences, encounters with sex and near-death, which differ markedly from early expectations on the journey from Ireland, "here she was in London, her first time across the water" (9), with the voice of false, would-be immigrant hope: "... because I've seen this, maybe I'll see all those other places too, New York and Paris, and someday maybe I'll even live someplace like this

with a job that will pay me enough to send plenty of money home to Mama" (8). It is this mother who hears on her fiftieth birthday the cockcrow call close by Ulster Linen Works which "made her think of her childhood on a farm in Donegal" (25).

The relative peace of a pre-Troubles Southern past and Eileen's London present are marked by an Ulster of sectarian, and lingering colonial, struggle:

> "... there's been no playing in the streets here in Lismore. Nothing but British Army patrols and searches and bombs and shootings and burn-outs .... It's not the boys people worry about now. It's bombs and bullets. And the people don't see each other the way they used to: the old life is gone forever, everybody stays at home, stuck up to the telly, you never go over to your neighbour's, is it any wonder there's more drink and tranquillisers than ever?" (27)

The generational theme of so many of Moore's novels allows yet again for a view of a pre-Vatican II religious as well as pre-Troubles political history. As a neighbour of Eileen's mother, Mrs. McTurk, reflects:

> "Isn't it well for them, this generation ... I mean, in your day and mine, missus dear, Irish people only went to the Continent once in a lifetime, a pilgrimage to Lourdes or Rome. And now they're off at the drop of a hat, the way it was a day excursion, only it's the Costa Brava, or some place like...." (33)

The changed, post-Vatican II theological territory of Ireland is never too distant an unconscious geography in the narrative. Still, returned to Ireland, but prior to Bernard's suicide, Mary's visit to Mona McAuley demonstrates the depth of theological memory:

> It was a wet afternoon, drizzling and dark, the sort of afternoon that would make the Garden of Eden look a misery, but when Eileen went through the gates into the driveway of Tullymore she was struck by the beautiful way the front grounds were kept up ... she knew he was here someplace and might even be watching her as she came up the drive. (198–99)

Having encountered only rejection, it is as if Bernard has in a newly post-lapsarian world absented himself from the world of his created devotion; Bernard's invisible presence is here the implied omniscience of an unseen God in an Edenic garden.

Yet, despite the unity of theme—theological transference in an Ireland which has witnessed a post-Vatican II transformation in Catholicism—the sight of the large house, which so impressed Eileen and provoked Bernard to declare his devotion, is a moment of epiphany that indicates the undercurrent of a wider intertextuality in the novel; namely the "big house" in Irish literature, and the colonial heritage ingrained so deeply in nationalist folk memory of the days of Irish Catholic oppression. Thus Bernard's secret country house in County Louth "was built in the eighteenth century by one of Cromwell's officers, some murderer paid off in Irish land" (55), a Cromwellian reference which appears early even in *Catholics.* The Anglo-Irish Betty and Derek Irwin, friends of Bernard's in London, highlight too something of the tensions and accommodations of English colonial history in Ireland, Eileen Hughes surmising they were "probably well-to-do Irish Prods," with "accents that were English but not quite." After Bernard's suicide and the funeral at Saint Patrick's, Mona McAuley also moves to London and a "big house in Chelsea," indicating similar cultural alienation and accommodation. The "big house" motif established—the mock-serious "Protestant Ascendancy" returned to mainland Britain perhaps—the subtle Daniel O'Connell "liberator" reference in the final pages of the narrative draws no political closure but, given the ongoing Troubles, evokes the aesthetics of nation and narration most fully explored by Moore in *The Mangan Inheritance. Lies of Silence,* though, deals significantly with the politicization, or at least the perceived politicization, of Catholicism in an Ireland some years from the 1998 Good Friday agreement in a Belfast which might be unrecognizable to Judith Hearne.

Lies of Silence (1990)

Lies of Silence marks Brian Moore's fictional closure with Ireland. It is a world tired of politics and priests, a world that ends with the inevitable death of Michael Dillon; textual limit mirrored, as in so many of Moore's later fictions, in metaphysical limit. With a cultural undercurrent of theological

and political conspiracy that continues to characterize an Ireland of seemingly endless Troubles, it is this metaphysical limit which frames the text. In a post-Vatican II world which has lost its theological sense and a political world which relives its own history through the divisions of Irish landscape, the enduring colonial encounter of Catholic and Protestant is heightened by the street-by-street proximity of division. It is a violence in which the history of division is a seemingly permanent landscape of encounter, where both cultural time and cultural space prevent accommodation. Here centuries of conflict are defined by the minutiae of the spatial, where road names (Antrim, the Falls) themselves mark the sectarian divide. It is a violence of inner city Belfast which invades the ordinary, even mundane, suburbs, where in the midst of the hostage-taking at the centre of the plot, Mr. Harbinson, a retired bank manager, is seen coming out of his front door and "slipping a lead on his Airedale dog," unaware "that he was being watched by armed men in balaclava helmets" (69).

For Michael Dillon, then, the landscape is, naturally, well defined, and the self-referential nature of and intertextual portrayal of the Irish landscape heightens the tensions of the sectarian plot. The abiding but increasingly forlorn hope of exile by geographical distance is, though, seemingly thwarted by psychological entrapment:

> Dismissed from Keogh's busy, money-breathing world, Dillon stood looking out at a mountain which reared up like a stage backdrop behind the city. Long ago, in school, daydreaming, he would look out of the classroom window and imagine himself in some aeroplane being lifted over that grey pig's back mountain to places far from here, to London, New York, Paris, great cities he had seen in films and photographs, cities far away from the dull constrictions of home. Outside now, in the mezzanine bar, familiar Ulster voices were raised in a wave of chat and jokes. It was as though he were still in that long ago classroom, still daydreaming, still trapped. (114)

Even at the novel's end in London's Hampstead, a semi-rural idyll of a world away from the violence of the city of Belfast, it seems that Dillon cannot avoid the consequences of a personal history which now plays an integral part in the culture of sectarianism. Morally distanced early on in the novel from Catholic roots by adultery and planned divorce, Michael

Dillon attempts to distance himself too from the sectarianism which is perceived to identify the Church with a violent nationalism.

Reflecting on the contradictions of being kidnapped by a nominally Catholic IRA, Dillon's is a consciousness which reminisces bitterly on his own impotent part of a wider collective and collusive Catholic past as he drives to his hotel to make delivery of the bomb which is to kill the Orangeman Pottinger: "See this car on its way to kill innocent people, see my wife in a room with a gun at her head, and then ask your Cardinal if he can still say of these killers that he can see their point of view" (81). Then, as he drives through the city, he sees the cultural marks of the Protestant "other":

> ... into the roundabout at Carlisle Circus. In its centre was a stone plinth which had once supported the statue of a Protestant divine, a statue like many of the city's monuments, toppled in the war and never replaced. The white Ford came circling around behind him as he entered Clifton Street and drove past the headquarters of the Orange Order, that fount of Protestant prejudice against Catholics. Above the ugly grey stone building was a statue which had not been toppled by war or civil strife, a Dutch prince on horseback, waving a sword, staring out over the damaged city at ancient unchanging Irish hills, a statue commemorating a battle three hundred years ago in which the forces of the Protestant House of Orange defeated, on Irish soil, the forces of the papist English king. At the bottom of Clifton Street he turned right, driving along the edge of those Protestant and Catholic ghettos which were the true and lasting legacy of this British Province founded on inequality and sectarian hate. (82)

The narrative of sectarian violence thus continues to characterize the conflict of grandnarrative in Ireland and Moore makes close identification, if a little wearily, between religion and politics.

Moore shows here, though, the way in which sectarianism crosses its own self-imposed religious divide, Michael and Moira Dillon themselves being Catholic. Michael Dillon's moral dilemma is either to cooperate with the IRA and save Moira, the wife he plans to leave for another woman, or to deliver the bomb and kill and maim the innocent at the hotel he manages. The irony is that Catholic Michael Dillon is coerced into the attempted bombing of the Protestant extremist, Dr. Pottinger. Still, as for the youthful

terrorists who have taken them hostage in their own house, it is a Catholicism in name only. Just so, Michael Dillon surmises that Mr. Harbinson is "no more a religious Protestant than Dillon was a religious Catholic." Moore, at his most moralistic, thereby presents the ideals of both sides of the Northern Irish divide in pragmatic context: "Mr Harbinson would never fight a civil war to prevent Ulster becoming part of the Irish Republic, or take up arms to affirm his status as a citizen of the United Kingdom. Mr Harbinson, like ninety percent of Ulster, Catholic and Protestant, just wanted to get on with his life without any interference from men in woollen masks" (69). The revealed youthful face of the IRA foot soldier "volunteer" belies the religious dimension of the conflict, as does the religious apathy of the majority caught within the sway of sectarianism. Still, for all its nominalism (something which Sheila Redden admits of herself partaking in *The Doctor's Wife*), it is a secularized political faith in which religious difference between Protestant and Catholic becomes heightened through a geography of terror where sectarianism defines territory.

The inner city's invasion of the suburbs indicates too both a narrative necessity (it is where Michael Dillon, the hotel manager, fittingly lives) and the economic nature of the divide and its perpetuation. That Protestant-Catholic identity is one amongst many means for expressing this territory of ideological conflict, and class struggle another expression of the same divide, has been noted in the context of Moore's early Irish novels. Considering the geographical economics of sectarian division in the history of Northern Ireland as in *Lies of Silence*—the troubled, working class, inner city Belfast and seemingly more peaceful middle class Belfast suburbs—one is reminded of Kevin Redden's comments that "It's all economics, it's not patriotism" (57). That Kevin Redden was lucky to get a post at a Protestant teaching hospital adds a ring of truth to this. Indeed, the "lies of silence" passage at the heart of Moore's final Irish novel correlates religion and poverty as endemic to a sectarianism in an Ulster where Catholicism is otherwise a spent force (as might also be Protestantism), especially as regards its influence on a liberal, middle-class, if not also working-class, populace.

The narrative portrayal of Catholicism in *Lies of Silence* is thus of a grandnarrative at its most violent and most indifferent, a violent indifference which is the key to the narrative's title. Almost as a motif of the

inconsequentiality of extremism, Mr. Harbinson, insignificant to both the novel and its wider points of religious and political reference (narrative plot and grandnarrative history), provokes Michael Dillon's anti-sectarian diatribe:

> ... Dillon felt an anger rise within him, anger at the lies which had made this, his and Mr Harbinson's birthplace, sick with a terminal illness of bigotry and injustice, lies told over the years to poor Protestant working people about the Catholics, lies told to poor Catholic working people about the Protestants, lies from politics and parliaments, lies at rallies and funeral orations, and, above all, the lies of silence from those in Westminster who did not want to face the injustice of Ulster's status quo. (69–70)

This is a Catholicism which (post-Vatican II and post-Troubles) has, in Belfast at least, been both liberalized, and thereby weakened, and politicized, and thereby made more powerful. Thus there are no genuinely religious Catholics in *Lies of Silence*. The priest, "wee Father Connolly," epitomizes Catholicism's entrenched sectarian politicization just as Michael Dillon, together with his lover and his wife, epitomize its moral liberalization. It is as if the authority of the late-twentieth-century Catholic Church in Ireland overrides, but only residually and through political fanaticism, the loss of an authority which has been eroding by attrition from both pre-Vatican II and pre-Troubles days.

It is, however, an accommodation which matches the weakening of the authority of the republican extremists too. After his daughter has been released and decided to speak out against the IRA, Moira Dillon's father comments that "if Catholics are calling for 'Brits outs' they should also call for 'IRA out' " (173). Her father then reflects on this wider political decline in post-Free State and post-1937 Constitution Ireland:

> "My daughter! My daughter! Sittin' in her house with the IRA pointin' a gun at her head. Before the war, when I was a wee boy, if anyone had told me that, I'd have said you're daft. I mean, back then the IRA was finished, a bunch of dodos that nobody heeded anymore. Sure, we had the same Troubles in those days, a Catholic would never get a job if there was a Protestant up for it. But then the war came and there was more jobs and I used to think all that bigotry's dyin' out and after the war things will get

> better. But they didn't. And then in the sixties the civil rights marches started and it was on the telly an' the whole world saw the prods beatin' us up and the police helpin' them. Now that the outside world sees what's goin' on here, things will get better. But they got worse. And you know the rest." (173)

It is not Moira, though, but Michael Dillon who marks the continuing failure of conflict resolution. Initially rejecting the pleas of Father Connolly (the uncle of one of the momentarily unmasked terrorists) that Michael should not identify his nephew, the recanting of this stance comes too late, and the assassin's bullet reaches Michael Dillon even in his London hideout. Dillon, like the priest, remains embroiled in the sectarian complicity earlier so despised.

Commentators have rightly criticized *Lies of Silence* for Moore's treatment of conflict in Northern Ireland as over-simplistic in its bald statement of sectarian oppositions.[38] It does indeed lack the sophisticated portrayal of *The Doctor's Wife* where Sheila's Redden's unconscious provides a more convincing sense of historical struggle and present tragedy. It lacks too the subtle presentation of the history of a culture in conflict as political and aesthetic as observable in *The Mangan Inheritance.* The thriller mode may account for, but not excuse, Moore's easy statement of sectarian encounter but what takes the volume beyond the limitations of its form is its metaphysical conclusion. Michael Dillon's death is both a simple twist of a thriller plot and a more fundamental literary-theological *aporia*, no less than the silence of God which greeted the abbot at the end of *Catholics*, the novella which began Moore's re-visitation of Ireland. In an increasingly doubt-ridden Catholic world faced with the effects of globalization, its theology in turmoil at the interface of conflicting ideologies, where even Catholic history is read in the light of a post-Vatican II theology, it is a silence of God which increasingly permeates much of Moore's final works of fiction.

Chapter 5

North America Revisited: Post-Vatican II and Postcolonial Perspectives

(*The Great Victorian Collection*, 1974; *Cold Heaven*, 1983; *Black Robe*, 1985)

Introduction

As *Catholics* was the beginning of a period of writing in which Moore's reappraisal of Catholicism coincided with a fictional return to the landscape of Ireland (the beginning of a period concluding with *Lies of Silence*), *The Great Victorian Collection* marks Moore's parallel literary treatment of North America, brought largely to geographical, ideological, and theological closure by *Black Robe*. In this chapter, I trace the textual shift away from the largely hegemonic secularity of Moore's early North American fictions to a greater cultural, and especially religious, heterogeneity in his later North American novels. Such heterogeneity is greatly enhanced by the adoption of an historical perspective in which contemporary issues, especially those of religious and political import, are brought into heightened focus. To this end, I argue that Moore's later American works highlight an increasing convergence of ideology and theology; and that after Vatican II Moore's literary theology increasingly finds an ideological context within a postcolonial perspective.[1]

Moore's Irish fictions, especially the early works, have often contained marginal references to the colonial context of Catholicism in Ireland.[2] Later Irish fictions (as in the futuristic *Catholics*) contain by contrast a possibly postcolonial context within which to read Irish Catholicism. This contextualizing of the theological within the history of imperialism is retained in Moore's early and later American fictions, and most forcefully in the author's last works. The term "postcolonial" is adopted here since Moore's

portrayal of Catholicism retains a continuing relationship to imperialism and various historical states of coloniality and postcoloniality.[3] The colonial context of some novels is more central, explicit, and obvious than others. If there has, to date, been some exploration of Moore's treatment of "spiritual colonialism"[4] and use of history in these settings,[5] such literary criticism has not examined how Moore's portrayal of Catholic colonial history might be affected by a postcolonial (and indeed, however anachronistically) post-Vatican II perspective.

In short, Moore's later American novels present an authorial perspective which is advantaged by a particular view of theological and ideological history. We see this tension between the contemporary and the historical exhibited throughout the later North American novels: in the modern setting of California of *The Great Victorian Collection* with its British Empire subtext; in the historical (Spanish colonial) background to the Catholic Church in the contemporary California of *Cold Heaven*; and in Moore's supposedly historical account of French Catholic imperialism and Christianizing missions in early colonial Quebec. The focus on Moore's final three American fictions (*The Great Victorian Collection, Cold Heaven,* and *Black Robe*) shows a literary convergence of postcolonial and post-Vatican II perspectives in Moore's novels; a matter particularly illustrative of the author's ever-prominent (and ever diverse) treatment of theology and metaphysics in the light of ideology.

There is something worth noting here about the distinction in postcolonial theory and criticism between postcoloniality, as historical and political state of the postcolonial, and postcolonialism, the theory of postcoloniality within and beyond the academy. The present emphasis is on Moore's use of the historical states of postcoloniality—Moore is not elaborating any theoretical construct even if his fictions borrow from ideological and theological perspectives to enhance the representation of the historical moment. Thus, an emerging assumption within the field is that a distinction also needs to be made between postcolonial theory, as cultural commentary on power imbalances between the colonized and colonizer, and postcolonial criticism, as the more (actively) political and engaged involvement in overcoming such power imbalances. This is perhaps best illustrated by distinguishing between seminal texts, say, between the postcolonial criticism of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* and the postcolonial theory of Said's *Orientalism.* Both centre their concerns around power

imbalances and the oppressive use of such power for domination – territorial gain, cultural and political imperialism—but the two have differences of emphasis and approach. It is possible here to postulate a scale dependent upon the emphasis placed upon either an "engaged" stance or a more "detached" position. Such a scale might be described as ranging from a politically engaged anti-colonial/imperial nationalism (postcolonial criticism) to transnational cultural commentary (postcolonial theory). If we again compare Fanon and Said, it is the difference between the postcolonial *criticism* of Fanon's anti-imperialist, revolutionary stance against colonialism in *The Wretched of the Earth* and the postcolonial theory of Said's (trans-national) cultural analysis of *Orientalism*, further exemplified, even typified by *Culture and Imperialism*.[6] Moore's fictions remain representations of postcoloniality in theological context rather than ideological appropriations for historical transformation.

In the context of the literary influence of Vatican II Catholicism on Moore's fiction and the author's portrayal of this, three key areas are of most relevance for our present discussion. First, as we have seen, the Church redefined itself as an institution from a hierarchical to a more egalitarian (if as yet far from democratic) ecclesiology, from a "Church militant" to the "People of God." The key document here is *Lumen Gentium*.[7] Second, *Lumen Gentium* illustrates too another development, that is, a radical redefinition of soteriology. Essentially the shift from "no salvation outside the Church" to a universal model of salvation could not be more marked.[8] Here, the Church recognized the possibility of salvation for those outside the Church, a doctrine incorporating ecumenism in *Unitatis Redintegratio*, and, in *Nostra Aetate*, the possibility of salvation through the religious "others" of Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam,[9] and even atheism in *Lumen Gentium*.[10] Third, despite a history of social teaching which predates the Second Vatican Council, the Church demonstrated a growing awareness that the Vatican I separation of the Church from the world prevented a full involvement with issues of social, economic, and political import.[11] *Gaudium et Spes* is generally recognized as the document which most fully exemplifies this new spirit of active socio-economic engagement and Christian responsibility.[12] The latter, for instance, is accredited, particularly since the Medellín Conference, with the development in liberation theology of conjoining a "people of God" ecclesiology with a pastoral theology of social justice, already hinted at in

Moore's earliest portrayal of liberation theology in *Catholics*, and to be more fully developed in *The Colour of Blood* and *No Other Life*.

It is this alignment with the poor against injustice and oppression in which resides a potential degree of commonality in approach and ideological orientation between post-Vatican II theology and postcolonialism. Indeed, it is liberation theology (or, more correctly, theologies of liberation) which most closely reflect this convergence of postcolonial and post-Vatican II perspectives. That liberation theology and postcolonialism share varying degrees of emphasis on Marxist analysis is a highly contested point of such theological/ideological reference. Nevertheless, their shared stance against economic inequalities and exploitation presents a common front in terms of achieving social-structural transformation—even if perceptions of such shared goals have led to an overstated identification of Marxist ideology with Catholic theology.[13] Such identification is inevitably reinforced when the analysis of oppression is rooted in the history of the colonial—and especially where liberation is defined through its postcoloniality.[14]

With a key emphasis upon the historical context of salvation, such theological/ideological analyses naturally lead to an examination of the structural roots of injustice in an historical as well as a contemporary context.[15] In many theological communities, often but not exclusively in former colonies, the re-examination of biblical scholarship in postcolonial contexts led not simply to an analysis of the historical roots of present-day inequalities but to a re-examination of texts central to Christianity itself.[16] The historical irony here, of course, is that in so many colonial histories, the imperialism of economic and political might was vouchsafed by theology, a dual expression of material power and supposed cultural superiority, with colonization often accompanying and consolidating missionary conquests.[17] Moore's later novels portray these often unresolved perspectives on political and theological history through narratives in which Catholicism variously displays an ambivalent historical relationship with colonialism: identified on the one hand with imperial power through missionary activity (subtly in *The Great Victorian Collection* and more explicitly in *Black Robe*) and on the other with its postcolonial subversion—especially through theologies which identify with the marginalized and the oppressed (as in, if indirectly, *Cold Heaven*).

As a way of approaching Moore's final works, specifically here the later North American novels, I suggest that post-Vatican II theology and

postcolonialism (theory and criticism) share a common stance on a number of grounds, and I identify three: an emphasis on historical perspective in the analysis of social-structural inequality; an identity with the marginalized and oppressed "other"; and a radical, social interpretation of texts. Thus, in identifying the historicity of oppression, certain notable instances of post-Vatican II theology and postcolonialism provide ideological and theological focus on (and give voice to) the marginalized "other," and provide for religious and ideological readings of texts as either economically and politically transformative or inherently conservative. Thus, where the foundational writings of liberation theology and postcolonialism provide a shared reading of texts as either upholding the colonial or subverting the imperial, Moore's final novels are themselves party to a re-examination of political and theological history in literary terms, a process which in these later American novels is evident in seminal form within *The Great Victorian Collection.*

The Great Victorian Collection (1976)

Having arrived to investigate "an anonymous complaint that a fairground was being set up illegally" in the parking lot of a Carmel motel, Lieutenant Henry Polita of the Salinas County Sheriff's office asks Anthony Maloney if he is a Catholic. Maloney answers, "No." Asked what he meant, Lieutenant Polita replies, "I mean this is a miracle, isn't it?" (29), thus greeting with mocking skepticism Maloney's "dream" of the "Great Victorian Collection": a reconstituted Victoria and Albert Museum in the midst of Carmel, California. This is a world from which the formal marks of religious practice and belief have disappeared.

A young history professor from McGill University, Montreal, Maloney is thus delayed on his first trip for an academic seminar at Berkeley. Montreal, Quebec, remains still a contested land in tension with English-speaking Canada, and thereby torn by a double colonial identity, tying Quebec to France and more indirectly to England.[18] From one contested land – French Canada in tension with the Old World and the New – to California, a model of cultural flux, Maloney exchanges interwoven sets of seemingly unstable cultural signifiers (English-speaking French-Canadian) for another, "his first trip to the West Coast" (3) to explore the Big Sur region where

"one could hardly fail to be appalled by the values evidenced in this place" (4). The dream of the Victorian Collection derives from a period which was the area of his doctoral thesis, "A Study of the Effects of Gaining a Colonial Empire on the Mores of Victorian England as Exemplified by the Art and Architecture of the Period" and is essentially a reconstruction of artefacts and scenes he might have observed when "in connection with his thesis he had journeyed to England to visit museums and libraries to look at various public buildings" (5). A specially marked influence was that of the Great Exhibition of 1851.[19]

Maloney's dream is a reconstruction of a world he had only known indirectly, through his thesis and through visits to London. It is re-creation which is highlighted, though, by differences in both culture (the artefacts of the Collection) and the landscapes which are integral to it. A shed thus contained "an exhibition of oils and watercolours by Victorian Royal Academicians: landscapes, stormy seascapes, portraits, illustrations from the novels of the day" (26). This encounter of physical landscape and ideological grandnarrative—Maloney's dream of Empire and in the land of the American Dream—is heightened when Maloney meets Vaterman, the *Monterey Courier* and local *New York Times* correspondent. Momentarily leaving the journalist as he observes the paintings, Maloney is reminded "that in the time of the old Queen, something like this Collection would first have been announced to the world in a series of artist's drawings in *The Illustrated London News* as a marvel, a far-off miracle, to be accepted by most of the population as yet another wonder. But, today, in this age of instant distrust, who would believe it?" (26). The need to translate the dream of the Collection into a credible story for *The New York Times* becomes crucial for Maloney; but the landscape as much as the culture of America threatens the dream and its potential plausibility: "he looked at the Victorian paintings, alien and vulnerable under this metal American sun" (27). This is a New World which is historically, theologically and ideologically a world away from the Old World of Empire, a world in which the denial of religion is easy, undertaken by Maloney without qualm. Yet *The Great Victorian Collection*, for all its apparent conscious neglect of the religious, provides a major subtext for the portrayal of Catholicism which will form the basis (at least indirectly) for Moore's later fictions, even if it is seemingly marginalized to the terse exchange between Maloney and Polita.

The Victorian Collection thus persists as a shared reality for Maloney and those who subsequently flood to see the Collection—and indeed for those who flood to see the replica of the Collection, reproduced supposedly for its own protection as the Great Victorian Village. Collectively, Maloney's dream and its reproduction in the Victorian Village are models of the degeneration and decline of religious culture which were the marks of the cultural, economic and political growth of Empire as much as it was of the Enlightenment.[20]

Yet the zenith of post-Enlightenment European empire building, in Moore's novel represented by Maloney's dream, was one in which religion was both adjunct of imperialism and increasingly relegated to a privatized region on the margins of culture.[21] Maloney's dream represents the metaphysical skepticism of a post-Enlightenment world where the theological and ideological constructs of empire building have seemingly disappeared. Thus the rationalism of the academic establishment—here the American Professor Clews and the British establishment figure of Sir Alfred Mannings—is key to asserting the Collection's authenticity or otherwise. The opinions of Clews and Manning thus lead to the *Monterey Courier* headline: "BRITISH, AMERICAN EXPERTS CONCUR: CARMEL 'DREAM' COLLECTION IS A FAKE: Yale Professor hints at scheme to defraud would-be collectors" (60). By contrast with this post-Enlightenment rationalism, the religious witness in the novel becomes a "madman, lips moving in a silent babble" with his own banner "headlines": "GOD ALONE CAN CREATE: *Do not believe this lie*" (72). Academic and rationalistic credence is provided by Lord Rennishawe, "Hellenist of stature" and "proprietor of Creechmore Castle in Wales, a repository of Victorian treasures which Maloney had visited" (113); and this credibility is also sought through the "scientific" mediation of Dr. Spector of Vanderbilt University, the parapsychology researcher who charts Maloney's final inability to maintain both the dream and his own sanity.

If early on the most frequent request made by visitors was to be shown the room in which "the original dream had taken place" (199), they soon become content with its subsequent imitation, and if the second most frequent request of visitors was to see the dreamer himself, Maloney deteriorates "to the point that the tour guides, if they saw him approach, would turn their groups into another aisle" (210). Six months after the original dream and its

reproduction, the place of both—in the physical and ideological setting of the American landscape—demonstrate near-total assimilation into the foundational ideals of American society, an integration emphasized by the Collection's place alongside the cultural icons of the American Dream:

> ... a traveller on the highways of California approaching Los Angeles, San Francisco, the gambling cities of the desert, or remote national monuments such as Joshua Tree or Death Valley, could not fail to see a sign, positioned at fifty mile intervals. Beneath a simplified drawing of the south portico of the Crystal Palace was the legend:
>
> VISIT CARMEL-BY-THE-SEA
> *Home of*
> THE GREAT VICTORIAN COLLECTION (199)

The Victorian Village becomes then a consumerist reconstruction of Victorian culture and Victorian imperialism:

> There were ... two large family restaurants, the General Gordon and the Gladstone; a food market named Covent Garden; and a number of shops, including the Olde Curiosity Shoppe, the Florence Nightingale Tea Room, Oscar Wilde Way Out (a men's-wear boutique), and, finally, a large warehouse supermarket filled with cheap reproductions of Victoriana and misleadingly named the Great Victorian Collection. The whole was fronted by an altered scale reproduction roughly corresponding to the south portico of the Crystal Palace. (201)

Maloney's dream, by means of this Victorian Village, is thus marketed and packaged for the American dream, becoming indeed indistinguishable from it, many visitors actually believing "that the warehouse supermarket *was* the great Victorian Collection" (196).

The dream, however, survives Maloney's continued psychological deterioration and final suicide. Dr. Spector's article, "Psychokinetic Elements in the Manifestation of Dreams: The Carmel Experiments," including excerpts from Maloney's journal, provides closure for the novel, and yet the substance of the Collection itself, which – perhaps with the ideological trace of

empire—survives Maloney's death: "... in Dr Clew's opinion had suffered some deterioration since he had last examined it, probably as a result of having stood for more than a year in a semi-outdoors, subtropical location. But it was, essentially, intact" (212). In more optimistic times earlier in the novel, though, threatened with the loss of and then actually fired from his post in Montreal, Maloney's megalomania knew few bounds.

Prompted into another dream, that of being both campus hero and finally vindicated academic genius (there's a touch of Brendan Tierney here), the defence at McGill is coordinated by a former history colleague, John Palliser (117–20). Maloney's excited self-reflection after the phone call from his friend is that he is "a historian who was witness to that moment in history when a man's dream literally came true" (120). His reflection demonstrates the centrality of the novel's theme of "the Victorian era as a factor in modern man's historical consciousness," an "extension of my PhD thesis ... I'd be an outstanding lecturer, unique in my field" (120). If Maloney does predate the development of postcolonial theory by a decade or two, *The Great Victorian Collection* establishes an amount of groundwork for themes in which theology and imperialism will begin to surface more explicitly in Moore's later American fictions through to his final works, and most obviously in *The Magician's Wife*.

Cold Heaven (1983)

In ways which prefigure *Black Robe*, *Cold Heaven*—Moore's penultimate North American fiction—presents the roots of Catholicism within the historical context of Church mission and early colonial enterprise, here late-seventeenth-century Spanish imperialism.[22] *Cold Heaven*'s focus on the embodiment of faith and skepticism—and tension between the two—in the character of Marie Davenport is part therefore of a wider historical encounter between a liberalized post-Vatican II faith in contemporary America with a colonial and counter-Reformation Catholicism which was its historical predecessor. Indeed, the indigenous population marginalized by the process of imperial and theological expansion provide signals not only of a pre-colonial Catholic inheritance but a continued postcolonial religious presence. Moore's novels reflect this post-Vatican II Catholic global pluralism. *Cold Heaven* signals the development of this process.

Beginning with her husband's "resurrection" following his "death" in the boating accident (in a French location which opens the novel) Marie Davenport's experience of the numinous is centred around the geography of the Monterey Coast, not far from where Anthony Maloney had his own visionary encounters in *The Great Victorian Collection.* Her contemporary visionary experience, though, achieves historical depth by Moore's theological contextualization. Catholic theology and Catholic theological history thus provide at least the potential for a fuller epistemological grounding than Maloney's finally inexplicable dream. The following passage therefore serves crucially not simply as a meta-text for the reading of Marie Davenport's experiences but as a wider history of ideological and theological grandnarrative of which her experiences form a part, pointing to encounters of old and new worlds, Catholicism and imperialism:

> **Our Lady of Monterey**
>
> On an expedition to the Monterey Peninsula in 1780, the Archbishop of Merida sent this statue in care of the Franciscan monks to be conquistadora of this new land. On arrival the monks placed it in a temporary altar and later installed it in the mission in this place.
>
> In 1799 Captain Portillo gave the statue a silver crown in thanks for the miraculous relief of his vessels when they were almost shipwrecked on the cliffs near this chapel. An invocation to our Lady of Monterey produced a sudden, total calming of the elements for several minutes during which the vessels were enabled to come about and the crews and vessels were saved.
>
> When the mission was abandoned after secularization, the statue was cared for by local Indians in their homes. After the Sisters of Mary Immaculate established their convent here in 1921, the statue was found in the home of one of the surviving Indian families. It was restored to its original chapel in 1937. (64)

It is, of course, a Catholic grandnarrative from which Marie Davenport has consciously excluded herself, like so many of her predecessors in Moore's early American works: "Her mother who was only nominally a Catholic, had placed Marie as a day pupil in convent school.... She knew almost nothing about the Catholic faith and at once got in trouble with the nuns

.... Her father had not let her change schools even though he was not a Catholic" (21). Indeed "Marie had never known this religion into which she had been baptized. That was the irony, that was the mystery" (53). Montreal-born-and-bred, she is a French-Canadian who has forgotten her historical and cultural identity; she "was alone in a foreign country," had "learned French in a school in Montreal," and "knew nothing of France" (16). Where these former faithless North Americans (Ginger Coffey, Brendan Tierney, Mary Dunne, and Fergus) retain Catholicism as a continuing, if unconscious, grammar of their emotions, and where Anthony Maloney's experiences represent all the elements of the miraculous without the conceptual content, Marie Davenport is a unique North American Moore character. Her encounter with the numinous is explicitly of a religious character and is so very precisely defined in terms of her Marian visions in the same region where the original late-seventeenth-century vision of Mary had appeared.

It is the anniversary of Marie Davenport's vision while Marie is on holiday with her husband Alex. The nominal comparison between Marie and the Virgin Mary presents some ironic distance between the original appearance and devotional reception of the vision of "Our Lady of Monterey" and Marie Davenport's own Marian vision, which in its latter-day appearance meets with denial rather than religious affirmation. Alex's "resurrection" throws in an eschatological dimension to the plot, a preoccupation with the metaphysics of death not uncommon in Moore's fiction, especially his later work. Add Marie's guilt at her visionary denial, combined with her sexual infidelity, and we have a clear portrayal of classical Roman Catholic eschatology of the "last things": death, judgment, heaven, and hell.[23] The novel's title derives from Yeats's "The Cold Heaven," heightening a literary context for this eschatology which is matched by a scriptural intertextuality deriving from the New Testament story of Lazarus.[24]

There are, however, wider frames of cultural and geographical reference in the narrative beyond the eschatological. If one of Catholicism's distinctive features is the devotional as well as theological pre-eminence of Mary as the Mother of Jesus, the sightings of the Marian visions on the Californian coastline present here a sacralized American landscape in which religious skepticism seems ill-conceived. In this variant of faithful fictions—skepticism struggling against faith rather than the obverse—landscape is central to the definition of events. Thus Mary's sighting of lightning striking the rock

late in the novel is epiphanic, reiterating the sustained, trans-historical pre-eminence of the environment on the sacramental. More impressive than her first vision, this latter experience of the numinous literally transforms the physical landscape itself: a cruciform shape appears on the rock.

Indeed, the transcontinental theme of mysticism and transformative spiritual experience is highlighted in a powerful array of references to and accounts of the numinous in Catholic devotional history, from the simplest of uneducated piety—Bernadette Soubirous and the children of Beauraing (111) to "Doctors" of the Church—St. John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, and Teresa of Lisieux (198–99). For all her apparent ignorance Marie Davenport is surprisingly knowledgeable about salvation history: "Bernadette Soubirous, the children of Beauraing, the shepherd at Guadaloupe; they had been disbelieved when they first told their stories. All had returned to the scene to be given some further sign, to convince the doubting priests. The priests always doubted: it was part of the pattern" (111). Marie Davenport's visionary experience, uninvited and unwelcome, provides a metatext for the novel's portrayal of a Catholicism otherwise degraded by petty institutionalization and post-Vatican II liberalization:

> And then I felt something strange .... It was a sort of silence, as if the sea wasn't moving, as though everything was still. Then the branches of the cypresses rustled and shook and someone came through the trees below me. It was a young girl: she couldn't have been more than sixteen. It was a cloudy day, did I say that? There was no sun at all. And yet she was surrounded by a little golden path of light. (111)

This is a repetition of her original vision. For Marie, however, it is the odd theatricality of the moment that she perceives, not the "halo" suggested by Monsignor Cassidy. For her, it was "more like a stage light," that it was "phony-looking." Still, the religious language of the vision provides its Christian contextualization: "Marie, I am your Mother ... the Virgin Immaculate" (105).

As for other of Moore's skeptics, religious ritual is a theatrical pageant.[25] When Alex is later resuscitated it is this which creates the contradictions of belief and skepticism: she pleads to God for Alex's life "as if she believed" but when he *is* revived she is uncertain of the cause of his improved condition.

Her own experience of denial thus originally marks the injury while her momentary (if simply petitionary) faith seems to mark his apparent cure. Both are linked to the events of contemporary and historical experiences of the numinous, the tensions again always marked in Marie Davenport's mind between the material falsity of religious practice and the power of genuine divine intervention:

> Into her mind came the stupid doll face of the statue she had seen in the chapel of the Sisters of Mary Immaculate. The words of the printed notice beneath the statue filled her ears as though someone spoke them aloud. *An invocation to Our Lady of Monterey produced a sudden, total calming of the elements for several minutes during which the vessels were enabled to come about and the crews and vessels were saved.* Invocation or medical treatment? She was again in the pit of the question. (116)

Marie's final position is a denial of the numinous and its institutionalization in the Church, but evidently not its possibility.

Marie Davenport, though, fundamentally rejects the place of religion as a source of cultural identity. In San Francisco with her lover, she hears a chorus of voices sing an Irish ballad in "a New York Irish sort of pub" with photographs of Dublin streets, the lyrics of nationalist violence—"With drums and guns and guns and drums/The enemy nearly slew ye"—disavowed too by Daniel "shaking his head at a young woman who had come by with a tray and a notebook, asking for contributions for some Irish cause" (127–28). It is Marie who parallels the economic exploitation for the "Irish cause" with a "false black nun" collecting in the name of a Church to which she did not belong (130). Paranoid though she is, and perhaps not unreasonably so, Marie associates the collecting nun with the inevitable quest to build a shrine and to make the place of her vision a place of pilgrimage. Forced into a visionary state over which she has no control, the possibility of a future reconstruction of the scene is not unlike that fate suffered by Anthony Maloney. Marie later fears that she would be "vouchsafed a second vision, and this time, perhaps, there would be witnesses to testify that the Virgin had spoken to her, commanding her to tell the priests to make this place a place of pilgrimage" (191). When Sister Anna effectively takes over the vision, this is precisely the form of the divine plan, the

prediction that, "people will come," that "this will be a place of reverence" (233). The likely commemoration of the site of the numinous makes an intractable link between experience and its spatial determination, coordinates which are as geographical as they are spiritual. Marie, the modern and skeptical prophet, unwilling but chosen by God, is likened by Father Niles to Saul of Tarsus (145), an analogy which forever links the numinous to the geography of a first-century Palestine, just as subsequent events in Christian history continue to mark the numinous of the personal within the specifics of otherwise unremarkable history and unsuspecting cultural geography: "There had been no special reason for choosing them; the simple Indian shepherd; the half-starved French peasant girl rooting around a riverbank for scraps of food; the illiterate Italian children; the pious postulant in the Paris chapel. And now me, the unbelieving adulteress" (140).

Marie's sexual history of course is no particular bar to Christian, even privileged, discipleship. In fact, the novel links sexual and visionary experience (Marie experiencing her first numinous experience after an early sexual encounter with Daniel) as it also links the mental uncertainties of Marie's experience—sexual and soteriological—with the search for divine purpose, a divine teleology with insanity; "Isn't this the way mad people think; they see a purpose in things, a plot, a scheme that doesn't exist?" (173). The religious parallels with the social and psychological marginality in Church history are, however, recognized by Father Niles, and he attempts the vain with the more cautious Monsignor between the place of Carmel and the religious history of the order which founded it:

> "Well, first of all it was Carmelite friars who landed here in 1602 and named this place, the Bay of Carmel. And then the Carmelite Order, as you know, is the Order which is linked to the tradition of mysticism and the great mystic saints, St Teresa and St John of the Cross. And then, in modern times, Saint Therese of Lisieux, was of course, a Carmelite nun." (214)

It is, nevertheless, a history which in the post-Vatican II era sees a newly liberalized American Church—Monsignor Cassidy, "God's Golfer" (111), and Father Niles, "watching as a pass was dropped on the twenty-five yard line" (136). It is a Catholic world which has alienated itself from the sacred, a sense of the sacred which Father Niles tries to recapture and which simply

puzzles the Monsignor: "The miracle lady. Funny thing, the way Ned can't let go of that story. Come to think of it, he's more like a newspaperman than a priest, nowadays" (136). It is a matter of further puzzlement to the Monsignor that Ned's bishop had given permission and funds for Ned's present occupation. Times have changed, "Imagine a bishop going for a program of that sort" (136).

Marie's view of the Church is inherited as much from her pre-Vatican II convent education and in the Church of Saint Benedict Labre, "the bright polish of institutional poverty," where she meets Father Niles, "as though her inquisition had begun," the obvious links to a more sinister Catholic past (141). When Father Niles elaborates the New Testament precedent for her experience with the Saul of Tarsus analogy, she declaims, "That was just those Bible stories, they're like fairy tales, long ago, we can't check on them" (145). If the Catholic Church recognizes one divine source for revelation and two "channels" for its transmission, the revelation of scripture and tradition,[26] Marie Davenport's skepticism is certain in its rejection of both. Her lack of Catholicity is, however, no bar to Father Niles's enthusiasm when he cites that the Virgin had appeared to Alphonse Ratisbonne in 1842, "He wasn't a believer. In fact, he was an Alsatian Jew" (141).

There is a distinction between the realities of Church life and the transcendent mysticism which forms part of Catholic Christian history, persisting in the youthful idealism of Father Ned Niles and the level-headed faith of Monsignor Barney Cassidy, the challenge being set by Marie Davenport when she wonders if "in religion we haven't become too practical" (187). In the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception too the parallels between the institutional and the devotional also become apparent. Mother Paul, the head of the convent, who took the name of her visionary male ancestor, while portrayed sympathetically, is no match for the practical wisdom of the Monsignor. The effusive, would-be visionary Sister Anna has all the enthusiasm and excess of piety of Father Niles, the latter pair kneeling together at the site of Marie's vision, on Sister Anna's face a look of "indescribable adoration" (231). The reader is uncertain whether to believe Sister Anna's testimony that the Virgin had added words not conveyed to Marie: "People will come. This will be a place of reverence" (233). The expected shift between the experience of the numinous and the institutionalization of the place parallels the events of Lourdes which lost

Abbot O'Malley his faith in *Catholics*, but Monsignor Cassidy's skepticism is in line with a more practical outlook: "We're not starting up a building fund, not by a long shot" (231).

Monsignor Cassidy's level-headedness, a sign of the "modern" Church, is contrasted by Marie's experience of the divine manifested as a sort of re-imposed inquisition, a more troubled history by which she still feels marked—"Signs, miracles, solicitings. This is force. I am being punished":

> "Mrs Davenport, you still have the right to refuse. It's basic to Christian theology that man is free to say no to God. Miracles and miraculous appearances are only signs which solicit belief. That's all they are. Remember, the Church doesn't require anyone to believe in miracles." (159)

It allows the Monsignor finally to absolve Marie of her responsibility or even mention her in his inevitable report to the bishop: "Remember if you say you saw nothing, nobody can prove otherwise. Except God, of course. And I think God has let you go. I think you're right. It's Sister Anna's vision now" (235). Marie returns to her secular life, the devotion of her love for Daniel, as it was in the beginning of the novel, free from the imposition of the sacred upon the secularity of her affair and the ending of her marriage. Mother Paul allows Marie to recognize the sincerity of Marie Davenport beneath her skeptical protestations, this politely spoken girl who reputedly "hates religion and all that it stands for"—her face, though, that "of a nun as it might be depicted in a religious painting: pale, beautiful, suffering—a holy face" (189). In this respect, the closest figure to Marie is Mother St. Jude, "the old and holy nun," in whom Marie recognizes the look "of love mixed with reverence, a look she had never known from any other human being ... mysteriously, her fear of this place and these people was subsumed in a larger feeling, a feeling of peace" (197).

Marie's position at the end of the novel is characterized by the exercise of free will, by her right not to believe. In the final analysis, Marie is determined not to accept the transformative burden of faith. It is, however, Monsignor Cassidy, the voice of the novel's theological reason and the epitome of the modern rather than the mystical Church, who reminds Marie of the reality of the divine: "Remember, the Church doesn't want you to do anything you don't want to do. But perhaps Our Lady does. That's something

else" (160). The distinction between the sacred and its day-to-day institution is finally left unresolved, a mark of continuing tension between Church and individual believers.

For Monsignor Cassidy, in this lack of resolution, the final mystery of the divine ("No wonder they call it blind faith"), transcendent and immanent, means "Faith is a form of stupidity" (221). A religious reading of the world, as indeed a religious reading of the novel, allows the natural world in which the events of the miraculous and visionary occur to remain open to interpretation. Here the natural and supernatural seemingly interchange according to the standpoint or worldview of the observer. And so for Marie, at the physical site (and sight) of her Marian vision:

> ... within seconds, the darkness lifted. All was still. She waited. There was nothing supernatural here. It was, again, a normal cloudy afternoon. This was a cliff on the coast of California, a meeting of land and water, the natural confrontation of elements in a serene, familiar world. She turned away, continuing to walk along the cliff path towards the convent, when, beneath her, there started a familiar trembling, as though the ground were shaken by an explosion. Within seconds, it passed. She had felt this before in the years she lived in California. It was an earthquake tremor, a minor movement on the Richter scale. She turned, looked out to sea again, then down at the cliff below, looked and shocked, looked again. The great shelf of rock had cracked. A thin straight line ran down its entire length, a fissure less than six inches wide, intersected by a second narrow fissure, also straight, the whole forming a great cross that ran the length and breadth of the rock she looked back to the spot where the twisted trees guarded the cavelike place. But all was normal. Gulls wheeled in from the ocean, crying like banshees. She looked again at the great cruciform design, an accident of nature, caused by earthquake, by a fault in the earth's crust. (175–76)

This is the world which hearkens back to Kinsella at the end of Part I of *Catholics*, standing at the symbolic cross of roads in a natural environment signalling the absence of the divine where people once saw the hand of God. Yet here the unbeliever Marie Davenport is "in a world where nature is no longer natural": "Why was there an earthquake at the very moment I

walked away from the cliff? Why did it split the rock into the shape of a crucifix?" (178–79). It is a world which retains the signs of divinity but where for Marie, too, "God was absent" (190)—but through choice, through the exercise of her "right not to believe" (233). With the "strange theatrical light to glow beneath the cavelike entrance" (reminiscent of Christ's resurrection as much as that of Lazarus) interspersed with her husband's funerary shrouds, *Cold Heaven* still reiterates the intertextual reference to the Gospel of John from which the story of Lazarus is taken, "*I am the resurrection and the life*" (205).

Locale remains ever-important here as a reminder of the universal within the particularity of culture, history, and place. To the pious Father Niles, Carmel, "a lovely spot," would make "a natural place for a pilgrimage" (214). And in addition to her comment that this "would be a place of reverence," there is Sister Anna's statement about the physical appearance of the Virgin: "Her skin is dark, like a Mexican's" (233). This provides both a narrative (or grandnarrative) circularity to the novel and its theme of the visionary. Early in the novel, we learn that it was during the first Spanish missions to the indigenous peoples that the Virgin first appeared and "when the mission was abandoned after secularization" the commemorative statue "was cared for by local Indians in their homes" (64). Now, at the end of the novel, there are more than hints of the importance of divine revelation to all peoples. But this brings up the troubled history of the conquest of indigenous lands and the destruction of native cultures in the name of Christianity. Importantly, it shows the direction of Christianity from a European-dominated faith imposed on others to a form of belief which other continents and peoples have made their own.

Significantly, this prefaces a shift in Moore's focus for his portrayal of Catholicism. After *Cold Heaven*, Moore no longer examines the place of Catholicism as institution and worldview purely through Western culture and society. We have already looked at his treatment of the historical shift of Catholicism before and after Vatican II. Such treatment focused, often in cross-cultural ways, on Ireland and North America. If Moore uses these settings again, it is to look at their social and cultural margins: at indigenous peoples in the history of the colonial Canada of New France (*Black Robe*); at the struggle against communist imperialism (*The Colour of Blood*); at the oppressed in the Caribbean (*No Other Life*), to Jewish persecution (*The*

Statement); and in his final novel at French colonial incursion into Islamic Algeria (*The Magician's Wife*). With a post-Vatican II portrayal of Catholicism increasingly loosening its Eurocentric focus, especially post-Medellin, it is entirely natural that Moore's novels should themselves reflect, in the novelist's continuing preoccupation with religion as favourite metaphor,[27] an increasing geographical and theological diversity.

Moore's final writings therefore throw light on his preoccupations not only with Catholic theology but Catholic encounter with the cultural, and specifically religious, "other." I want to show ways in which the notions of identity set against alterity, otherness and difference are key themes in both post-Vatican II theology and postcolonialism and how these two perspectives are provided with a reflective literary space in the novels of Brian Moore. Moore's later portrayals of Catholicism need to be viewed within a wider ideological context just as his theological themes become increasingly prominent. His constant heightening of otherness and difference in encounter becomes geographically and culturally diversified in these later fictions. Theologically, where post-Vatican II and post-Medellin Catholicism developed its global ideological involvement, Moore also found renewed theological meaning in issues of social justice. Moore's later novels demonstrate a continued preoccupation with Catholicism but increased awareness of theology's political dimension and active ideological commitment, the link between political and salvation history. In his concern for justice Moore demonstrates an interest in post-Vatican II theology and postcoloniality. We have already recognized *Catholics* as a turning point in Moore's portrayal of Catholicism in a fictional return to Ireland whose intertextual references heighten theological as well as political and literary "revolutions." In *Cold Heaven*, we have seen the emergence of Moore's concerns with those on the religious and political margins. In *Cold Heaven*, the Mexican Virgin and the Indians who had looked after the early colonial statue of Mary "after secularization" represent models of historical disempowerment in Moore's fictions while remaining on the margins of the narrative itself. Moore shifts the focus in later novels to the marginalized themselves, and for this his move involves a look to the religious and cultural "other" in history.[28]

This move marks a fictional and theological watershed. While retaining a perennial concern with marginality, obvious from *Judith Hearne*, Moore's

focus from *Black Robe* onwards is to new landscapes of encounter. Evident here is the "globalization" of Moore's novels as well as their greater ideological and theological diversity. Moore's most notable interests in his late fictions reflect a convergence of postcolonial and post-Vatican II Catholic thinking, perspectives especially apparent from *Black Robe* to Moore's final novel, *The Magician's Wife*. These novels' historical settings predate both postcolonial criticism and the Second Vatican Council but, significantly, their ideological and theological positions do not. Both *Black Robe* and *The Magician's Wife* provide a treatment of cultural, religious, and ideological otherness in historical context while demonstrating a wider authorial presentation of a more contemporary shift from pre- to post-Vatican II theology and from a colonial to a postcolonial perspective. It is to the first of these treatments, Moore's fictional closure with and theological/ideological perspective on North America, that we now turn.

Black Robe (1985)

Moore's story of seventeenth-century French colonial and missionary enterprise in Quebec relates the journey of a Jesuit priest, Father Laforgue, to the northern outpost of Ihonatiria.[29] Though Laforgue's is a journey of personal transformation through encounter with the indigenous "other," it is a natural successor to *Cold Heaven* in both geography and theme.[30] I argue that this transformation in Laforgue marks (however anachronistically) the later historical shift in post-Vatican II theology as well a postcolonial perspective: from a distinct otherness ("no salvation outside the Church") to an empathetic respect for difference, a stance in favour of those marginalized in the history of imperialism.

Apart from *The Magician's Wife*, in no other of Moore's novels is the final, physical destination of a protagonist's journey so clearly set out as it is in *Black Robe*. In no other is a protagonist's opening theological certainty more seriously undermined through encounter with as alien a landscape and worldview. As the narrative opens, Father Laforgue awaits the result of discussions between Champlain, the "founder of this land" (14) and Father Bourgue, the Jesuit Superior. The potential guides, the "Savages," Chomina and Neehatin, wait on. While the Algonkin are in the room where the discussions are taking place (but presumably distanced from the discussion

by language), Laforgue is outside on the ramparts. At once, he seems excluded— a man apart from his native France, but one also more subtly an outsider from the counsel of both civil and religious authorities.

In this colonial territory of the joint secular and ecclesiastical powers of French State and Roman Catholic Church, Laforgue is a man eager with Jesuitical ambition for the salvation of souls. Still awaiting confirmation of his journey outside the Commandant's fort quarters, Laforgue instinctively avoids meeting a fur trader (the economic precursors of colonization proper) who, significantly, has abused him recently. He moves "closer to the shadow of the ramparts" to hide, a tendency to concealment characterizing duplicity as much as cowardice. In so doing, he has to look up, his inferiority further signified, to see Champlain's face framed in a window; and it is the Commandant's perception of Laforgue, "the lonely figure of the priest," amidst the small, still emergent colonizing community against the backdrop of a vast Canadian landscape that establishes the novel's physical and metaphysical perspective (13). Champlain's view of "the settlement of Quebec"—only "a jumble of wooden buildings"—extends beyond the fragility of this human habitation as "in a painting ... towards the curve of the great river"; that on this river "four French ships lay at anchor" and in a week "would be gone" highlights the protagonist's impending distance from the familiarity of French land and culture (13–14). Indeed, the novel marks a transition from the Western contexts of Ireland and America to countries on the geographical and cultural margins of the West and here with a culture soon to be marginalized by the colonization. Laforgue fears he will never again see "the red flame of Richelieu's robe come towards me in the long gallery of the Palais de Justice" but he is driven too by the twin forces of imperialism and missionary conquest: "The journey to almost certain death of a priest and a boy, against the chance to save a small outpost for France and for the Faith" (16).

The journey and the harsh physical realities of Canada's landscape continue to serve such allegorical purposes throughout the book, but it is an allegory underpinned, or perhaps undermined, by the "Author's Note" on the historical authenticity of the geographical setting and anthropological detail.[31] If the Canadian landscape is used not simply to demonstrate the historical encounter of French Catholic and native Indian culture but as a more self-conscious vehicle for universalizing the theme of the relativity of any worldview, there is a risk that the force of historical authenticity is

overridden by an allegorical reading, or even by links to the author's own life. This is not uncommon in studies of Moore, but it is a temptation worth resisting.[32] The risk here is that the cultural opposition becomes such that the encounter risks stereotype or simple idealization: on the level of physical landscape, Canada itself becomes the idealized wilderness and, with this, the characterization of both savage and Black Robe risks amounting to little more than a dramatized anthropology,[33] a story whose allegorical theme of cross-cultural conflict is as contemporary as it is historical.[34]

Indeed, Moore's story of seventeenth-century French colonial and missionary enterprise, in telling of a Jesuit missionary journey, the sort well recorded by history, can be provided with a more public than private interpretation. The authorial perspective on history unavoidable in any critical commentary encourages this, though critics are often skeptical of the novel's historicity.[35] Thus Laforgue's is a journey of personal transformation through encounter with the (indigenous) "other." Moore's *Black Robe* may thus be subject to a possible universalized allegorical interpretation on the human condition rather than an historical particularity. Still, the novel as theological (and cultural/anthropological) history—the historical representation of Jesuit mission in an encounter with the indigenous "other" within early colonial Canada—needs to be taken more seriously, as much for what is relevant to the less obvious voice of contemporary Catholic theology within the text as to the explicit historical references in Moore's introduction. It is this transformation in Laforgue which on one level is the psychological change in the protagonist's character, but which in a more complex interpretation marks the later historical shift in post-Vatican II theology as well a postcolonial perspective. Again, this might be stated as shift from a distinct otherness ("no salvation outside the Church") to empathetic respect for difference. This historical perspective and Moore's presentation of European/First Nations encounter needs to be reviewed.

The preparatory "Author's Note" makes plain the sources of historical research for *Black Robe*: Francis Parkman's *The Jesuits of North America*, which derives in turn largely the Jesuits' letters to their superiors in France, the *Relations*, which Moore also consulted. From the outset of his novel, Moore contextualizes the cultural encounter between the French Jesuits and "*Les Sauvages*"—as the confederacies of indigenous tribes were collectively known to the French—in colonial Canada:

> The Huron, Iroquois, and the Algonkin were a handsome, brave, incredibly cruel people who, at that early stage [that is, the seventeenth century], were in no way dependent on the white man and, in fact, judged him to be their physical and mental inferior. They were warlike; they practised ritual cannibalism and, for reasons of religion, subjected their enemies to prolonged and unbearable tortures. Yet, as parents, they could not bear to strike or reprove their unruly children. They were pleasure-loving and polygamous, sharing sexual favours with strangers as freely as they shared their food and hearth. They despised the "Blackrobes" for their habit of hoarding possessions. They also held the white man in contempt for his stupidity in not realizing that the land, the rivers, the animals, were all possessed of a living spirit and subject to laws that must be respected.
>
> From the works of anthropologists and historians many facts about Indian behaviour not known to the early Jesuits, I was made doubly aware of the strange and gripping tragedy that occurred when the Indian belief in a world of night and in the power of dreams clashed with the Jesuits' preachments of Christianity and a paradise after death. (8)

If this is essentially a summary of mutually uncomprehending attitudes, it is from Moore's postcolonial perspective; yet this pervasive sense of complete otherness is reinforced as Father Laforgue progresses towards the Ihonatiria Mission before the full onset of the harsh Canadian winter. This "otherness" was largely down to the Jesuit descriptions of difference between Christian Europe and "... this Country, and with Nations who do not differ from us more in Climate and in Language than they do in their nature, their way of acting, and their opinions, and in everything that can exist in Man, except body and Soul....[*sic*]"[36]

Accompanied by Algonkin guides, they encounter the feared Iroquois. Escaping the horrors of cannibalism, torture, and the certainty of death at the hands of Iroquois tormentors, the much-reduced party of travellers encounter the fur traders Casson and Vallier returning from the Huron country down with six Algonkin paddlers. Illustrating the post-Reformation as well as early colonial context, Casson, the Huguenot, and Vallier, the Catholic, have set aside religious difference in their trade expedition, but it is the Huguenot Casson who admits of the strength of

the theological underpinning of imperialism: "The Jesuits were the real rulers of this country. Champlain was completely under their thumb. He was like a priest himself, now, in his old age, lecturing everybody on the importance of saving the Savages' immortal souls" (178). As it was to the Jesuit correspondents to France in the seventeenth-century *Relations*, Laforgue's mission is one in which "the dangers of this journey were transformed miraculously into a great adventure, a chance to advance God's glory here in a distant land" (47).

The notion of otherness is reciprocal. In the perception of the indigenous peoples, the culture of the priests are different from the traders: "What sort of men are you? You don't come here, as other Normans do, to trade furs. You ask to live with us in our villages, and yet you stay apart in this house. No one may sleep here and you hide your nakedness from us. Why?" (221). Still, the motives of religion and trade (theology and economic imperialism) become confused. Thus, the shaman Mestigoit remarks to Laforgue, "You are just another Norman pig, a greedy fucker in love with furs" (69). As an Algonkin leader also later admits to Laforgue, "Norman" greed becomes the source of personal and collective corruption: "I have become as you, greedy for things" (152). Although Laforgue eventually reaches the Ihonatiria Mission to find Father Duval dead and Father Jerome stroke damaged, he decides to stay "in this land God gave to Cain, the devil's land, living among barbarians" (88) for the sake of their salvation. But traditional means of achieving this salvation, the quest for souls and mass baptisms, is increasingly making less sense. In the encounter between First Nations and Jesuit at the Ihonatiria Mission, Aenons, a friend of (the now also murdered) Father Jerome speaks with prophetic intensity of mutual cultural difference and of the manner in which religious conversions make vulnerable people of the indigenous tribes: "You and your god do not suit our people. Your ways are not our ways. If we adopt them we will be neither Norman nor Huron. And soon our enemies will know our weakness and wipe us from the earth" (220). Struck by metaphysical doubt, Laforgue's faith is restored by a compassionate transformation, as soteriological as it is personal:

> He looked up at the sky. Soon, winter snows would cover this vast, empty land. Here among these Savages, he would spend his life. He poured water

> on a sick brow, saying again the words of salvation. And a prayer came to him, a true prayer at last. Spare them. Spare them, O Lord. (223–24)

There is a decided shift away from a traditional understanding of mission as soteriological conquest toward empathy, compassion, and, finally, at the conclusion of the novel, identity. Father Laforgue's concluding stream-of-consciousness leap to identification with the indigenous people, previously seen as other, is summed up by the litanic conclusion of the novel and takes Moore's novel beyond the comparisons with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*[37]: "*Do you love us? Yes*" (224). In Laforgue's journey to Ihonatiria, shifts in his thinking mark, from Moore's wider authorial stance, a transition (again, anachronistic as it might be) from a pre- to a post-Vatican II and from colonial to postcolonial perspective. Indigenous people are no longer "Savages," neither civilized nor transformed by Christianity. Still, in terms of a move from pre- to post-Vatican II theology, this is an emphatic shift from the salvific subjugation of the "other" through the universal imposition of Christian uniformity to the celebration of difference through an identification which is both psychological (as it occurs in Laforgue's perception of the "other") and theological (as it reflects a wider shift in Catholicism's approach to mission). In terms of the move from the colonial to the postcolonial, and from pre- to post-Vatican perspectives, theology is finally (if ambiguously) differentiated from imperialism.[38]

Moore's fictional return, then, to the physical landscape of North America marks a change in the portrayal of Catholicism by an indirect reinterpretation of the secular assumptions of the early American novels, *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, *An Answer from Limbo*, *I Am Mary Dunne*, and *Fergus*. The later American fictions – from Anthony Maloney's ethereal metaphysical constructions which resist Catholic definition ("Are you a Catholic?"—"No") through Marie Davenport's decidedly Catholic Marian visions to Laforgue's journey from an exclusive to a universal soteriology – mark both a transition (in *The Great Victorian Collection*) and a transformation (in *Cold Heaven* and *Black Robe*) in Moore's portrayal of Catholicism in an American context. If the usual skepticism of Moore's protagonists remains from the early American novels, this skepticism is under increasing epistemological pressure from the experience of the numinous uncommon in any of Moore's previous fictions: the later American fictions are thus significant for their representation of a

literary quantum shift where religion *per se* is taken more seriously than before, a process that Moore's final novels will extend and yet, typically, draw only to ambiguous conclusion. In direct relation to these later American novels, though, metaphysically, Moore moves from the heightened uncertainties of empirical reality evident in *The Great Victorian Collection* through the certainty of a faith denied in *Cold Heaven* to a universalized affirmation of salvation for all in *Black Robe.* In Moore's later American fictions, metaphysical "realities" now compete on equal epistemological grounds with the secular.

Theologically, such a dramatic shift is facilitated by Moore's developing historical portrayal of Catholicism: from unambiguous pre-Vatican II dogma and ecclesiology, which divided the Church from the world, to the plural, theological ambiguities of a post-Vatican II Church more involved with politics and society in all its global diversity, as we shall see especially accentuated in the next chapter. If Catholicism's historical transformation is of inherent interest to Moore, though, the ideological perspective of the colonial – already apparent in the margins of *The Great Victorian Collection* and *Cold Heaven* (and traceable back to *Judith Hearne*) – takes centre stage jointly with the theological in *Black Robe.* The authorial benefit of historical insight, however, enables Moore to take a transhistorical overview which conjoins post-Vatican II and postcolonial perspectives. Moore's juxtaposition of the social with the metaphysical thus enables his later and final literary treatments of colonial history to be interpreted through these wider post-Vatican II and postcolonial perspectives in *No Other Life* and *The Magician's Wife,* while, more broadly, the theological and the ideological underpin Moore's examination of the complexities of Church–State relations in *The Colour of Blood* and *The Statement.* In these works, to be considered next, Moore's portrayal of Catholicism increasingly reflects a post-Vatican II plurality within a Church as diverse geographically and culturally as it is theologically.

Chapter 6

Moore's Portrayal of the Church in the Modern World: Theological Universality and Cultural Particularity

(*The Colour of Blood*, 1987; *No Other Life*, 1993; *The Statement*, 1995; *The Magician's Wife*, 1997)

Introduction

In examining Moore's portrayal of Catholicism, a distinction has been made between the theological stance of the pre- and post-Vatican II Church. In the last chapter, I identified in particular three key areas which are of most relevance for the present discussion: first, the Church's redefinition of itself as an institution from a hierarchical to a more egalitarian (if as yet far from democratic) ecclesiology, from an exclusivist "Church militant" to the inclusive "People of God"; second, a theology also arising from a more moderate ecclesiology, that is, a radical, truly universal redefinition of soteriology in which is recognized the possibility of salvation for those outside the Church; third, the Church's growing involvement with issues of social, economic, and political import, an incorporation of theology with politics most famously elaborated from Medellín in liberation theology.

I have already argued that a potential degree of commonality in approach and ideological orientation exists between post-Vatican II theology and postcolonialism.[1] In this present chapter, I argue that this convergence of post-Vatican II and postcolonial perspectives becomes even more marked in theologies of liberation and that such is reflected in Moore's later fictions. Such an identity is significantly reinforced when the analysis of oppression is rooted in the history of the colonial, and especially where liberation is

defined through its postcoloniality. Thus, with a key emphasis upon the historical—material, politico-economic—context of salvation, such theological/ideological analyses naturally lead to an examination of the structural roots of injustice in historical as well as contemporary context; and, indeed, Moore uses history too to significant literary effect when exploring themes which are arguably amongst some of the most current in contemporary Catholic theology. As McDade comments:

> If human history becomes an indispensable locus revelationis for the Church—and I take this to be the principal theological orientation of the Council, the central intuition maitresse of post-conciliar theology—then human history becomes the locus theologicus for the post-conciliar theologian .... This also has the effect of revivifying biblical and historical theology—the study of the "script" of inherited tradition—because the relationship of the various texts to their contexts illuminates the character of theology as something "enacted" in varying cultural milieux.[2]

What also becomes apparent here is the importance of geographical demarcations of movement in the convergence of the ideological and the theological in global context. As will become apparent in this chapter, post-Vatican II Catholicism's theological universality increasingly achieves some notable and culturally particular expressions. *The Colour of Blood, No Other Life, The Statement* and *The Magician's Wife* certainly reflect this.

The Colour of Blood (1987)

Published in the final years of the Cold War, *The Colour of Blood* portrays an ideological landscape of Eastern European Church–State relations which has now passed into history.[3] If the complex of social and cultural, political and theological ramifications are still in transformation more than a decade after the revolutionary year of 1989, then such ramifications are unexpected in Moore's novel.[4] Thus, the ambivalent relationship of theology to Marxism, so prominent a feature of liberation theology's development—and so central a part of its critique—is represented in *The Colour of Blood* as the primary aspect of the struggle of Church against State in a Cold War Soviet context (though an explicit theology of liberation is essentially undeveloped in the

novel).[5] One must also be wary of the dangers of extending the context of even a fictionalized Poland in *The Colour of Blood* as a pattern of Church–State relations for Soviet Russia or the rest of Eastern Europe. In Soviet Russia, for instance, the dissident movement that developed subsequent to Khrushchev's policy of active religious persecution manifested itself in distinct aesthetic forms of political resistance in which the Eastern Orthodox faith provided an alternative, national culture distinct from the hegemony of Communism.[6] Significantly, then, Moore here accurately reflects the inherent tensions of Church–State relations during this period—and most notably in the dialectic or conflict between challenge and accommodation—especially the manner in which the language of Church–State opposition in Eastern Europe, particularly Poland, often reflected a distinctive brand of religious nationalism in which Catholic national identity lent itself to opposition to state-imposed atheistic culture and worldview.[7]

If Vatican thinking since the accession of Cardinal Wojtyla reflects a conservative interpretation of the political implications of Vatican II social teaching,[8] John Paul II's papacy significantly provides an important context for understanding the events which centre around Church–State conflict in *The Colour of Blood.* By contrast, studies of this novel tend to universalize its themes into allegory, the journey of Cardinal Bem being said, like that of Father Laforgue's in *Black Robe,* to represent some personal spiritual odyssey rather than the particularities of theology in a Cold War setting.[9] This approach is naturally limited in interpretative scope. By contrast, I contend that, given the evident geographical, historical, and theological frames of reference, the interpretation of this novel is best undertaken in the context of the culturally particular.

There are, then, two frames of reference which set *The Colour of Blood* in appropriate geographical, historical, and theological context. The novel makes use of an Eastern European setting and this facilitates an exploration of Church–State relations in terms of a complex *realpolitik.* As well, the theological/geographical frame of reference extends, in explicit terms, to Latin American liberation theology.[10] Thus, the opening and closing of the narrative—an attempted and in the end successful assassination of Cardinal Bem—resonates with the failed assassination of Pope John Paul II in 1981 and the successful assassination of Archbishop Romero in El Salvador in 1980. Again, the narrative of *The Colour of Blood* unites Europe and Latin

America in terms of ecclesiastical history just as it equally implies a perhaps unexpected fissure in theological perspectives: between the conservative-turned-radical in Romero and the radical-turned-conservative in Pope John Paul II.

Known as a conservative for most of his ecclesiastical life, Romero's appointment as Archbishop of San Salvador was generally greeted with dismay by radical elements within the El Salvadorean Church. His subsequent increasing identification with liberation theology and his eventual murder in March 1980 by State forces have since given Romero status as a martyr and an icon of liberation theology. John Paul II's formative experiences were under political repression: during the Second World War, he trained in Krakow as a priest in the underground seminary network banned during Nazi Occupation, and later served his ministries as priest, bishop, archbishop, and cardinal under successively repressive communist regimes in Poland. In terms of the convergence of ideology and theology behind the Soviet Iron Curtain in which Catholicism provided a coherent sense of religious nationhood against an atheistic State, Moore's novel is a literary synthesis of a distinctively Eastern European model of political resistance with a geographically radical theology which achieved its most noted articulation in South America.[11]

The figures of the Polish pope and the South American archbishop provided paradigms both of and for the historical readjustment to post-Vatican II theological transformation within the Catholic Church; and both the theological and the political dimensions of this readjustment have relevance for interpreting Moore's novel. Politically, Romero's death marked a violent point of transition, initially to civil war in El Salvador, but longer term to a wider, if prolonged and bloody, democratization in many South American countries.[12] Such democratization led, if incidentally, to a theological shift away from the politicization of the Church. John Paul II's papacy epitomizes, and indeed influenced, both periods of transition.[13] *The Colour of Blood*, without historical hindsight, thus provides a limited reading of the signs of the ideological and theological times: in recognizing the theological critique of politicization (often through theologies of liberation) within the Church during John Paul II's papacy, Moore could not be blamed for failing to expect that the outcome of such political and theological critique—the dual papal critique of Communism and the politicization of

Christianity—would lead to the decline of both liberation theology as an active theological force and the fall of the Soviet Communist system itself. Moore nevertheless reflects the post-Vatican II tensions between the theologically universal teaching of Catholicism and its particular cultural interpretations; and *The Colour of Blood* represents a loose literary synthesis of these.

If, theologically and ideologically, Moore's most notable interests in his late fictions reflect a convergence of post-Vatican II Catholic and in the widest sense anti-imperial and postcolonial thinking, such a convergence can be traced, as we have noted, to *Catholics*, where Moore presents the first explicit references to liberation theology.[14] *Catholics*, then, provides the intertextual lead to an analysis of *The Colour of Blood* in terms of political and theological history. The Catholic critique of Marxism as an ideology and Communism as an atheistic state system thus has a dual history: open, pre-Vatican II antipathy towards a social and economic system rooted in atheism, transformed into a post-Vatican II accommodation with, if not acceptance of, both atheism as a worldview and Communism as a political system.[15] Both *Catholics* and *The Colour of Blood* highlight the ambivalent historical relations between Marxism as an ideology and Communism as a system in relation to Christianity; both novels jointly indicate the increasing prevalence in a post-Vatican II world of such tensions and accommodations. In a post-Vatican II Soviet Union, and through the satellite countries of Eastern Europe behind the Iron Curtain, tensions between Christianity's accommodation and conflict with state Communism remained, while in Latin America, especially subsequent to the Cuban revolution, Marxist ideology was increasingly apparent in liberation theology. The Cold War, of course, both heightened and complicated such tensions, as did the 1978 election of a Polish pope. With his Polish background, John Paul II was unlikely to view favourably overtures to an ideology which, as manifested in Soviet Communism, had repressed the Church and restricted religious freedom throughout the Cold War period.[16]

The encounter between ideology and theology in *The Colour of Blood* holds, then, a literal and historical significance. Moore is trying to say something about *particular* Church–State relations in a Soviet satellite; the narrative extends intertextually to the grandnarratives of ideology and theology. Cardinal Bem's passage through the unnamed Eastern Bloc country

may also be a personal spiritual odyssey which may be interpreted as a wider allegorical journey of faith—a late-twentieth-century *Pilgrim's Progress*, perhaps. Yet Bem's struggle equally represents the real and particular, that is historical, struggle of peoples and nations in the era of the Cold War, both in eastern Europe and beyond it.

The novel opens with Cardinal Bem chauffeur-driven into Proclamation Square in the capital of this unnamed country. The square's "statues, roofs and monumental buildings were wetted slick" and "the pavement glistened," the forces of nature gently imposing themselves upon the city, its human history (statues and the monuments of human achievement) rightly contextualized, placed into perspective by something more elemental, more lasting. It is as if this very juxtaposition—man and meteorology—which leads the hero of the novel into a reverie which takes him beyond the everyday business of the city, from the immanent to the transcendent. So, having left "the meeting" (the nature of the meeting clearly not important), he is reading "not his notes, but a small book by Bernard of Clairvaux":

> "Do you not think that a man born with reason yet not living according to this reason is, in a certain way, no better than the beasts themselves? For the beast who does not rule himself by reason has an excuse, since this gift is denied him by nature. But man has no excuse."
>
> Sometimes, reading St Bernard, he could abandon the world of his duties and withdraw into that silence where God waited and judged. (7)

Commenting on the Clairvaux passage, critics have contrasted the supposed rationality of human nature, suggested by the figure of Bem, with the "beastly" unreason of the assassins who, even as Bem contemplates that silence of a waiting and judging God, approach in a black car in the following sentence.[17]

Yet the Clairvaux reference has far more complex interpretative possibilities. If Christian tradition has presented active and contemplative forms,[18] Bernard of Clairvaux—in his writings and monastic reforms—is seemingly identifiable with the latter, but, as the novel progresses, it becomes clear that Moore is also drawing on Clairvaux's insights as a thinker on Church–State relations in the middle ages.[19] By contrast with such subtleties,

Bem's would-be assassins belong to a group known as the Christian Fighters, a Catholic terrorist group explicitly linked to a "liberation theology," and are unfavourably contrasted with Bem/Clairvaux throughout the narrative by their purely "active" and this-worldly praxis. Set within the broader context of Church history, then, Bem's reading of Bernard of Clairvaux at the beginning of *The Colour of Blood* provides a crucial ecclesiastical key to understanding his subsequent reticence in the face of those Catholic forces who would literally revolutionize the Church.

As Cardinal, though, Bem has only limited choice between religious contemplation and social action. His role as the Primate of the Church in his country necessarily immerses him within ecclesiastical, as well as to a lesser extent State, politics. Bem's preferred stance with regard to the latter is the path of accommodation and official concordat rather than revolutionary confrontation with the government, a path historically taken by the twentieth-century Church.[20] Yet such a path is easily regarded by more radical clerics, in actuality as in Moore's novel, as a way of collaboration as much as compromise. Cardinal Bem, a moderate, identifies with a contemplative Catholic tradition both through his reading of the Clairvaux passage as the narrative opens and, as the narrative unfolds, through his subsequent resistance to the violent revolution which Archbishop Krasnoy hopes to call for at the Commemoration for the Rywald Martyrs, an event to which the novel's plot leads:

> He thought ahead to the Jubilee celebrations next Tuesday, to the thousands and thousands of pilgrims who would come to Rywald and climb the Jasna mountain to the church, built two hundred years ago to honour the September martyrs. There in that place dedicated to God, a concatenation of events could be set in motion destroying all his gains: the right to have church schools, the right to publish religious literature, the right to worship freely, the right to build churches in the new territories. All that would disappear. Instead, there would be tanks in the streets, torture in secret rooms, prisons overflowing, riots, beatings, deaths. Help me, O Lord. Let me be in Rywald on that day. I must be seen. I must be heard. (61)

Archbishop Krasnoy's planned speech, leaked to Bem through his aide Father Malik, is in stark contrast to such accommodation:

> The nation in this critical time is like a great forest at the end of a summer of dreadful drought. A spiritual and moral drought. On the floor of this forest are millions of pine needles. It takes only a spark to set them ablaze. And what is that spark? Is it not the recent proof that those who rule us hold the Church in contempt? This callous behaviour towards the religious leadership of the nation could be the spark that will set the forest ablaze, a fire that will cleanse and purify. Much could be destroyed, but in the end the nation will be strengthened in its faith and its freedom. We must ask help in our present plight. We must unite to show the strength of our national will. Here, in this place, on this day at the shrine of the Blessed Martyrs, I call on all of you to stand behind the Church in this hour of need. (19)

The post-Vatican II, indeed post-revolutionary, Church, had a difficult ecclesiastical task, needing to ensure its own survival in the face of persecution and repression while offering some theological resistance to regimes on which the Church in turn depended, and Moore's novel deals with both the problem and its resolution.

Thus the Second Vatican Council promulgated a series of decrees in this area of ecclesiastical governance which aimed to retain a degree of theological integrity in such circumstances. The Council maintained a delicate balance between affirming the rights of religious freedom (in *Dignitatis Humanae*) and holding to the view—in the new spirit of *aggiornamento*—that the Church should not exclude from either dialogue, or even salvation, persons of good faith of either agnostic or atheistic persuasion (evidenced in both *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*).[21] It is in this context that *The Colour of Blood* must be read. Interestingly, of course, if we return to the paradigmatic figure of political ambivalence in John Paul II—not the oversimplified conservative so often portrayed—then we see that the young Archbishop Wojtyla was a major influence in these very areas of theological transformation in Catholic thought at Vatican II itself, that is, religious freedom and the universality of soteriology.[22]

Indeed, less than ten years after his succession in 1978, the year of the three popes,[23] John Paul II's papacy was to transform further the relation between theology and ideology and, in practical terms, the *realpolitik* of Cold War politics and eventually ensuring its decline and fall. Pope John

Paul II was a survivor of Nazi-occupied Poland, Stalinist repression, and later anti-Church laws behind the Iron Curtain. It is a history which is in part at least shared by Cardinal Bem:

> ... now, as he genuflected before this makeshift altar and rose, saying the words that told his meagre audience that the mass was ended, he thought of those masses said in prisons and concentration camps by his fellow priests, so many of whom had died during the long years of German occupation. He had been a fifteen-year-old schoolboy when the first Soviet tanks arrived in the streets of the capital, driving the Germans back, block by razed block. While the other boys of his generation regretted that they had been too young to fight, he had felt cheated of the honour of suffering abuse and imprisonment in Christ's name. (45)

Unlike Bem, Karol Josef Wojtyla (as Archbishop of Krakow and delegate to Vatican II[24]) was also a key instigator of new theological thinking on Church–State relations. As Bishop of Krakow in 1962, Karol Wojtyla had, for instance, a major influence on the formation of *Lumen Gentium*, important for its increasingly egalitarian definition of the Church. Further, as Archbishop of Krakow, in 1963 Karol Wojtyla exerted some influence on the Council's great text of social reform, *Gaudium et Spes*, known for its social teaching and for its radical "accommodation" with atheism. Crucially, it balances a critique of atheism with a call to dialogue. Thus it comments:

> Among the various kinds of present-day atheism, that one should not go unnoticed which looks for man's autonomy through his economic and social emancipation. It holds that religion, of its very nature, thwarts such emancipation by raising man's hopes in a future life, thus both deceiving him and discouraging him from working for a better form of life on earth. That is why those who hold such views, wherever they gain control of the state, violently attack religion, and in order to spread atheism ... make use of all the means by which the civil authority can bring pressure to bear on its subjects.

Yet the document also offers the following stance:

> Although the Church altogether rejects atheism, she nevertheless sincerely proclaims that all men, those who believe as well as those who do not, should help to establish right order in this world where all live together. This certainly cannot be done without a dialogue that is sincere and prudent.[25]

Yet, as Pope John Paul II, Wojtyla was less than favourably disposed toward communist regimes which repressed religious freedom. In speaking of the relationship developed with Moscow initiated by both John XXIII and Paul VI, Szulc summarizes the ambivalent stance as it came to be initiated by Karol Wojtyla:

> Such was the complexity and subtlety of this situation that Wojtyla, as a Polish archbishop, could favour an improved relationship with communism as a matter of constructive long-range diplomacy while squaring off with communist authorities over the treatment of the Church there. It was a state of affairs that the West never understood. Nor, for that matter, was it understood that the most interesting young personality in the Church emerging from the Second Vatican Council was a Polish archbishop name Karol Wojtyla. That is why, perhaps, the advent of John Paul II would be such a surprise.[26]

Unlike Bem, Wojtyla as Archbishop and Cardinal played therefore an important role within the Polish Church in using religion as part of an historical sense of nationhood. This provided powerful theological opposition to the Communist state, a position to this extent closer identified with Krasnoy.[27]

It is precisely the dangers of this politicization that Cardinal Bem is aware in Moore's novel when he confides to his aide that "the people are using religion now as a sort of politics .... To remind themselves that we are a Catholic nation while our enemies are not. To remind us that we always continued to be a nation even when the name of our country was taken off the map" (176). Wojtyla's ecclesiastical career may itself be said to have consisted of a life of resistance to ideological domination in various guises—both the state fascism of Nazi-occupied Poland and the state communism of Soviet-directed domination from Stalin onwards.[28] Yet, as

Pope, John Paul II's post-Vatican II stance of dialogue with atheism and accommodating *realpolitik* as a former member of the Catholic Church hierarchy in Poland masked an antipathy to Soviet Communism. This also extended, perhaps inevitably, to a less than favourable assessment of the Marxist politicization of Christianity so evident in liberation theology.[29] Yet there is an irony here in the critique of Catholicism's politicization in that religious belief—especially in Karol Wojtyla's Poland—provided cultural identity in the face of both Nazi and communist repression.

Still, such a stance is given little theological credence when it surfaces in Moore's characterization of Bem. Thus—as we see with conservative critiques of politicization during John Paul II's papacy—in conversation with Father Malik, Bem openly distinguishes between a religion which serves narrowly social rather than more transcendental ends:

> "... It's all part of our collective memory and we cherish it. But what has it got to do with our love of God?"
> "Perhaps it's brought us closer to God, Eminence?"
> "I wonder. Are we filling the churches because we love God more than before? Or do we do it out of nostalgia for the past, or, worse, to defy the government? Because if we do, Kris, then God is mocked." (176)

A natural contemplative, Bem has no choice though as cardinal but to involve himself with matters of ecclesiastical as much as of atheistic state governance; and this in a period which, as in Poland prior to the collapse of Communism, is marked by the ascendancy of Church over State:

> In his ten years as bishop and seven as cardinal he had seen the power of the State erode while the Church, despite its mistakes, had assumed greater and greater power over people's minds. The party had unwittingly strengthened that power by stripping the Church of its prewar estates and leaving it as poor as the people themselves. And yet, as he knew, this churchly power was not real. It was the sort of power that he, as cardinal, would have held in the sixteenth century. In those days the cardinal became the head of State in the interregnum between the death of one king and the coronation of his successor. (71–72)

Just so Bem's secular counterpart, Prime Minister Urban, a former Jesuit school companion, both personalizes and equally highlights the final absence of qualitative distinction between secular and ecclesiastical power relations. Equally committed to a life of political involvement—secular but inextricably bound to the life of Bem's Church—Urban, like Bem, has a personal lifestyle which is likened to the monastic and the contemplative (and by name associated with the papacy[30]): "Urban is unmarried, they say he lives an ascetic life" (158).

If the ideological and religious worlds of these two men are linked through a notional "politics" of social action, a connection between secular and ecclesiastical governance, both are subject to authority beyond the physical, geographical space in which they operate; Cardinal Bem is ultimately answerable to Rome and the Prime Minister similarly to Moscow. Yet, despite these links to an "outside" world—ironically more defined than the unnamed country and its capital where the action takes place—both men are also contained within these geographical limits, physical limits which are themselves imagined. The Eastern European sounding names of places (the Volya river, the Jasna mountain, the suburb of Praha, the towns of Gneisk and Rywald) serve both to heighten the Soviet Bloc atmosphere and at the same time create a world of fable. The *realpolitik* worlds of Rome and Moscow serve only to highlight this very unreality. Differences in ideology—the atheistic Communism of the ex-Jesuit schoolboy Urban and the conservative Catholicism of Bem, so characteristic of the post-revolutionary Church—are well matched to the historical territory by the Cardinal's persecuted journey through the geopolitical landscape of *The Colour of Blood.*

The Colour of Blood, set in an unnamed country, reflects the actual struggles of the Catholic Church in the years of former Soviet rule in eastern Europe during the Cold War. Cardinal Bem, already having survived an assassination attempt at the novel's opening, is caught between the repression of an atheistic government and the unpredictable activities of revolutionary Catholic extremists who perceive Bem as representing a potential compromise with the hated powers of the State. It is in the end the sister of a Catholic extremist—Danekin—who perpetrates the death of Bem during Mass at the end of the novel:

> It was as if he stood at the edge of a dark crevasse, unable to see to the other side. The silence of God: would it change at the moment of his death? He held up the Host a though to give it to her. He saw her finger tighten on the trigger.
>
> And heard that terrible noise. (191)

The religious doubts evident here in the mind of Bem before his certain death reintroduce that strong element of metaphysical uncertainty into the event: on the one hand, Bem seems assured that his assassination is "God's will" but, on the other, he is confronted by the "silence of God," and the latter being contrasted with the murderous audibility of "that terrible noise" as the gun is fired. Bem's life is ended, literally and metaphorically, by the final sentence of the book. The metaphysical possibilities of anything beyond these—the ending of the book and the ending of the man, either in terms of an afterlife for Bem or in terms of the validity of any metaphysical speculation beyond the events of the narrative—is a resounding uncertainty. It is a metaphysical doubt which might supposedly throw into question both religious and theological grandnarrative. Yet, just as one commentator has placed the metaphysical emptiness of Tomas O'Malley at the conclusion of *Catholics* in the positive context of mystical theology,[31] so too we can reflect on Bem's own positive reading of the silence of God, that which we witness from the novel's opening, whereby, "reading St Bernard, he could abandon the world of his duties and withdraw into that silence where God waited and judged" (7). The final and most significant encounter which frames the text is thus eschatological and existential, coloured for some by ideology, for others theology, for those who have lost belief, emptiness. If this contrast between the temporal and the transcendent is the source of grandnarrative conflict—here of theological engagement with the political—it is the eschatological and existential which continue to provide the metatext for Moore's next novel.

No Other Life (1993)

Indeed, perhaps nowhere else do we see this literary-theological reflection on death, and specifically Catholic approaches to death, more effectively

developed than in the rather aptly named novel, *No Other Life*. If the eschatological permeates many of Moore's novels,[32] this narrative presents too a metaphysical context for issues of ideological and theological conflict and accommodation. Set in an imaginary Caribbean island, *No Other Life* is strongly reminiscent of the Haiti of recent decades and of course especially the presidential rise of the Catholic priest Aristide to the presidency.

Though returned to power in Haiti at the end of the year 2000, Aristide's rule was a short one in the Haiti of the early 1990s and one which provoked considerable hostility within the Vatican. Indeed, Aristide in turn was less than favourably disposed toward the eccesiastical hierarchy in Rome. Aristide saw that the institutional church of Haiti had given succour to the dictatorial regimes of the Duvaliers. One of the great triumphs of the Duvalier regime had been to win (in the early 1960s) the right to appoint its own bishops, something which since the Ultramontanist days of Vatican I had been undertaken from Rome. When François Duvalier came to power, he rid Haiti of the foreign-appointed clerical hierarchy. Rome resisted the move to give the State the power of episcopal appointment but, as Griffiths comments, "through a strange irony, Duvalier was aided by the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council then taking place in Rome and which came down strongly in favour of finding local leadership for churches which had previously been considered 'missions'"[33]; the Haitian Catholic Church, then, as much as the Haitian State, was targeted by Aristide.[34]

Moore's novel is the first-person narrative of a Catholic priest, Father Paul Michel, who reflects, in the days after his formal retirement, upon his place as a white missionary figure in the multi-ethnic island of Ganae where, in his final years, he has served as principal of a Catholic college of higher education. The novel's opening strongly suggests the book's main theme of death, and of existence as an ephemeral passage of years:

> In the old days they would have given me a gold watch. I never understood why. Was it to remind the one who is being retired that his time is past? Instead of a watch I have been presented with a videotape of the ceremonies. My life has ended. My day is done. (1)

The image of the traditional retirement clock is juxtaposed here with the technologically progressive. This scene of a (potentially reviewable)

official ending emphasizes the finality of a life while representing the beginning of the text itself. So the ending of a fictional public persona marks the start of the novel; yet it is one which takes the narrative back to the past.

The book is, however, more a reflection upon the orphaned Jean-Paul Cantave, known as Jeannot, from the impoverished village district of Toumalie. Travelling around Ganae for scholarship boys to improve the ethnic balance of a predominantly privileged white and "mulatto" college intake, Father Michel finds a woman in Toumalie, "a widow with four children of her own and two boys who were the orphaned children of her brother, a warehouse clerk who had died three years ago" (7). One of the orphaned boys is Jeannot. Speaking to Jeannot's guardian about his plans for giving the boy a new life "she gave him into my care as casually as she would give away a puppy from a litter" (7).

Characterizing a trend towards the use of life stories illuminate the grandnarrative of wider theological history, Moore here uses the stories of individuals to reflect post-Vatican II transformations of Church in the modern world. Most crucially, the Church in this post-Vatican II period faced just those questions of social justice which became so evident in nations in the aftermath of colonialism. Against the backdrop of Ganae's harsh socio-economic setting, its colonial history succeeded—as so often in dictatorship—Jeannot's accomplishments, firstly as a scholarship student at the college and then, inspired by Father Michel, as a seminarian and priest are all the more notable, as indeed they were for Aristide. But whereas the chance childhood meeting of Father Michel with Jeannot's family in Toumalie highlights Jeannot's apparent good fortune, Jeannot's subsequent and near-meteoric rise to the leadership of Ganae as priest-president have all the marks of destiny. Jeannot's character and the trapping of office though, while initially matching those of Father Michel, later almost inexorably match those of the dictator Doumergue. Nevertheless, Jeannot's movement from the world of religious ministry into the same political arena which had maintained, through the inequalities of military dictatorship, the oppression which had kept his own family, his village, and the majority of the people of Ganae in poverty, is initially a sign of hope for the country; but, finally embroiled in the political machinations of various power brokers, Jeannot is forced into a potential compromise with the new dictatorship. At the occasion to mark his

relinquishing of the presidency and forced seal of approval for a corrupt government, Jeannot calls all to prayer. To the surprise of all, not least his political opponents, Jeannot physically and symbolically merges into the vast crowd of his supporters who had come in prayerful witness to mark Jeannot's supposed public resignation. Jeannot thus returns to the masses who had brought him (however temporarily) to power, his political and spiritual integrity retained; and here of course Aristide's history departs from that of Jeannot.[35]

For all the intricacies of Jeannot's characterization—a personal focus on the ideological and theological grandnarrative of a post-Vatican II and postcolonial era—the novel's most important metatext is its eschatological meditation. At the close of his own life, the narrator's story is a personal recollection of one man's rise to political and ecclesiastical prominence, and his final, anonymous death. Yet *No Other Life*—through Father Michel's recollections—presents too a social view of the anonymity of death on a Caribbean island through poverty, political neglect by indigenous state authorities, and ecclesiastical indifference from a conservative Rome distant from the harsh realities of Ganaean life.

The narrative, from the existential focus of its title, constantly draws the reader to the central theme of the book. Early on we learn that "In Ganae, because of the heat, funerals are sudden" (42). We thus have the murder by Colonel Maurras of the child who happened to be part of a protesting crowd (42). Through the great levelling of geographical and cultural distance, we are drawn too from Ganae back to Quebec and to an historical encounter of culture and belief—and, with subtle intertextual reference to another Moore location—from the colonial encounter of *Black Robe* to a latter-day, and postcolonial, mission:

> Behind the chapel there is a cemetery. In it are buried the priests of our Order who died in Ganae. It is small and quiet, shaded by jacaranda trees. In the nearby chapel we heard the shuffling of feet, then silence, as the service began .... On the worn gravestones I could read the names of our priests, French and Canadian, forgotten now, their labours ended, their bodies rotted to anonymous bones in the unforgiving soil of this lost and lonely land. What was the true meaning of those lives, lived far from France and Quebec. (18–19)

We have too the death of the dictator Doumergue (45). This latter event presents Jeannot with the opportunity, soon seized, to combine political with priestly office and which (like the liberation theology Jeannot is intended to represent) finally fails to effect real and lasting social structural change.[36]

The generational features we have noted in Moore's early portrayals of religious belief surface in *No Other Life*. Following a call from Henri, his brother in Quebec, Father Michel is drawn from Ganae to Canada to his mother's deathbed (72). From the universal the novel draws us to the particular: Father Michel is drawn to his own life story and the death of his mother; the reader is drawn back in intertextual geographical reference to the treatment of early colonial history—and the Church's involvement in this—by the protagonist narrator's return to Quebec. The mother's skepticism reflects an about-face. In her deathbed scene, the reader is drawn to a socio-historical memory of place which intertextually evokes *Black Robe* and its postcolonial reconsideration of mission. In the latter context, as in *No Other Life*, the certainties of belief and conquest are themselves jointly subjugated to an eschatological emptiness:

> "Do you remember when you were a little boy and did something bad? I would say to you, 'Remember, Paul, the Man Upstairs is watching you.' Do you remember that?"
>
> "Of course, I do."
>
> "I was wrong to tell you that," my mother said. "There is no one watching over us. Last week, when I knew I was dying, I saw the truth. Paul, I have prayed all my life. I believed in God, in the Church, I believed I had a soul that was immortal. But I have no soul. When we die, there is nothing. That's why I sent for you. I must speak to you—you of all my children. Paul, listen. You must give up the priesthood. When I think how I guided you towards it, when I think of the times I told you how happy it would make me if you became a priest. If it weren't for me you might be a doctor doing useful work like your father and Henri. You'd be married, you'd have children. You would not have wasted your life telling people something which isn't true. Please, Paul. You're forty-seven years old. It's not too late. Promise me. Leave the priesthood now."
>
> "Maman, you're wrong. You didn't make a priest. I was the one who decided it. And you will go to heaven. You will."

> "No." She lay back on the pillows, her eyes not on me but on the red votive lamp flickering between the painted plaster statues on the mantelpiece. "There is no other life," my mother said. (73)

Here the text opens itself to an implicit psychoanalytic, as much as socio-historical, critique of Catholicism, and indeed religion in general, from Feuerbach through Freud.[37]

Father Michel, a celibate, encounters the mother's room as he had in childhood. Given Freud's classic critique of religious belief as an infantile form of wish-fulfilment, in the scene which continues to haunt the priest his religious belief retains the traces of an immature stage in his physiological and psychological history which might be read as thwarted. A psychoanalytical hermeneutic at this stage of *No Other Life* might make much of the mother here as both object of Oedipal desire and, given her rejection of the heavenly Father, denial of comforting substitutions: Father Michel can neither possess the mother nor, following the mother's denial of any religious replacement for the father (God), possess any sexual, religious surrogate. The mother, giver of life, talking of death and absence of eschatological hope is an image which Father Michel retains for the rest of book, and when she is laid to rest his anger and disillusionment are obvious: "In a funeral parlour three streets away, my mother's body waited burial, her voice stilled, that voice which, in sixty-seven years of daily prayer, praised and honoured a God who, in her last hours, deprived her of that ultimate consolation of religion, belief in a life after death" (86). This skeptical refrain permeates Father Michel's perceptions of the violence and death which characterizes political and ecclesiastical life on Ganae. In short, the eschatological again continually provides the metatext for the historical intricacies of both ideology and theology.

When the Cardinal speaks critically to Father Michel in Rome of Jeannot's (Father Cantave's) homespun revolution, it is this tension between the temporal and the transcendent which reflects the Church's wider critique of liberation theology itself. This is by no means as clear-cut as popular presentations of the conservative papacy of John Paul II might indicate. The earliest opportunity John Paul II had to comment on liberation theology was at the Third General Conference of the Latin American Bishops—"Evangelization in Latin America's Present and Future"—at Puebla de los

Angeles, Mexico, 27 January–13 February 1979. Pope John Paul II made an opening address to the Conference on 28 January. There were some implicit criticisms of liberation theology (which is not identified explicitly), the Pope being especially critical of the use of the Marxist terminology of "alienation" in association with the "institutional" or "official" Church. The Pope identifies the Church's commitment to a progressive social teaching but one in which the dignity of the human person, not political ideology, forms the basis of a struggle for justice:

> The complete truth about human beings is the basis of the Church's social teaching, even as it is the basis for authentic liberation. In the light of this truth we see that human beings are not pawns of economic or political processes, that instead these are geared toward human beings and subject to them.[38]

In his "General Audience on Evangelization and Liberation" a month later (Rome, 21 February 1979) John Paul II identified liberation theology directly. While suggesting that the "theology of liberation is often connected (sometimes too exclusively) with Latin America," he argued that the "task of theology is to find its real significance in the different concrete historical and contemporary contexts."[39]

In simple terms, if an accessible definition of this movement is found in it pastoral and theological direction as "first and foremost, the engagement of the poor in their own personal, socio-economic and political liberation,"[40] in this, to its critics, liberation theology reflects a dangerous potential synthesis (expressed at its most extreme) of Marxist ideology and Catholic theology.[41] Thus:

> "Let me explain. I know that Father Cantave and others like him sincerely believe that by improving the lot of the poor they are doing God's work. They also believe that Rome is hostile to change, that here in the Vatican we do not understand the modern world. They are wrong. We understand the world, as it was, as it is, and as it may be become. We know that the Church is changing and will change. But if, by following the preachings of Father Cantave, the people of Ganae lose the Kingdom of God in the course of improving their lot here on earth, then you and I must remember

> our duty. Our duty, and Father Cantave's duty, is to remember always that, while it is a holy and wholesome thought to wish to improve the material lives of the poor, the primary task of the Church is, and always has been, to save their immortal souls. In this day and age, that task may not be uppermost in the minds of clerics such as Father Cantave. Sincere as he may be, he is still mortal, frail, capable of falling into heresy and leading his people away from the true faith." (96)

For its political and theological opponents, though, often one and the same, the decline of Marxist ideology in a post-Cold War world—a world into which literary-political *No Other Life* (published in 1993) can be placed—signalled the end too of liberation theology, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger speaking in 1996 claimed that, "The fall of the European governmental systems based on Marxism turned out to be the twilight of the gods for that theology."[42] Concomitantly, the Marxist critics of liberation theology have challenged it for not being Marxist enough.[43]

In *No Other Life*, then, the fictionalized history of Aristide is part of an extended consideration of Catholicism's late-twentieth-century theological history. Crucially, despite its inherent radicalism and genuinely global character, decrees from the Second Vatican Council were perceived by the Third World as emanating from a Eurocentric Church. Medellin and similar South American councils of bishops such as that at Puebla marked the perceived need to further translate the universal teaching of the Church (especially its social teaching) from a European to a Latin American context; and such a translation, often radical, has subsequently been undertaken by theologians globally into very specific cultural forms.[44] This theological translation itself extended through the Third World to often former colonial states at a time too of ideological ferment. The post-Vatican II period was thus marked by a generalized translation of a universal pastoral teaching into the practicalities of local church contexts across all continents where Catholicism had a presence. It was also a time when many states were seeking new political identities in a postcolonial and post-Cold War period.

Father Michel's account of the rise of Jeannot/Aristide is part of just such a history; yet his crisis has inevitable pastoral implications. He questions quite fundamentally his place in the ecclesiastical order in a world wrought by doubts as metaphysical as they are political. If Rome, despite the inherent

political radicalism of Vatican II, has circumvented this same ideological radicalism in practice, it is a matter made more difficult for Father Michel by a failing transcendental hope, that resurgent eschatological assurance of a politically conservative Church hierarchy in Rome. Returning to Ganae and observing Jeannot's physical but morally symbolic 'clean-up' of Ganae's streets, Father Michel is no longer certain where his own pastoral priorities lie:

> What was my duty? Was it, as the cardinal said, to save these people's immortal souls, or was it to help Jeannot relieve their mortal misery? And as I stood there ... seeing the happiness in the faces of those who crowded around the tables to eat the simple food prepared for them, into my mind came that quiet but deadly sentence. There is no other life. (101)

Jeannot himself personalizes the dangers implicit in the Church's involvement with the State. Symbolically, we see the priest-president develop a lifestyle which begins, if subtly, to emulate that of the former dictator: Jeannot lives in Doumergue's palace, is driven in Doumergue's car and, most ironically, sleeps in the same bed in which Doumergue breathed his last. It is Father Michel who begins to see Jeannot, though duly empowered by the democratic process, becoming himself an autocratic symbol: "This wasn't 'liberation theology.' This was faith built around one man" (101). Nevertheless, the many speeches made by Jeannot continue to reflect the concerns of a liberation-type theology which, contrary to its critics, continues to present eschatological as much as temporal hope: "Brothers and Sisters/ Do not be afraid/We will come into our paradise, I promise you" (115). As so often in the recent revolutionary history of Haiti during the presidency of Aristide, Jeannot's famous and recurrent "machete speech" calls the people to arms to overcome social and economic oppression.[45]

The line that "Priests see death more often than do other men" would certainly seem to be the case on Ganae as, subsequent to the "machete speech," the forces of the military's counter-revolution emerge and come to a meditative head as the book draws to its close. Standing by body of Mathieu, Jeannot's bodyguard, Michel reflects upon other sights of death and dying recently encountered: "I stood by his corpse, not in tears as Jeannot was, but sick, my mind filled with images of death: Mathieu, the corpse on

the bonfire at Damienville, the mutilated body of Colonel Maurras in college sacristy, the children hiding behind their dead parents in a Papanos ditch" (164). As if saturation by the experience of the constancy of death close at hand strengthens the doubts placed in his mind by his dying mother, Father Michel's crisis of belief permeates the rituals of death: "I had not said a prayer for [Mathieu's] soul. The familiar words came to mind. 'Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon him.' But they were remembered, not said. Perpetual light? Eternal rest? My mother's words came back" (172). In the novel's most bizarre portrayal of death, Michel and Jeannot, seeking sanctuary in the hills for fear of their own lives, enter the village of Lavallie and encounter a wake at which the corpse appears as the most important guest:

> The dead man was seated at a table dressed, as was the custom, in his best clothes, a clean white shirt, denim trousers, sandals. His old felt fedora we perched jauntily upon his head. On the table was a funerary wreath fashioned form white frangipani and red immortelles. A dish of plantains, beans and rice had been set before him and an unlit cigarette dropped from his lips. He was a peasant in is thirties, scarecrow thin, as were most of the others in the room. And then I saw the bullet hole in his temple. The blood had been cleaned away. (172)

The religious significance of Jeannot's appearance for those gathered is not lost in the scene as Moore describes it, and Moore again draws strong theological parallels from the occasion:

> And now, as in a biblical miracle, Jeannot had appeared at the dead man's wake. The villagers did not ask why he had come or ask how he knew of the death. The Messiah is not a man. He co-exists in the world of the flesh and the world of the spirit .... He was God's messenger. Because of this, the room was filled with a strange exaltation. These lives of poverty, of endless toil, of children's early deaths, of storms that washed away the meagre crops, of soldiers and bleus who beat and pillaged, were, in that room, on that day, transformed into the promise of a future life. Now, with the Messiah come among them, they believed anew. Paradise would be theirs. (173)

Jeannot's Christ-figure status here, as elsewhere, epitomizes the soteriological hopes present within theologies of liberation. Such theologies dramatically altered—and necessarily—traditional Christology, essentially characterizing Jesus as a revolutionary, a shift Christologically reminiscent of Boff's *Jesus Christ Liberator.*[46]

This characterization of Jeannot as a revolutionary brings a hitherto absent Christological perspective into Moore's portrayal of liberation theology, a representation which epitomizes the official critique of such Christology, as in John Paul II's opening address at Peubla de los Angeles, Mexico:

> In some cases people ... indulge in types of interpretation that are at variance with the church's faith .... people purport to depict Jesus as a political activist, as a fighter against Roman domination and the authorities, and even as someone involved in the class struggle. This conception of Jesus as a political figure, a revolutionary, as the subversive from Nazareth, does not tally with the Church's catechesis.[47]

The comparison with Boff's work makes the point effectively since Boff was himself silenced by the Vatican. If Boff's Christology stressed, in short, that Jesus could be interpreted as a revolutionary political figure, his divine involvement in human history an intervention against injustice and oppression, Moore's Father Cantave is a revolutionary figure too whose theology has shifted too far into ideological involvement, as (at least from a Vatican perspective) did Aristide's.[48]

Still, if Jeannot had not radically altered the lives of the people, it seems that their physical condition is of less significance than their mental attitude of devotion to Jeannot, the Christ-figure suddenly in their midst. At the Lavallie wake, Moore presents an empathetic view of the simple religious hope of Ganae's rural poor, especially their optimism about death in the midst of economic difficulties and political barbarity: "We were at the table with the dead man and offered precious cigarettes .... The wake resumed, but all was changed: life had vanquished death. The corpse, stiff and silent at the table, would rejoin us one day in another, truer world" (173–74).

It is with the undeniable physicality and the final mystery of human mortality that Moore leaves us at the end of *No Other Life.* This presents,

though, interesting parallels with the transformation of liberation theology in the 1990s and, arguably, an ironic ideological and theological, as well as narrative, circularity. Thus, if from its inception liberation theology was rooted in the expectations of social structural change—a Marxist critique of economics being as crucial as its neglect of Marx's critique of religion—these expectations failed, clearly, to materialize. Indeed, in addition to the failures to effect social structural, especially economic, change, the reversal of the incipient radicalism of liberation theology from a conservative papacy coincided, at least in South America, with a challenge to Catholic hegemony itself.

When "ten years since that day when Jeannot seemed to disappear from this earth" in a Ganae where there had been no further revolution but where "to the dismay of the elite and the army, an ungovernable rage and resentment consumes the daily lives of the poor," Father Michel recalls how one year after his disappearance a woman from Jeannot's village hands him the inscribed pocket watch which Father Michel had once given Jeannot as a present (209). He is led to Toumalie to meet Frederic, Jeannot's brother, who had been separated from Jeannot all those years ago when Father Michel had first entered the village. It is Frederic who takes Father Michel to the unmarked, mountainside grave of Jeannot who had died of a fever soon after his disappearance. At the end of the novel, Moore presents us with none of the fleeting consolation offered at the wake in Lavallie. At the conclusion of his personal history of Jeannot, Father Michel's final, theological, meditation on death presents a doubt-ridden context for both ideological and theological struggle:

> And then I was alone with Jeannot, alone for the last time. I looked at the ground, anonymous as the unmarked graves of peasants who had died a hundred years ago. Jeannot, his incantatory voice forever silent, Jeannot who had passed into legend. If only he were the Messiah, if only the gravestone could be rolled back. But I stood on this earth and he lay beneath it, his frail body returning, ashes to ashes, dust to dust.
>
> I knelt down by the unmarked grave but not to pray. I touched the muddied earth in a useless caress as though, somehow, he would know that I had come here. I wept but my tears could not help him. There is no other life. (215)

No Other Life presents a metaphysical ambivalence which arises from a perceived lack of rational or theological grounds for belief and, through its compensatory functions, seemingly upholds those economic, psychological, and sociological critiques of religion which form the philosophical foundations of modernity.

Seen in this context, liberation theology's appropriation of one such (Marxist) critique of religion is ironic, and provides at least theological grounds for the Catholic Church's latter-day theological suspicion concerning such appropriation. In contemporary theological history, it has provided the ecclesiastical justification (in the context of a conservative papacy) for the post-Vatican II reassertion of centralized authority, especially over the particular (cultural, economic, political) interpretation of the Church's universal social teaching and Church–State relations. It is a reasserted authority which is often resentfully regarded as the re-imposition of a universalizing European Church over non-European cultural diversity; and, of course, in postcolonial terms this has more than a degree of irony.

Yet *No Other Life* provides a wider existential context for these encounters. A narrative circularity—the novel begins and ends with a priest's reflections on life and death—is part of a sustained eschatological meditation. If *No Other Life* provides a physical limit for Jeannot as part of the textual fabric of Moore's story, the novel also provides wider intertextual reference points to the grandnarrative of which Jeannot and his Catholic narrator are both an integral part. Still, the grandnarratives of theological and ideological history seemingly lack here a fundamental teleology. Moore's appropriation of theology and ideology retains, then, a final and extreme ambivalence: through the naturalistic portrayal of the scene of Jeannot's burial (there is only the earth) and the implied 'silence of God' (as we last saw with Bem's assassination) Moore may be interpreted as making a fiction of all grandnarrative; or, like Wittgenstein said, creating a metaphysical space in which that of which we cannot speak, we (or at least the novelist) should remain silent.[49]

The Statement (1995)[50]

While eschatological themes—especially of death and final judgment—continue to permeate *The Statement*, this novel is Brian Moore's literary-

historical reflection on Catholic–Jewish relations, a matter which has a long pedigree in his fiction.[51] In this novel, Moore fictionalizes the story of the Nazi collaborator and war criminal Paul Touvier,[52] though his focus is less on Church–State relations during the Second World War[53] than on post-War theological developments.[54] Convicted of crimes against humanity in Vichy France during the Second World War and finally uncovered in a French monastery, Paul Touvier was only arrested in 1989 after decades on the run, having been sheltered by extremist elements within the Catholic Church. Moore explores the changing historical and theological face of Catholic–Jewish relations from the mid-to-late-twentieth century through one literary text, one of his most sensitive treatments of Catholic interfaith relations. Within the novel, Moore effectively integrates developments in post-Vatican II Catholic thinking as well as in social and political attitudes within France.

In terms of the portrayal of Catholicism, *The Statement* is particularly important for its focus upon a key theological issue for the post-Vatican II Church, that of Catholic–Jewish relations; and, more broadly, Catholic theological understanding of religious pluralism.[55] The narrative shifts between 1940s Vichy France and the 1980s, a timeframe which spans not only the major phase of Moore's own career as a novelist but also marks developments from pre- to post-Vatican II Roman Catholic thinking. Significantly, the period was characterized by a move away from the traditional "Teaching of Contempt" of Catholics towards Judaism to a more conciliatory stance.[56] The changes are most noted in four documents arising from the Second Vatican Council and the post-Conciliar period, these being:

> *Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, Nostra Aetate*, October 28, 1965, Ecumenical Council Vatican II;
>
> *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration, Nostra Aetate*, December 1 1974, Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews;
>
> *Notes on the Correct Way to present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church*, June 24 1985, Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews;

We Remember: a reflection on the shoah, 16 March, 1998, Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.[57]

The Statement, then, certainly mirrors certain theological developments; and, much to the fore here, Moore's focus on France shows how literary treatment of theological universals can be demonstrated by the particularities of encounter within a specific location.

The Statement opens with a strong evocation of France from the perspective of the anonymous "R." His quarry is Pierre Brossard, a wartime Nazi collaborator in Vichy France based on Paul Touvier, and the plot mirrors the patterns of post-War political (religious and secular) collusion which allowed Touvier to escape justice for over forty years. One early assumption in the novel is that the assassin is part of a Jewish conspiracy to track down and kill those who have escaped justice for their crimes against humanity; another assumption is that "It was a known fact that the Church was involved" (7). Brossard, however, manages to kill his potential assassin (as later he kills "T," his second would-be assassin). "R"'s death early on reveals both the identity of "R," one David Tattenbaum, a false Jewish-Canadian identity, and the nature of "The Statement," the paper to be pinned to the murdered Brossard:

> THE STATEMENT
> COMMITTEE FOR JUSTICE FOR THE
> JEWISH VICTIMS OF DOMBEY
>
> This man is Pierre Brossard, former Chief of the Second Section of the Marseille region of the milice, condemned to death in absentia by French courts, in 1944 and again in 1946, and further charged with a crime against humanity in the murder of fourteen Jews at Dombey, Alpes-Maritimes, June 15, 1944. After forty-four years of delays, legal prevarications, and the complicity of the Catholic Church in hiding Brossard from justice, the dead are now avenged. This case is closed. (2)

The latter "Statement" highlights Moore's treatment of anti-Semitism within the narrative while *The Statement*, the book itself, amplifies the unfolding historical context of ideological and theological grandnarrative

within post-War France and within the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Church.

Influenced by Graham Greene, Moore uses a sub-genre of writing which he has identified as the "metaphysical thriller."[58] In this instance, a complex series of factional interactions link conflicts of the novel's plot to wider conflict between and within competing grandnarratives. Simplistically, the major parties can be divided into two main groups. Firstly, there are the protectors of Brossard, significantly those high in French political office as well as reactionaries within the Church. Secondly, there are the pursuers of Brossard, notably these include representatives of French justice and a reformed Church hierarchy. Within this metaphysical thriller, which largely mirrors the Touvier incident except for Brossard's eventual assassination, protectors and pursuers highlight ideological and theological shifts in French political and Catholic ecclesiastical history.

The series of geographical moves, shifts in landscape and setting as Brossard moves around France in search of an ever-elusive security, also present different maps of ideological and religious debate. Associating monasticism with political and religious conservatism, Moore's reactionary forces within the Church are those which demonstrate independence from changes within the post-Vatican II Catholic Church: in Salon du Provence is Dom Vladimir Gorkakov of Abbaye de St. Cros; in Aix, Dom Andres Vergnes of the Prieuré de St. Christophe; in Cannes, Abbé Fessard; in Armijnon, Dom Henri Armijnon, of the Carmelite priory St. Michel des Monts at Villefranche, and finally in Nice, Dom Olivier Villedieu of the Prieuré de la Fraternité Sacerdotale de St Donat. In fear of either imminent capture or assassination, Brossard's passage from monastery to monastery provides Moore with the opportunity for the reader to hear clearly the voice of political right within the French Church and their reflections on Vichy French history.[59] Thus, for instance, the Abbot addresses Father Blaise, the Abbot's liberal "*père hospitalier*":

> "... under the Maréchal Pétain, France was given a chance to revoke the errors, the weakness and selfishness, of the Third Republic, that regime that caused us to lose the war to the Germans. Of course, it was a sad time. I'm denying it. Part of the country was occupied, but you must remember there was a large free zone, the zone of the Vichy Government, the

> Maréchal's government, which was giving us the hope of a new co-operation between our country and Germany. Under the Maréchal, we were led away from selfish materialism and those democratic parliaments that preached a false equality back to the Catholic values we were brought up in: the family, the nation, the Church. But when the Germans lost the war, all that was finished. Stalin's communist armies overran Europe. The enemies of religion came back in force." (73)

Establishing within his fiction an intertextual space which is both literary and theological, Moore explicitly integrates the historical context of Vatican II within the narrative moves of *The Statement.* Thus, Dom Olivier, the Prior General of the Fraternity of St. Donat, has chosen to follow Monsignor Lefebvre, "the former Archbishop of Dakar who believed that, with the abandonment of the Latin mass and the changes that followed Vatican II, Rome was no longer the true Church" (175). Active resistance to post-Conciliar liturgical change is thus portrayed as a mark of political extremism. Dom Olivier's pre-Vatican II liturgical conservatism is associated with the perniciousness of classical Christian anti-Semitism, the association of the Jews with evil personified in the form of the devil, as he explains to the man he had sheltered for so many years:

> Pierre, one of the reasons we have lost the true path is the Devil, more than at any other time in history, has managed to conceal his ways and works. The people have forgotten that the Evil One exists. And, alas, the Church, the Papal Church, has not seen fit to remind them of his existence. If, indeed, the Papal Church believes that the Devil still exists. I am not sure of that, as I am not sure of anything in connection with present-day Rome.... We know, and we have always known, that the Jews do not have the interests of France at heart and that they are still willing to sow dissension and feelings of guilt and blame, more than forty years after the German Occupation. I see that lust for vengeance as inspired by the Devil. (195)

Brossard concurs, reflecting with unrepentant anti-Semitism that the "Devil isn't someone with a cloven hoof and a forked tail," the "Devil is the Jews" (207). With Brossard's greatest public advocate, Monsignor le Moyne

(42), innocent of crimes but duped by a revisionist view of Holocaust history—the "numbers of the dead are exaggerated no doubt, but what matter?" (44)—Moore seemingly presents a damning picture of post-War Catholic involvement in perpetuating prejudicial attitudes toward Judaism. However, with his portrayal of Brossard's pursuers, such a simplistic picture is modified, if not fully overturned.

If Brossard's flight around the south of France charts a complex ideological and theological landscape, Brossard's protectors are only one face of this map of French political and Catholic ecclesiastical life. Thus, post-War political and post-Vatican II Church reform are shown as having radically altered the ideological and theological landscape of France. The literal and metaphorical territory which allowed Brossard to escape justice is shown to have been reduced exponentially. Massed against Brossard are those representative forces which would seek redress for the injustices of France's and the Church's wartime and post-War past. There are a number of such identifiable forces pursuant of Brossard, one of whom turns out to be a former protector.

One major change to France's theological map is the post-Vatican II Catholic Church itself. Thus, Archbishop Delavigne's commission, consisting of an independent group of secular university historians, attempts to provide evidence of ecclesiastical culpability (though not legal judgment). With openness towards the Vatican's "murky" record, including the acknowledgment of "the post-war Vatican passports issued to Nazis to help them escape to South America," Delavigne recognizes the diversity of post-Vatican II Catholicism with his comment the "Church is not monolithic, particularly in France" (66).[60] Representative of such progressive-conservative diversity, Brossard's protectors are indicative of the unreformed elements within the Church. Indeed, unreformed elements in the post-Vatican II Church provide the wider critique of the Church's past, one of indifference as well as active persecution. As one monk comments to a pro-Brossard supporter, the Church "forgives itself for its silence when thousands of Jews were sent to their deaths" (154). Response to recent publications from the Vatican on Catholic-Jewish relations would indicate that much ground still needs to be covered before full reconciliation, statements from the Vatican being described by critics as "a bridge too short."[61] Still, Delavigne's position does mark the major shift in Catholic interfaith relations since the Second

Vatican Council, from *Nostra Aetate* onwards.[62] Internal tensions within the grandnarrative of Catholic theology nevertheless remain reflected in Moore's fiction.

If the public face of Catholic–Jewish relations changed with pronouncements of the Second Vatican Council and the post-Conciliar Church, political change in post-War France is portrayed as lacking such a definitive break with the past. The new state *juge d'instruction* investigating the Brossard case, Madame Annemarie Livi, indeed highlights the long-standing divisions between police and army:

> "I've been told that it concerns the relations between the Commissariat of Police and the Vichy regime. It's a matter of record that the French police were pro-Pétain and collaborated with the German occupiers in deporting Jews to German concentration camps.... The gendarmerie, on the other hand, were sympathetic to the Resistance and to the de Gaulle forces fighting outside France. As a result the gendarmerie has a clean record in the matter of collaboration with the Germans. The Commissariat of Police does not." (36)

It is for this reason that, in the novel, the investigation of Brossard is transferred from the police to the army. Later, it is revealed that Church involvement must be seen in the wider context of continuing political support. Thus, setting the case of Brossard against other post-War trails such as that of Klaus Barbie (and Brossard himself a fictionalized Paul Touvier), the likely assassins of Brossard cannot be traced to "one of the well-known Nazi-hunters like the Klarsfelds or the Wiesenthal Centre" (123) and this provides the clue to culpability within the French political hierarchy. Moore hereby integrates the grandnarrative of competing political ideologies (as well as competing Catholic theologies) into his novel, providing a metatext for the analysis of post-War French political and ecclesiastical history.

Here we have Moore's denouement as a reflection of contemporary theological history. Given the resistance to this development during Vatican II, Moore's portrayal of apparently simplified opposition is not far from historical actuality. Thus, just as deliberations at the Second Vatican Council on Jewish–Christian relations were affected by feelings of bitterness and resentment from Arab Christians in the middle-east,[63] what *The Statement*

demonstrates is the interaction between not only competing (conservative/reformed) theologies but competing (again conservative/reformed) political ideologies. Colonel Roux, one of Livi's fellow investigators, reveals that "... other Frenchmen are similarly charged but have never been brought to trial. But if Brossard is caught and tried, their trial can't be put off any longer. So, to sum up Madame, I don't believe the Church alone had the power to help Brossard escape the police and the courts over a forty-year period" (67).

Significant here is Commissionaire Vionnet who had arranged the immediate post-War release of Brossard for information received, a means of covering up a "question about deportation orders signed by someone high up in the *préfecture* in Paris." Politically most sensitive, though, is the place of Maurice de Grandville:

> Now eighty years old, with a record of past action requiring judicial investigation, which, over the years, had accumulated thirty tomes of evidence, without his ever spending a night in prison, he had outlived the statute of limitations on his former deeds. Except one, the one that had shadowed his long career. In the years of the German Occupation, as Secretary General of the prefecture of the Gironde, he had facilitated his SS colleagues by organising a series of French deportation trains which sent sixteen hundred people, including two hundred and forty children, to their deaths in Nazi extermination camps. For this action there was no statute of limitations. The crime against humanity. (183)

It is de Grandville's money, channelled by Vionnet and Pochon, which has been supporting Brossard financially while certain monasteries have provided physical shelter. De Grandville, fearing Brossard's revelations on capture, thus arranges for the latter's assassination. Aware of public knowledge of Church complicity with Brossard and expecting no public surprise if a Jewish group is found to be responsible for killing Brossard, it is de Grandville, Vionnet and Pochon who are revealed as the hirers of the assassins and authors of the "statement" which would point, incorrectly, to Jewish involvement in the death of Brossard.

The complexities of this metaphysical thriller are greater for its transhistorical plot, and for the manner in which the grandnarratives of politics and religion merge within Brossard's much smaller story. With the

Commissioner's involvement in the repression of Algerian protest which led to independence in 1962, and through the character and background of the second failed assassin "T," Moore, highlighting the contentious issue of immigration in modern-day France, presents Catholic prejudice against and persecution of the Jews within the wider context of racial conflict and cultural intolerance. Here "T" looks at the photograph of the young Brossard and reflects on his earlier meeting with de Grandville in the context of his own immigrant family history:

> Now he's supposed to be seventy, he should be dead, he's part of history. The milice. Those days are old movies, that's all, Nazi uniforms, propeller bombers, Casablanca with Ingrid Bergman, and chez nous, Rommel in the desert with his tanks, and the Americans landing at Algiers. Papa was a little kid in the Arab quarter in Oran, he saw Rommel's tanks on the run, then the winners, Americans, French, British, parading through the streets, he loved that, he loved uniforms, Papa, he wanted to be a soldier, not the ones in France, not Vichy, not the ones this guy fought for, but de Gaulle's. Not that it mattered. No matter which French side you fight for, the French will fuck you, like they did Papa, who couldn't wait to grow up and join the French army, yes, in '55, signing on in Algiers, he was twenty years old, and they filled him full of lies, he was to be a Harkis, part of an elite commando, auxiliary troops, riding camels, encamped beside the French, Papa was in the top commando, the Georges, Muslims against French officers, fighting for Salan and the junta against the FLN, our own brothers. I wonder if that rich Jew officer tonight knew I'm the son of a Harkis. No, he wouldn't know that. I'm not dark, like Papa. I can always pass for French. (32–33)[64]

Elsewhere in the novel, similar themes are presented. As Bouchard—the winegrower, talking with Monsignor le Moyne, arch-advocate of Brossard—says, returning "obsessively to the subject of immigrant population," blaming the Muslim element in his son's school for the boy's involvement with drugs: "Le Pen is right .... Send them back where they came from. What do you think Father? Wouldn't you vote for Le Pen, if you were me?"(44–45).[65]

France, though, becomes a prison for Brossard as, trapped by memory, political changes in French society, and theological shifts in Church culture,

his demise becomes inevitable. Residual pre-Vatican II attitudes and post-Vatican II developments in Catholic thinking on Catholic–Jewish relations are thus mirrored within *The Statement* when his (still undiscovered) political protectors take direct responsibility for his assassination. In the last lines of the narrative, we are left with Pierre Brossard's final and unrepentant stream of consciousness which, at least in part, reflects too the collective conscience of extremist elements within the Catholic Church: "Pain consumed him but through it he struggled to say, at last, that prayer the Church had taught him, that true act of contrition for his crimes. But he could feel no contrition. He had never felt contrite for the acts of his life. And, now when he asked God's pardon, God chose to show him fourteen dead Jews" (218). If Brossard is finally unrepentant for both his crimes and his anti-Semitic attitudes, his death at the hands of his right-wing former political protectors marks a public separation of such ideological and theological extremes. Wartime collaboration between the Church and the Vichy government had been possible because of—albeit loosely shared and perhaps unsystematic—anti-Semitic attitudes, the classical "teaching of contempt" which historically marked Jewish–Catholic relations. If in post-War France anti-Semitic and more broadly racist ideology remains prominent through figures such as Le Pen and the French National Front, then post-Vatican II, it is an ideology which the Church can no longer support theologically.

The Magician's Wife (1997)

Moore's final novel confirms the importance of colonial geography in the representation of religious and ideological space. Landscape is central to the portrayal of belief in *The Magician's Wife* just as it has been in his other fictions, but here its explicitness is distinctive. Set in the mid-nineteenth century, the book is divided between two continents, a cross-cultural feature not unknown to his other novels, but unlike before, this book's two geographical settings are stated as titles, openly linking both history and geography; the first being "France, 1856" and the second, with Moore's first full literary journey into Africa, "Algeria, 1856."[66] *The Magician's Wife* portrays the historical roots of Catholic co-operation within the French colonization of North Africa but finally contextualizes both theology and imperialism within a postcolonial and post-Vatican II perspective.

A French magician, Henri Lambert, is enticed into the court of Napoleon III, and his skills as a conjuror are to be employed in the process of colonial subjugation in nineteenth-century Algeria. Here, in classic colonial fashion, Europe meets Africa, the contrasting territories highlighting cultural otherness as much as physical difference.[67] A waning, post-Enlightenment French Catholicism[68] oddly combined with pseudo-scientific conjuror's tricks of illusion meets a seemingly credulous, and essentially pre-scientific African Muslim "other." The historical context, despite a vastly different physical and ideological landscape, is reminiscent of *Black Robe.* Moore has again looked to the past for a physical place to experiment with the ambiguities of contrasting and conflicting belief systems—in *Black Robe* between the French Jesuits and the First Nations, and in *The Magician's Wife* between the modern scientific rationality (and residual Catholicism) of the French and the pre-modern faith of Islamic Algeria.[69]

On the French side, then, there is a clear but ambiguous alliance between religion and politics in a post-Enlightenment France.[70] The relationship between the Church and the powers of the Napoleonic State is thus consistently uneasy, with the narrative highlighting the continued centrality of Catholic religious orthodoxy, and thus continued papal influence, in the presence of the sectarian and religious other within nineteenth-century French society: "Freemasons, like Jews, were frequently cited as the enemies of religion and although Napoleon III was known to be more liberal than his predecessors the Church had lost none of its powers to punish transgressors" (67). At Mass, though, for instance at Compiègne, the Emperor is not present; and the Empress with a modern self-reflection critically surveys this central Christian sacrament of the eucharist within a context of increasing secularization:

> Emmeline knelt at her pew and put her head down as if in prayer. But she did not pray. After a few moments she looked at the congregation and saw that, as so often at Mass, she was not alone in this absence of prayer. The ladies in their lace veils were covertly studying their neighbours. The gentlemen perused their missal like inattentive students, and everyone from time to time looked up at the alcove where the Empress knelt, her hands entwined in her rosary, her eyes fixed on the altar. Emmeline glanced sideways at her husband and saw that, as always in church, he read his

> missal carefully, from time to time studying the movements of the priest on the altar as though by paying close attention he might one day solve the mystery of changing bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. What did he think of miracles; did he, who had said that all such things were illusions, include in his condemnation the mystery and miracle of the Mass? (67)

The pre-eminence of the secular forces over and above those of the Church does not mean, though, that the Third Republic is averse to using religion as a means of political influence. Aside from the social conformity enforced amidst a largely secular gathering at Compiègne, it is Napoleon's representative Deniau, Head of the Bureau de Arabe, who sees the merits of employing Lambert's magical powers to convince the Arabs of the superior spiritual authority of French "Christians" over Muslim religious leaders.

There is no little irony here, of course, in that Lambert represents from the outset of the novel a man who has aspiration to all the scientific rationality that the Enlightenment can afford. The preoccupation with clocks (there are forty of them in Henri Lambert's Tours residence) is largely symptomatic of this, as is the predominance of mechanical gadgetry in the household. The devices which alert the head of the household to intruders or more benign visitors suggests more significantly a secular struggle for omniscience, a clear analogy to powers of a scientific modernity to replace a pre-modern religiosity.

Ironic too is Lambert's quest for personal and social status, as is the embarrassment of the magician's wife, who fears that Lambert is simply a magician, a conjuror, a performer of tricks. At home in France, he may entertain theatres with his skills, but educated audiences will always assess his performance as a demonstration of trickery and pretence, however skilful. That less educated or sophisticated audiences, especially in the French countryside, identify Lambert's skills with the supernatural ("local tradesmen who think us in league with the devil") (29), and most definitely with a pre-modern, indeed often pre-Christian, pagan worldview, only illustrates his imprecise and indeterminate status as representative of either the pre-modern or the modern. Lambert does constantly attempt to be more than a magician, to raise both his social and scientific status. This is indicated in his willingness to help the Emperor and France in ways which would, and which in the end

do, make him more than an entertainer, it being his wife's major social fear that he be regarded as only that; and it is part of Lambert's argument to convince her to attend the royal gathering at Compiègne to which she feels she will be excluded: "you'll be treated as the wife of an inventor, which is just as high a calling as a sculptor or writer or any other intellectual" (8). From the outset, though, Lambert remains on an epistemological (as well as socially indeterminate) middle ground between pre-modern magic religiosity and the scientific modernity of the Enlightenment, as he himself realizes: "He no longer thought of himself as a magician. Now he was an inventor, a scientist. But would a real scientist spend his days making mechanical marionettes?" (4).

Still, it is Colonel Deniau, the key instigator in using Lambert for political ends, who plays upon the potential perceptions of Lambert's "magical" skills as spiritual authority amongst the Arab population, a rhetoric which Lambert himself takes to heart: "Fear mixed with awe and reverence for the unknown, for something we do not understand. That's at the heart of all magic ... But in Africa ... the Arabs will never have seen illusion such as I can devise. Believe me, to them I will be the most holy of marabouts" (76). That electricity is used as part of the demonstrations to impress and frighten the "unscientific" Arabs indicates a colonial use of modernity under the guise of a superstitious, pre-modern religiosity, Lambert being described "a great Christian sorcerer" (112). As Deniau claims: "What we need to convince the Arabs is something even more spectacular, something which will both frighten and amaze them ... supernatural powers" (58).

In contrast to an expanding but secularizing French Empire, Algeria represents a reverse demarcation between religious (marabout) and secular (sheik) authority. It is the marabouts' capacity to declare jihad against the French which is central to Deniau's colonial manipulations, as he explains to Lambert: "Muslim countries are very different from ours. Their marabouts or saints have a political and spiritual influence which is greater than the power of any ruler.... An unfortunate situation for the sheiks" (58). However, aside from French recognition of the marabouts' political influence through religious authority, Deniau sees nationalism epitomizing the true faith of imperialism, a substitute for French Catholic identity in post-Enlightenment times ("Today's true devotion was reserved for the flag"[71]): "I have great plans for Algeria. I see it as the meeting ground between East and West and

the key to our empire's economic expansion" (58). Already a declining influence in post-Enlightenment France, Catholicism retains a nominal role in Napoleon III's colonial advancement; and attempts to convince the Arabs of the spiritual superiority of "Christianity" over Islam with no more than Lambert's electrical trickery does indicate the role religion played in the imperial process. Conversely, from the Algerian side, religion later plays a major part in the resistance of imperialism and Enlightenment-inspired secular modernity.[72] It is a perverse "theology of imperialism" which thus provokes Lambert to admit: "I am a sorcerer. I am Christian. I am French. God, whom you call Allah, protects me. As he will protect my country from any enemy who dares to strike a blow against France" (59).

Such comment is shared by Deniau in using the false miracle of science for imperial ends under the guise of a duplicitous religiosity, "... we may convince them that Islam is not alone in possessing miraculous powers ... we will present him as a greater marabout than Bou-Aziz and convince them that God is not on their side but ours" (61). It is, however, the magician's wife (her designation a sign of derivative status and social marginality[73]) who reveals the trickery behind the surface "spiritual" power of her husband's magic to the leading marabout, Bou-Aziz, thereby exposing the bankruptcy of this avowed complicity between between theology and imperialism. Moore had earlier set a number of possible manifestations of compromise for Emmeline: first with a lecherous Napoleon III at Compiègne and second through an ironic juxtaposition of female and eastern licentiousness in a potential sexual encounter between Emmeline and Deniau where "she sensed that in a strange exotic country she would face a new dilemma ... in that momentary covert closing of an eye, was proposed the ultimate betrayal" (61).

It is not exploited sexual power but combined political and spiritual authority, though, which the narrative provides Emmeline and, later, Bou-Aziz. Thus in the novel's key encounter between the magician's wife and Bou-Aziz, two figures on the imperial margins, Moore focuses on "otherness," giving voice and finally power to the disempowered: the female "other," within the physical bounds of imperial France but beyond influence there now given the narrative opportunity to subvert Empire; the Islamic "other," geographically "external" to North Africa but open to imminent subjugation and territorial incorporation. Bou-Aziz finally makes no use of the insight provided by Emmeline and in accepting the will of Allah allows for the

French conquest to be completed. Here is presented Islam's weakness and strength: in accepting the will of Allah and not exposing Lambert, Algeria receives but finally resists French colonialism. This strength is recognized by the magician's wife, herself "other," by virtue of being a woman: "Their faith was not more spiritual than Christianity, but it was stronger, frightening in its intensity, with a certitude Christianity no longer possessed" (198).

After all, on the way to Compiègne, it is acknowledged that Emmeline was "Catholic but no longer devout" (68). Indeed, Lambert "had forgotten to include prayer books in their luggage," this symptomatic of the more explicit revelation later that "religious observance became an obligation, not an act of worship," that "in large measure, she had lost her faith" (195). By contrast, while in Algeria, close to the Sahara (the "spiritual landscape" acknowledged even by Deniau, 127) we have the closest contrast between the formal but insincere, residual religiosity of post-Enlightenment France and a world where spirituality was a reality integral to all aspects of Algerian life: "Never in France, in cathedral, convent or cloister, had she felt the intensity of belief everywhere present in the towns, villages, farms and deserts of this land. It was a force at once terrifying and inspiring, a faith with no resemblance to the Christian belief in Mass and sacraments, hellfire and damnation, sin and redemption, penance and forgiveness" (196).

In a world where "Everything comes from God" and where the marabout are seemingly defined by "baraka – holiness" Emmeline's newfound spiritual assuredness is replaced by despair when her identity is displaced from both European home and the religious, cultural, and geographical "other": "As of this moment she no longer felt she belonged in the world of Tours, Paris and Compiègne. And yet she must return to it. There was no other choice. For this world of total fervour, of blind resignation, was one she neither could, nor would, wish to enter" (195–96). It is this distinct religious, cultural, and political identity which neither French imperialism nor the ambiguously complicit Catholicism can eliminate in the process of colonization, the trace of the subjugated other nowhere more apparent than in the mosques converted for other uses. In the following passage, this relationship between imperialism and Catholicism is most clearly signalled as Archbishop François du Chatel says High Mass in celebration of victory in the South:

> In this former mosque, columns fifty feet high supported the cupola which was lit from above by stained glass windows. The altar was on the north side, decorated by a painting of the Virgin which had been presented to the cathedral by the Pope. Yet above this painting in prominent relief was a series of ornate, interlaced sentences from the Koran which had not been erased despite the fact that they proclaimed in Arabic that there is only one God and Muhammad is his prophet. (107–8)

The sign of Islam's theological simplicity remains in the trace of the Shahadah and the theological impurity of Catholicism is revealed; indeed, just as the expectations of Lambert being recognized as a Christian spiritual force by the imperialist French, he becomes perceived by Algerian Muslims as its evil antithesis, an "infidel sorcerer," "Chitan/Satan" (115).

Of course, Moore risks an oversimplified representation of Catholicism here—particularly through Lambert—as a tradition entirely in collusion with imperialism. There is much in the narrative by which both Catholicism and Islam might share sympathies in a nineteenth-century context: both would reject Lambert's sorcery *per se*, and certainly its pretence to supernatural origin and efficacy. More widely, as we have seen, Catholicism in the nineteenth century was itself as embattled politically as it was theologically: politically the loss of the papal states in Italy, for instance, coincided historically with manifold challenges to theology presented not only by enlightenment rationalism but the rise of science and industrialization. We have already outlined the anti-modernist response of the Church from Vatican I in the mid-nineteenth century through to the latter half of the twentieth century; and Moore's later novels such as *The Colour of Blood* and *The Statement* indirectly illustrate how in the twentieth century, Catholicism has continued both to accommodate with and to struggle against such modern manifestations of imperialism as communist ideological forces and Nazism and fascism. Lambert's characterization (and indeed Emmeline's perception of Islam's spiritual purity in the desert landscape) risks a simple reversal of the (still-current) traditional Western misrepresentation of Islam, that is, a portrayal of a "good" Islam and a "bad" Western Christian imperialism.

As we have seen, though, Lambert has been used for imperialist political ends under the guise of a pseudo-Catholic religiosity to convince Muslim Arabs of the superiority of Christianity not only spiritually but politically.

Moore has rightly highlighted here the key cultural difference between a separation of Church and State in nineteenth-century France and the integration of religious and secular power in nineteenth-century Islamic Algeria. in post-Independence Algeria, the struggle between the secular state and those who would wish for a return to this historical theocracy remains, but Moore seems more overtly concerned with the dangers of religion as it becomes embroiled in the mechanisms of State power. We saw this in the tension presented between Church and State in *The Colour of Blood, No Other Life,* and *The Statement.* In Moore's final novel, Lambert's lack of humanity is seen most profoundly not in his single-minded pursuit of political gain (in the widest sense, personal and national) but in the neglect of his servant, Jules Guillaumin, as the latter dies a lonely death from cholera. It is a death made more painful by Lambert's failure to visit and a lack of humanity heightened further by Lambert's considered indifference when Guillaumin finally dies. Just so, Catholicism finally retains its spirituality authority—as it has lost its meaning for those embroiled in the corrupting privileges of empire, court and privilege—as the Jesuit priest ministers the last rites to Jules Guillaumin in his dying days (165–73). Once again, of course, we see a personal eschatological encounter providing (here on the margins) a literary, metaphysical contextualization of human history.[74]

In *The Magician's Wife,* with an authorial foresight on history, flag and faith, nationalism and religion, are nevertheless seen as the twin forces which eventually win Algeria's independence. Moore's italicized concluding sentences to *The Magician's Wife* thereby contextualize the novel in events which give credence to an historical, metafictional, and postcolonial reading of his work:

> *The following year, in the summer of 1857, French armies under the command of Maréchal Randon and General MacMahon subdued the tribes of Kabylia, thus completing the conquest of Algeria by France.*
>
> *In the summer of 1962, Algeria officially declared its independence, ending the French presence in that country.* (215)

Coincidental perhaps, but the year of Algerian independence, 1962, is also that of the opening of the Second Vatican Council. It might be argued

that Moore's novel attempts explicitly to link a new post-Vatican II theological thinking with a postcolonial perspective. Interpreting the relationship with Islam as "people of the Book," the Second Vatican Council provided a radical re-identification with Islam in a relationship as historical as it is textual – a universal soteriology accepting difference and celebrating the other.[75] Moore presents the history of Catholicism as complicit in French colonialism but, taking the wider post-Vatican II and postcolonial perspectives, it is a Catholicism implicitly rehabilitated by a new allegiance with the oppressed and the marginalized.[76]

The Magician's Wife presents two distinct landscapes and cultures in one historical encounter. Focusing on a specific year in the colonial histories of France and Algeria, Moore's final novel presents the events of 1856 as part of a wider, subsequent history, to which novelist and reader have privileged access. As in *Black Robe*, issues of colonization relate both the religious and secular, and this relationship between theology and imperialism certainly adds too to the complexities of the encounter in *The Magician's Wife*. Here Moore portrays the often anti-religious spirit of Enlightenment rationalism that was to provide a frequently aggressive (economic, political, scientific) process of a modernizing hegemony. With colonialism – cultural and territorial imperialism – being the most militant expression of such European hubris, religious traditions have sought both *rapprochement* with and resistance to such modernity. Moore's later novels clearly portray the risks inherent in Catholicism's attempts at either. *The Magician's Wife* provides a literary view of the historical antecedents of such accommodation and confrontation. Moore's final novel provides too a view of how both the theologically universal and the culturally particular will come increasingly to the fore in a postcolonial and post-Vatican II era.