RICE UNIVERSITY

CIRCULAR STRUCTURE IN THE NOVELS OF GEORGE MOORE

by

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is a study of the novels of George Moore's final "canon." It covers A Modern Lover (although this novel does not remain in the final "canon," it is Moore's first and as such it rates study), A Mummer's Wife, Muslin, Esther Waters, The Lake, Héloïse and Abelard, and Aphrodite in Aulis. A few of Moore's short stories are considered, but only in passing.

The thesis attempts to show that Moore's novels all have structures of one of the following three types, all modifications of the basic "circular structure."

a) The protagonist of the novel ends where he began.

b) The protagonist of the novel ends at a clearly defined point opposite of that where he began.

c) The protagonist ends as either a or b and, moreover, minor characters end either where they began or at opposite points.

The final chapter of the thesis attempts to show that Moore's interest in story-telling and in "eternal recurrence" justify the interpretations of the novels that are given. The thesis ends with a summary and conclusion, followed by an Appendix on Evelyn Innes and Sister Teresa.
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Centuries hence, a million centuries hence,
You will dream again the dream of life
In a world more perfect and a form more fair.

George Moore, "Ode to a Beggar Girl"

There is too much George Moore in it. Is there? Then be thankful when I chose a George to write about it was not George Bernard Shaw; that I gave you some one you can understand and be superior about, and did not ask you to seat yourselves on a volcano and play with forked lightning.

Susan L. Mitchell in the preface to Aids to the Immortality of Certain Persons in Ireland
INTRODUCTION

If paperback books can serve for a moment as an index of popularity, the necessary conclusion must be that, as far as the public is concerned, George Moore wrote only one novel that is still, barely thirty years after his death, worth the reader's consideration. Esther Waters, that "most English of English novels," as Moore called it, is the only work of his which is readily available. The reader of A Mummer's Wife, The Lake, Héloïse and Abélard, and The Brook Kerith is amazed to think that not only the paperback industry but the general public has forgotten the work of a sometimes surprisingly good writer who, in his own way, contributed largely to the freedom of the English novel.

Too often, even in serious criticism, Moore is dismissed as "the man of wax" who changed his ideas as he changed his clothes; or who "conducted his education in public" as Oscar Wilde charged; or who, after introducing the naturalistic novel into England, wandered off into Irish folk-tales and historical novels.

Such dismissals render a complex writer into deceptively simple terms. Sonja Nejdefor-Frisk's acceptable, but not exciting or particularly enlightening book, has classified at least the early Moore as a naturalist.¹ Her book defines naturalism as the use of such and such techniques; Moore uses
those, and therefore Moore is a naturalist. This conclusion is true as far as it goes, and it is even further true that Moore's later novels are, almost strangely, different from his first; but as yet there has been no attempt to show the consistencies, if there be any, in George Moore's artistic point of view. It is partially true to say that Moore accepted and then rejected influence after influence, but there is the other side of the coin; Moore was, at least in the one aspect of his art to be considered here, consistent throughout his life.

Moore was, as this paper will try to show, always from first to last concerned with story-telling. The one aspect of his story-telling that will be considered is the structure, that is, the general direction of the movement and the action of the story. Structure may be, for the present purpose, considered as that one next step beyond plot. A discussion of plot, however, must account for every incident in the work, whereas a discussion of structure (the generalization of plot) accounts for the general movement of the whole narrative without necessarily explaining, as specifically as a consideration of plot, each individual incident. A study of the structure of Moore's novels is necessary, both for a better understanding of those novels and for correction of the statement that Moore was too changeable in his approach to literature and his methods of writing.

Any study of Moore is going to be governed by the avail-
Moore did three things which make it almost impossible for the critic to master his work completely. He constantly revised; he published, for the most part, in limited editions; and he rejected previous works from the final "canon." There has been only one even partially complete study of Moore's revisions, and that considers only *The Lake*, *The Wild Goose*, and *Esther Waters*. The difficulty of finding texts, because Moore published in limited editions, can be seen at a quick glance through the book catalogues. Finally, it may be a moot point whether an author's selection of a "canon" should be respected; but in Moore's case it becomes almost necessary to respect his selection since other, earlier, texts are seldom available. All these difficulties do not preclude a study of Moore, if the final "canon" of his works is used, for there we arrive at Moore's, as it were, final artistic statement. And further, Moore's revisions do not seem to have been extensive enough to suggest a change in basic structure.

Moore's final choice of a "canon" is printed as the Uniform edition of his works and is relatively easy to find. It does represent the final choice of the author, and the four most important books of his early work are included, so that the Uniform edition does cover Moore's whole life. A study of the novels included in the Uniform edition, if they prove consistent in structure, will certainly be enough to demonstrate that Moore had a constant opinion concerning the structural aspect of story-telling.
There was always a certain delicacy about George and he knew how to be a gentleman when he wanted to. He was always telling stories about himself and women. In every story there was a room full of mirrors and chandeliers, and the story usually ended with some woman throwing a lamp at George and driving him out of the house.¹

CHAPTER I

Part I.

George Moore was born, in County Mayo, Ireland, one hundred and ten years ago. This date would seem to place him well within the confines of the last century, but Moore was a sturdy old man who spanned eighty of those hundred and ten years before he died—barely a month before his eighty-first birthday, in January, 1933.² Such longevity, while in itself always remarkable, is doubly so in Moore’s case. For here is a man who claimed to have been "ashamed of nothing but to be ashamed." There are always records of profligates, but seldom has there been one so open about his profligacy as George Moore. Susan Mitchell says with her characteristic knife-sharp humor:

Mr. Moore took off his clothes that day when he was a child, in order to shock his nurse, and he has never put them on since. He still prances, naked, in shameless enjoyment, before a prudish world that has never learned to look back on its unclothed Eden.
days with any real pleasure. When Adam real-
ized that he was naked he hid himself—Mr. 
Moore knows perfectly well that he is naked, 
and he has not the least intention of hiding 
himself.  

If we take Moore’s word as objective truth; if we accept the 
python that feeds while Moore plays the piano in a red-
papered and draped Paris flat, or the very humorous seduc-
tion in "Lovers of Orelay," when Moore forgets his pajamas 
and is forced to settle for, and buy, a nightshirt; or if 
we believe in the generally unsettled, and quite often wild, 
life which Moore tells us he led in Paris, Dublin, and London— 
we are forced to believe that his long life was nothing less 
than a medical phenomenon. It was a life from which he man-
aged to draw five autobiographical books Confessions of a 
Young Man, (1888); Memoirs of My Dead Life, (1906); Ave, (1911); 
Salve, (1912); and Vale, (1914) which remain in the final 
canon, and he was working on a sixth when he died. This was 
truly a remarkable man.

On the other hand, the most common reaction is to dis-
miss Moore as, if not an outright liar, at least as a man with 
a too keen dramatic sense where his own life was concerned. 
Again Susan Mitchell puts it better than anyone else:

If Mr. Moore has a weakness for suggesting 
that the women about whom he writes might, 
could, would or should have been in love with 
himself, we must remember what was once said 
of him by the wittiest woman in Dublin: Some 
men kiss and tell; Mr. Moore tells but does 
not kiss.
From the tone of this statement and the rest of her preface, it seems Miss Mitchell cannot be quoting anyone but herself. She takes the extreme position: she does not believe any of it.

We shall probably never know just how much of what Moore wrote of himself actually happened and how much was the novelist's bending of events to suit an artistic purpose present even in his autobiographies. But there does seem to be a certain amount of subjective or artistic truth to the works. As Joseph Hone says of three of the books:

> In *Hall and Farewell* he put the events where they "composed" best, but nowhere in it did he invent out of nothing.

Moore's veracity is not of any real importance to this paper since the passages we quote from the autobiographies are his comments on writing, his own or another's; and they may be accepted at face value and without concern as to whether he said them to a certain company at a certain time. There is the possibility and even the probability that Moore changed

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> There was some hope in this regard when Moore's *Letters to Lady Cunard* were still in that lady's hands. Moore had instructed C. Morgan, when Morgan was to be the official biographer, that these letters were most necessary. See the introduction to Morgan's *Epitaph on George Moore* (New York, 1935) and also the introduction of Rupert Hart-Davis's final publication of the letters (London, 1957). The letters are woefully incomplete and shed little, if any, light on the truth of the autobiographies.
his position on a number of subjects, but we have tried to supply enough quotations from enough different periods of his life to prove that his position was constant on the matter at hand. Moore's "composition" of his autobiographies is actually an additional proof of his interest in storytelling.

So then, Moore lived a long life and, perhaps, a merry one. This circumstance raises two problems which relate directly to the existing criticism of Moore and his work. First, the long life. Moore died in 1933, just short of thirty years ago. Thus, any number of critics can claim to have known him when he was still alive and writing. This claim has both its advantages and its disadvantages; we know a great deal about Moore, the man, but we have very little criticism of his work that is not somehow directly influenced by Moore's personality and life. Also, Moore wrote right up to his death. Aphrodite in Aulis was first published in 1930 and revised for the Uniform edition as late as 1931. Moore was revising, writing prefaces for the Uniform editions, and working on A Communication to My Friends when he died. It is impossible to arrive at a complete evaluation of a novelist's work if that novelist continues to produce every year or so a novel which renders the criticism at least incomplete, if

*For example, his acceptance and final rejection of Zola. Evidence of his changing views may be found in any number of places, but most easily in Hone's Life or in Moore's own Confessions of a Young Man.
it does not suddenly rob it of its point. This is the first problem in Moore criticism; to put it bluntly, he simply has not been dead long enough for criticism to achieve proper objectivity.

The second problem, closely interwoven but still distinct from the first, is Moore's life and what he claims to have done during the eighty years and some months he was being "unashamed." There are so many anecdotes about Moore, so many very funny stories, and a few shocking incidents; there is so much of this sort of thing that criticism tends to become a collection of anecdotes about the character that Moore played rather than an objective consideration of his work. Moore himself is as much responsible for this state of affairs as anyone. It is Moore's own love of the anecdote which breeds anecdotal criticism about him; he was always telling stories on himself. And let there be no mistake about it, Moore loved it this way. Moore is speaking:

Some people affect of be shocked at the introduction of such anecdotes into a serious criticism of literature. Fudge, my dear Mr. Chew, fudge!

Moore not only interjected anecdotes into his criticism, but he went all the way to the opposite extreme and, more often than not, put passages of criticism into his novels. It is only within the last ten years or so that criticism of Moore has begun to free itself from the personality, the continued production, and the anecdotes of the man.
Part II

It would not be true to say that criticism has, until this moment and this paper, completely missed the way in which Moore told a story. Some of the early critics, especially those who considered Moore pornographic, were by our own standards pretty far off base, but criticism has touched upon, without having developed, the points made in the last two chapters of this paper. The present section will present, with representative quotations, the trends in the criticism of Moore—a presentation that may serve as both a demonstration and an introduction: a demonstration that criticism has not handled carefully and fully the matter of Moore's storytelling, and an introduction to those points that deserve to be treated more fully. There is no complete development of these points anywhere else, but at most only a paragraph here and there.

In Part I of this chapter it was said that Moore was neglected for two reasons: he is recent and he is profligate, and therefore it is easier to discuss the man rather than his work. There is another reason, which W. C. Frierson states as well as anyone:

"There seems little point to quoting the reviews which panned Moore's early novels and, in some cases, denounced him as immoral. For these reviews, see Hone's Life; and for Moore's struggles with the two circulating libraries who refused to buy his books see his own Confessions of a Young Man and A Communication to My Friends. Many nineteenth century novels were published in three volumes, and only the circulating libraries could buy in sufficient quantities to pay for the cost of the printing."
... there are many ... reasons why Moore has been omitted from critical discussions, not the least of which is the difficulty of placing him satisfactorily. To speak of him with authority one must read a vast quantity of poor and sloppy fiction and disentangle from it what is undeniably first-rate.10

Friserson is correct. The sheer amount of material by Moore is enough to scare most critics. It is only, as stated in the introduction, by cutting down this mountain of writings and revisions that anything at all may be attempted. Thus, again, this paper is necessarily limited to the final canon.

As in the case of any author, critical comments about Moore can be broken down into two groups: those by critics who do not like him and those by critics who do. Since the negative side of an argument is usually the easier, we may begin there.

Of all Moore's adverse critics, Katherine Mansfield is surely the most talented and expressive, if not the most definite:

How difficult it is to explain how so distinguished a figure [Moore] in modern letters comes to be forgotten! And even when we call him to memory do we not see him dim, pale, shadowy, vanishing round this corner, disappearing behind that door? ... This, too, in spite of his detachment and candour, taking into account the delighted re-tracing, retracing himself down ... for which he is so famous. We have no other writer who is so fond of talking of his art. So endless in his patience, so sustained in his enthusiasm ... and yet ... while we are engaged in reading
Mr. George Moore's novels he is "there," but once they are put back on the shelves he has . . . vanished until he is heard of again.  

Miss Mansfield's complaint, as I understand it, is that Moore's novels lack life enough to be remembered. She is not so scholarly as perhaps she might be, but her comment is a common one. There is more than some justice to it. As Frierson says above and Miss Mansfield seconds, one has to read a great deal of dull, repetitious, pointless, and lifeless writing to draw one gem (for example, the excellent handling of Kate Ede's downfall into drunkenness and finally into prostitution in *A Summer's Wife*) of Moore's realism at its best, of the writing that he can do when he is at his best.

There are other examples of this distaste for Moore, but, in order to concentrate on the matter at hand and to introduce the question of story-telling, let us move closer to the middle of the road. H. V. Routh, for example, says: "His novels were written to convey a sense within the sense; a tacit revelation of the author's personality, while the thin pageant of the story unrolled itself." This statement is closer to the point; Routh at least talks about "the story" in Moore's work, calling it a "thin pageant" although he later qualifies this judgment by saying of Moore that "he claimed no more for his novels than a new art of telling an old story." Now the criticism has moved to the problem, Moore as story-teller. Though Moore says over and over again
that he is only a story-teller, this comment has been ignored by most critics.

When criticism does take some notice of Moore's claims that he was a story-teller, it is done in some vague way as, for example, "There is no unity of place, tone, or ideas in the novels of George Moore. Their only unity lies in their excellence, for in their various ways they are all the work of a master story-teller. Excellent, but too vague, and it only touches on the problem. The question still remains, where and in what exactly does Moore's excellence as a story-teller exist?

Desmond MacCarthy, a close friend of Moore's, calls him "a born story-teller" and defines this to mean a master of reminiscence, one who can make the past seem as real as the present. He is closer to the subject than the previously mentioned critics, but he has not covered all the field, even of the autobiographies, by any means, and he does not explain the novels.

Joseph Warren Beach, writing a year before Moore's death, really came to grips with the problem when he introduced his concept of the "well-made novel." The reference here is, of course, to the "well-made play" although Beach

"Several examples of this self-judgment will be given in Chapter III.

"MacCarthy is a personality in one of Moore's "conversations" in Conversations in Ebury Street."
is careful to say that he does not want to convey the same meanings. The term "well-made play" often has connotations which imply that the "well-made play" is well-constructed and nothing more. Beach means rather that a novel also, and most particularly novels from 1850 to the First World War, may show signs of being, as a type, well-constructed. Beach does not, however, deal with Moore directly and his remarks on the "well-made novel" are too general to be of much help to us.

A question will come up and should be answered at this point. If Moore was, as a novelist, interested in construction, in structure, in plot, or in that shady area where all these terms come together, what was the source of his interest? Though this study is concerned with the first part of that question, the part about his indebtedness cannot be dismissed without brief comment.

There are some hints of an answer to be found in criticism as well as in Moore's own comment. Arthur Symons, in a contemporary review, called Moore "A man who respects his art, who is devoted to literature, and who has a French eye for form..." Symons attributes the "sense of form" to Moore's years in Paris. On the other hand, neither W. D. Ferguson nor G. P. Collet, both of whom have done full-length studies of the influences of France on Moore, mention the question. This lack of notice, of course, argues equally well that the source is not French or that the critics did
not see the problem at all. As for the influence of Huysmans, a hero for Moore after Moore had rejected Zola, these two quotations cover the field:

The last thing Huysmans ever dreamed of doing was to tell a story, whereas almost all of Mr. Moore's books are models of construction in narrative. They have a beginning, a middle, an end, and when he is at his best the movement of the tale he is telling is rapid, strong, and unceasing.20

Or from another critic:

Moore cannot forget his English heritage of sentimentality and melodrama; he must finish his story on a traditional note, but Huysmans freed A Rebours from all hampering and distracting intrigue, and wisely did not concern himself with plot or situation.21

It would seem that all hands are agreed that the source of Moore's concern with story-telling is not Huysmans. There is no one who traces the source directly; some say French, some English, but no one has ventured to pinpoint it exactly. I would suggest, although I cannot prove it, that Moore's concern with a "well-made novel" can be directly traced to the tradition of la pièce bien faite and, more particularly, to the collaboration with Bernard Lopez on Moore's first play, Martin Luther.* Malcom Brown's remarks on the play would

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*On the relationship with Lopez, see Hone's Life, pp. 59 ff. Another interesting sidelight can be found in W. B. Yeats's comments on his collaboration with Moore (told in Yeats's Dramatis Personae). Yeats calls Moore "a master of construction." A full study of Moore's plays would prove valuable in this regard, but it would be extraordinarily difficult to get copies of all Moore's plays. A copy of Martin Luther, for example, sold for over fifty pounds even before Moore's death.
The dramatic resources of the play were now spent after two acts. Two items remained, both fascinating for Moore. One was Luther's marriage to the former nun, Katherine Bora. The other was the Peasants' War... These incidents were insufficient to occupy the actors through three more acts, and neither Luther's theology nor Lopez's mastery of l'exposition de la pièce selon la formule de M. Scribe could fill the vacuum. 22

And further:

The happy fortunes of Luther and Katherine Bora were thus given a somber parallel in Bernstorff, Luther's bodyguard, and Elsa, another nun, to carry down through the well-made acts. 23

and finally:

Elsa's spirit, according to the laws of le théâtre bien fait, thenceupon passes intact to one of Luther's children. 24

Brown does not relate these comments on Martin Luther to the rest of his study. The connection could, I think, be made. If this paper shows that George Moore was primarily interested in story-telling, then a further study might well relate some of this interest to Moore's collaboration with Lopez.

So then, to summarize briefly this first and introductory chapter: Moore died less than thirty years ago; he lived and wrote about what seems to have been his own profligate
life; and these two facts have prevented criticism from being as objective as it should have been and have also made that criticism anecdotal. On the other hand, criticism has not been completely blind to Moore's claims to be a teller-of-tales, and some brief comments have been made on this subject. Further study is needed and this thesis will attempt, within limits, to fill the gap. The conjecture has been made that Moore's interest in story-telling might relate directly to the tradition of le théâtre bien fait, but that must remain a conjecture as the purpose here is to examine only one aspect, structure, of Moore's story-telling.

The following chapter is a study of the structure of the novels of the final canon.
She stood on the platform watching the receding train. The white steam curled above the few bushes that hid the curve of the line, evaporating in the pale evening. A moment more and the last carriage would pass out of sight, the white gates at the crossing swinging slowly forward to let through the impatient passengers.

An oblong box painted reddish brown and tied with a rough rope lay on the seat beside her.

*Esther Waters, p. 1.*

She stood on the platform watching the receding train. The white steam curled above the few bushes that hid the curve of the line, evaporating in the pale evening. A moment more and the last carriage would pass out of sight, the white gates at the crossing swinging slowly forward to let through the impatient passengers.

An oblong box painted reddish brown lay on the seat beside a woman of seven or eight and thirty . . .

*Esther Waters, p. 364.*
CHAPTER II

Part 1

Whenever Moore was asked about his work his reply usually tended to overstatement. He could, without shocking the listeners who knew him well, suggest that his work was the best in the language, or that one of his stories was the greatest ever written in English, or that Esther Waters was as English as Don Quixote was Spanish. It was his pose, and his long-time friends accepted it. Occasionally, at rare moments, his patient listeners would be rewarded with an almost honest comment. Such a one was given to Geraint Goodwin when he asked Moore, shortly before the latter's death, if he expected to achieve immortality with his writings. Moore's answer, in uncharacteristic fashion was, "Oh, dear, no; I set no higher value on myself than a story-teller." This comment, and many others of the same sort, will be examined, with their implications, in Chapter III. Suffice it to say, for now, that this comment should be kept always in view during the following discussion of Moore's fiction.

T. Earle Welby, if one judges from his life of Swinburne, is a critic of the pleasant school whose members try to find something to praise in an author rather than something to condemn. He does, in a very favorable review of Moore's Celibate Lives, touch on the, for us, important aspect of
Moore's story-telling technique.

Are they great stories? Are they slight? Need we care? Our eyes are on the teller, noting how a memory revives in him, is dallied with, is hesitatingly expanded, and then how the narrative softly acquires the impetus which shall take it to its conclusion; • • • But come, let me be sternly critical. In great fiction the narrative exists to be almost forgotten when it has served its purpose in revealing characters; in Mr. Moore's work the characters exist to be forgotten when the music and the pattern are revealed. 2

Welby's point is valid. In Moore incident is, to put it as shortly as possible, more important than character. Character is, of course, important, but the character will develop from incident. As Moore says:

You see, as the incidents follow one another, the character, as you call it, will develop as a matter of course. 3

Not only is character developed through incident, but also (and this against the previous history of the novel) it is not necessary for the author to comment or moralize on the incidents. They, the incidents, will do the commenting and moralizing themselves. From Moore again:

Incident again, you see—there is no need to moralize from incidents. They do all the moralizing that is necessary. 4

Moore is, here, coming fairly close to the modern idea of the disappearing author; 5 the author no longer steps into
the narrative to comment about the action; the action itself, as a selection of incidents from all possible incidents, will carry the meaning. Some moderns would go so far as Moore in saying that incident develops character. At any rate, the thing to note is that Moore speaks of the importance of incident in his work. To push these particular statements to a more general level, another quotation from Moore is necessary. There follows the conclusion drawn by Moore from the above two statements: "A work of art depends for its effect, as does everything else, on its plan."

Since the step from plot to structure, from the particular to the general, is short, the comments given above can be taken to apply not only to plot but to structure as well. In fact, it is difficult to see how Moore could be talking about anything but structure here since his comments are too general for a discussion of plot. Such remarks by Moore make one wonder whether he applied them in his own writings, and seem to offer justification for a study of the structure of Moore's novels.

Part II

It is, without question, true to say that all stories are basically searches, and the matter of the story is the incidents leading to the attainment, or the failure to attain,
the end of the search. As we shall see, Moore writes, for the most part, of people who fail to attain the ends for which they begin their searches. For the purposes of this paper we shall refer to such a failure as "frustration." Every novel has a theme of its own and a particular way of handling that theme, but, as a very general statement, we might say that George Moore's novels, whatever their individual themes, carry a general theme of frustration in the sense given; his characters fail to attain their ends.

Moore is not the first or by any means the only writer who writes of this sort of frustration. The interesting thing about Moore is that he uses what we shall call a "circular" structure to represent frustration. For the purposes of this thesis the word "circle" must be taken in a somewhat extended meaning. To modify the noun "structure" with the adjective "circular" calls for an explanation; and "circular structure" is explained by pointing out that it is really a metaphor (stated as a simile it would go: "the structures of Moore's novels are like circles") which is intended to represent graphically the concept of a story the actions of which might be diagramed as a circle. In other words, if the structure of one of Moore's novels might be diagramed, it would form a circle since the stories tend to end where

*For one statement of this common idea by a working writer, see Eudora Welty, "Reading and Writing Short Stories," Atlantic Monthly, vol. 183 (March, 1949), p. 46.
they begin.

All of Moore's novels, however, are not that simple. There seem to be three types of circular constructions in them, and the three might be described thus:

a) The life of the protagonist ends where it began, with the character a little better or a little worse, but in essentially the same situation as when he began. It is important to notice that this can happen to both good and evil characters, for in the novels of Moore, both good and evil characters are frustrated.

b) The life of the protagonist ends at the opposite pole from where it began. (On occasion, however, the complete circle back to the beginning is made by another character who adopts the spirit of the protagonist.) This ending at an opposite pole on the part of the protagonist might be called, if one wanted to be very careful about it, a "half-circle," but we shall try to simplify matters by calling it a sub-type of circular structure.

c) The life of the protagonist, while itself making a full circle or a half-circle (either a or b), may also involve the lives of companion characters so that those characters themselves have lives which transcribe circles. This type is a refinement of a and b, but it is made a separate type because Moore uses it in two early novels (and then rejects it for good). It seems to have been overly artificial even for Moore.
The procedure to be followed in this examination will be simple enough. In the case of each novel there will be, first, a brief summary of the story and, second, a discussion of the structure that will try to show that it is circular in one of the three ways mentioned above.

A Modern Lover (1883)

Although A Modern Lover (revised and published in 1917 as Lewis Seymour and Some Women) is not in the final canon of the Uniform edition of Moore's works, it is his first novel, and therefore rates at least a short examination here. As with the novels that follow, a brief outline of the story is necessary before any comment on structure can be made.

A promising young painter, Lewis Seymour, comes to London where he spends his inheritance in a rapid burst. He is near starvation and suicide when he is saved by an order to paint a picture. He gets a young shop-girl to sit as model against her better judgment, as she thinks the modeling is sinful. Finally, after the completion of the painting, her conscience induces her to leave Seymour. He has already

*A Modern Lover, as in the case of all the works which Moore rejected, was assigned to the authorship of "Amico Moorini." "Amico Moorini" was Moore's mental picture of his other self to whom he attributed all social blunders, rude remarks, and the novels which fell out of grace. See Morgan's *Epitaph on George Moore* for a full discussion of "Amico Moorini."*
found a wealthy customer, a mature divorced woman whom he exploits and who allows him to do so. After a period in Paris, he comes back to London and becomes involved in conflicts between his wealthy mistress and a young, newly discovered girl whom he at last marries but quickly tires of. He lives on, procuring orders and making money by flirting with women who can get him one or both. He forces and corrupts his beautiful wife into doing the same with wealthy old men.

The wheel of his life has moved full circle when, on the last pages of the novel, he hears of the young shop-girl of his early days, now a married woman, standing in admiration in front of his picture at the exhibition. (This ending is in the second version. In the original version, she is accepted as servant in his house, on the very last pages of the novel.)

As Miss Nejdefors-Frisk points out, the novel makes a complete circle—Seymour begins and ends with the shop-girl. He has not grown morally better; he has, if anything, grown worse. This is the awful irony of the situation: while he has grown morally worse, he has not advanced or even gone backward; he has only stayed in the same place. He ends, with some modifications, where he began. This is the pattern of circular structure, the narrative brings the protagonist, in utter frustration, back to his beginning. Since this is Moore's first novel and since it was ultimately rejected from the canon, this brief examination must suffice.
Two things should be noted about *A Modern Lover*, it is circular in structure and that circle carries the theme of Lewis Seymour's frustration.

*A Hummer's Wife* (1885; Uniform edition, 1933)

*A Hummer's Wife* is admirably put together, admirably planned and shaped; the whole composition of the book is masterly. 8

Thus Arthur Symons praised Moore's second novel. It is certainly the most naturalistic of the novels that remain in the final "canon," and yet Symons chooses to comment on the construction. In this novel, as in the first, Moore is consciously a story-teller, aware of structure, and using it to carry his theme. But first, a brief summary of the story:

Kate Ede is a pretty dressmaker working and living with her husband Ralph, an assistant Hender, and her mother-in-law in the draper's shop which they own in the little pottery-making town of Hanley. Kate's mother and Mrs. Ede had both been pious women, had known each other well, and had arranged the marriage of Kate and Ralph between themselves. Ralph is liable to horrible asthmatic fits through which Kate is expected to nurse him. He is irritable and she often thinks that she cannot endure the hard work, the lack of love, and Ralph's sickness. In spite of all this, when we first meet her, Kate is characterized by real affection and
pity for her husband and for Mrs. Ede. But a company of actors arrives in town and the couple, because they can use the money and over the pious objections of Mrs. Ede to actors in general, rent a room to one of the actors, Dick Lennox. The actor's voice and manners impress Kate and one day she meets him, by chance, in the street and consents to show him the town potteries. There, when he manages to get her alone for a minute, he tries to kiss her; a struggle ensues, and he falls among the cups and saucers and hurts his hand. Kate's natural affection and pity bring them closer together over this affair. Lennox leaves town, to be back in three months, and Kate devotes the time to reading sentimental novels. When Lennox returns, she is ripe for a love affair. Hender, Kate's assistant, has been keeping company with the stage manager and dreams of running away with the theatre group. At Hender's urging, Kate attends the theatre with Lennox and is so infatuated that she leaves Hanley with him by the next train. Lennox discovers that Kate has a beautiful voice, and persuades her to take singing lessons and to become an actress. Kate gradually changes; her views on morals change; she grows more beautiful but more unstable; finally, long after her divorce, when she is pregnant, Lennox marries her. After her confinement, her desire for security and Lennox's continual preoccupation with his work drive her to brandy. Moore's picture of the growth of an alcoholic is magnificently done. Kate begins with the traditional "medicinal wine from a tea-
spoon" and she proceeds downhill to the hidden bottles around their apartment. One night, when she is drunk, the baby dies from lack of attention and this deepens her madness. Lennox meets another woman, a semi-masculine poetess with a taste for popular pagan philosophy. Kate's jealousy completes her madness and she tries to kill her husband. Lennox first tries to put her into an institution; then, unable to live with her, he leaves. After a severe illness she tries to cure herself and asks him to take her back. He refuses and she relapses into drunkenness and, eventually, becomes a prostitute. At one clear moment in her downfall Kate again meets Ralph, who has married her former assistant in the draper's shop, Hender. They simply exchange regrets. In the last scene of the novel, Mrs. Forest, Lennox's new interest, comes to nurse Kate. When Kate asks to see Lennox, Mrs. Forest goes for him, but Kate dies in the meanwhile.

There are four significant points to be made about the structure of this novel. (a) To begin with the least impressive, Hender, Kate's only confidante and the assistant in the draper's shop, is at first interested in the actors, and in particular, in a certain stage manager. Kate finds in Hender encouragement to go to the theatre with Lennox and this is the turning point of Kate's life. Hender, on the other hand, completes a half-circle by ending at the exactly opposite point from where she started; she marries Ralph and takes Kate's place.
(b) Next, Dick Lennox was looking for fame in the theatre and a lovely mate in Kate; he was frustrated by a lack of talent, interest, and money in his professional ambitions and by Kate's desire for security in his love plans. Lennox completes a full circle, back to where he began, when, although until Kate's death he has not possessed Mrs. Forest, it is obvious that he will begin the same thing all over again with her. The last words of the novel are Lennox's, and he says them as he turns from Kate's body to the writing table where Mrs. Forest has been working on her opera. He says, "Have you finished the second act, dear?" It is his first use of the word "dear" to her, and the reference is not only to his uncollected thoughts, but to the beginning of another affair. It was, in fact, "Laura's [Mrs. Forest's] presence [that] put everything out of his head."

(c) Third, the novel's structure achieves another circle when Kate, at the lowest point in her fortunes, again meets Ralph who stands in complete contrast to the life she is now leading. It is important to notice that in both cases Kate would have been frustrated in her ends. If she had remained with Ralph, she would have become just as frustrated in her desire for happiness as she has with Lennox. Kate wanted both security and happiness, but her choice was only frustration, with or without respectability.

(d) Kate's complete circle of frustration is not only from living with Ralph to meeting him again; it is larger
than that and involves the whole novel. This is the fourth point. Kate Ede, as more than one female protagonist has done before her, read and tried to live the life she found in novels. It provided the necessary escape from the drabness of life in the draper's shop and justified to her the thoughts she had about Lennox and, finally, her leaving with him. The following example is typical of several instances of the same story which is repeated over and over in the early pages of the novel. It is the plot of Kate's favorite novel and Moore, in fact, repeats it so often that it becomes too obvious.

It was very delightful to hear of ... women who were tempted until their hearts died within them, and who years after threw up their hands and said, "Thank God that I had the courage to resist!"

... Amid these there was one story that interested her in particular, and caused her deeper emotions than the others. It concerned a beautiful young woman with a lovely oval face, who was married to a very tiresome country doctor. This lady was in the habit of reading Byron and Shelley in a rich, sweet-scented meadow, down by the river, which flowed dreamily through smiling pasturelands adorned by spreading trees. But this meadow belonged to a squire, a young man with grand, broad shoulders, who day after day used to watch these readings by the river without venturing to address a word to the fair trespasser. One day, however, he was startled by a shriek: in her poetical dreamings the lady had slipped into the water. A moment sufficed to tear off his coat, and as he swam like a water-dog he had no difficulty in rescuing her. Of course after this adventure he had to call and inquire, and from henceforth his visits grew more and more frequent, and
by a strange coincidence, he used to come riding up to the hall-door when the husband was away curing the ills of the country-folk. Hours were passed under the trees by the river, he pleading his cause, and she refusing to leave poor Arthur, till at last the squire gave up the pursuit and went to foreign parts, where he waited thirty years, until he heard Arthur was dead. And then he came back with a light heart to his first and only love, who had never ceased to think of him, and lived with her happily forever afterwards. The grotesque mixture of prose and poetry, both equally false, used to enchant Kate and she always fancied that had she been the heroine of the book she would have acted the same way.

The contrast between this dream life and the life Kate was actually to lead is so strong as to need only to be mentioned. The interesting and, in fact, the key point is the similarities between this novel and the life of Kate Bde.

Kate was bored, loved to read, and met a lover—just as does the heroine of the novel. The heroine, however, is faithful and in the end has both men as a reward, one gathers, of her virtue. Kate, forgetting her ideal reaction, runs off with the lover and ends just as frustrated as the heroine is happy.

The circular structure of *A Mummer's Wife* is not only that Kate again meets Ralph and that all of the other characters complete circles of one of our types, to their beginnings or to an opposite pole, but also that Kate herself ends by doing exactly the opposite of her ideal. Thus, the novel fits perfectly into the type of circular structure.

The artificial nature of this type should be plain now. Mender, Ralph, and Dick Lennox all make their own cir-
cles in the novel while Kate is making hers. This is the first of the two novels in which Moore went to such great lengths to make sure that the structure was neatly tied up.

One final comment is necessary before we leave this novel. The contrast between the two poles of Kate's life, in the draper's shop and with Lennox, is dramatically stated in the last pages of the novel when Kate, in a delirium, mixes both in her rambling talk.

The most diverse scenes were heaped together in the complex confusion of Kate's nightmare; the most opposed ideas were intermingled. At one moment she told the little girls, Annie and Lizzie, of the immorality of the conversations in the dressing-rooms of theatres; at another she stopped the rehearsal of an opéra bouffe to preach to the mummers—in phrases that were remembrances of the extemporaneous prayers in the Wesleyan Church—of the advantages of an earnest, working religious life.

Thus up and down, like dice thrown by demon players, were rattled the two lives, the double life that this weak woman had lived, and a point was reached where the two became one, when she began her famous song:

"Look at me here! Look at me there!"

alternately with the Wesleyan hymns. Sometimes in her delirium she even fitted the words of one on to the tune of the other.

Thus the two poles of Kate's life are presented dramatically. She has gone from religion to prostitution, from idealism to a naturalistic end which is brought on by her own failure in her ideals. Kate's frustration is represented when she reaches the exactly opposite point in her life in a circularly constructed novel.
Muslin (originally published as A Drama in Muslin, 1886; Uniform edition, 1932)

Despite Moore's claims for this novel, it does not measure up as a story or in characterization to either A Hummer's Wife or Esther Waters, the two novels that critics agree are the most important of the early period. Moore rejected the three other novels between Kate Ede and Esther Waters (A Mere Accident, 1887; Spring Days, 1888; and Vain Fortune, 1892) and it is difficult to see why he retained this study in giddy girlhood and the evils of Dublin Society. The novel is interesting because it is Moore's first Irish writing and because it operates on a circular structure that is as artificial as A Hummer's Wife, but otherwise there is little to say for it.

The scene is Ireland during the time of the Land League; and the worry of the landlords forms a constant background for the novel. The Land League is present in the novel as a subject which the men constantly discuss and which the young girls are supposed to be too silly to know anything about. The chief character is a young girl, fresh from the convent school, whose name is Alice Barton. Her father, an Irish landlord, spends his time either painting or telling what he could do if he were put at the head of an army; her

*He even went so far as to compare it with Ibsen's A Doll's House, claiming it was a similar treatment of the same theme.
mother, an aging flirt who has a rich admirer (Lord Dungory), has plans for the rich marriages of her daughters. Alice's sister, Olive, who is well within the beautiful but silly class, is concerned with following the mother's wishes and catching a suitable mate. Mrs. Barton has few hopes for Alice, but is determined and confident that Olive shall make a good match. Alice, who is plain but intelligent and keenly observant, soon notices that silly girls attract men but intelligent girls do not, especially if they are plain in addition. Olive's attachment to a handsome, but poor, officer, Captain Hibbert, is discouraged by her mother. At the Castle ball in Dublin the schemes of the fortune-hunting mothers and the ills of the marriage market are revealed. Alice meets a man who advises her to use her talents and write and whom she could love, but nothing comes of it. Olive fails to catch the Marquis of Kileoarney at the ball and Mrs. Barton secretly offers him a dowry of twenty thousand pounds. Still she meets with no success; the Marquis chooses, over Olive, a girl with flashing black eyes whose mother once sold bacon in the streets. One of Alice's beautiful convent friends leads a life of pleasure until her lover leaves her with child. Alice supports the girl by writing for newspapers during her secret confinement. The child dies and the young mother returns to society life more beautiful than ever. Another of Alice's friends is a hunch-back, intelligent, ill-tempered, and possessed of more than the suggestion of
Sapphic-like concern for Alice's relationships with men. When she learns that Alice is normal, she is so unsettled that she returns to the convent. Another year, with another Castle ball session, is still more frustrating than the first. Olive, afraid that she will never catch a man, attempts an elopement with Captain Hibbert. It ends in a broken ankle and pneumonia for Olive when she runs afoul of the woman who has been consoling the good Captain these many months. Alice nurses Olive back to health and then, to everyone's surprise, runs off with Olive's physician to London. The couple settle in a middle-class suburb of London where Olive, tired of Mrs. Barton's eternal schemes, soon joins them.

This novel is definitely another of the same type as *A Huminor's Wife*, type a. The minor characters complete circles of their own while the major character, Alice, is doing the same.

a) The Marquis of Kilcarney ends at a pole opposite that where he began when he chooses, over Olive, a girl whose mother once sold bacon.

b) Alice's beautiful convent friend ends where she began, back in society, more beautiful than ever, after having and losing a baby.

c) Alice's hunch-backed convent friend ends where she began when she returns to the convent. If one considers Moore's dislike of the Irish Catholic Church, a powerfully suggestive
circle, in Moore's terms, is closed when this girl returns to the convent.

d) Olive, the beautiful sister, ends at an opposite pole by coming through two ball seasons without catching a man. She leaves her mother and goes to join Alice.

e) Alice, the plain sister, and the protagonist of the novel, completes the circular structure of the whole novel when she runs off with Olive's physician to London. Alice, the least likely, is the first married.

Thus, *Muslin*, just as *A Hummer's Wife*, has the highly artificial type O circular structure in which both major and minor characters complete circles. To make this novel fit perfectly into type O, however, three characters have yet to be accounted for. They are Mr. and Mrs. Barton and Mrs. Barton's friend, Lord Dungory. Moore seems to have sensed these minor loose strings when he wrote the introduction to the Uniform edition of *Muslin*. He was enough of an artist to sense that giving these three minor characters perfect endings would be too much of the same thing; but he does speculate, in mild good humor, on the existence of the Bartons after Alice and Olive are gone. True, Mrs. Barton has been frustrated in all her plans, but her circle is not complete. As if in answer to this failure, Moore speculates at some length that, eventually, after Lord Dungory had died, the Bartons would miss him so much that they found life without him intolerable. Mrs. Barton must have someone with whom to
flirt and Mr. Barton must have his privacy. The completion of the circle comes when Mr. Barton introduces to his wife a new admirer, with remarks to the effect that he is perfectly fitted to fill Lord Dungory's place.

*Esther Waters* (1894; Uniform edition, 1932)

Probably the most famous critical comment on this most famous of Moore's novels, made by anyone but Moore himself, is Katherine Mansfield's:

And yet we would say without hesitation that *Esther Waters* is not a great novel, because it has not, from first to last, the faintest stirring of the breath of life. It is as dry as the remainder biscuit after a voyage. In a word it has no emotion. Here is a world of objects accurately recorded, here are states of mind set down, and here, above all, is that good Esther whose faith in her Lord is never shaken, whose love for her child is never over-powered—and who cares?

Despite Miss Mansfield, thousands of readers have enjoyed *Esther Waters* and some of them, some of them with taste in fact, find that it is indeed a great novel. Be that as it may, there is not space to defend a value judgment of the novel, but one thing might be said. After *Esther Waters*, Moore's work may properly be considered an offshoot of the Irish Renascence, and his last historical novels, as has been often noted, are difficult to fit into the main stream of English fiction. Moore's literary reputation, as an English
writer, must finally rest on *Esther Waters* or on *A Mummer's Wife*. If his contribution to the history of the English novel is to be ultimately the introduction of naturalism into England, then these two novels must stand as his contribution. In the present writer's opinion, *A Mummer's Wife* is more likely to carry the burden.

The story of *Esther Waters* is as follows:

Esther's parents were members of the Plymouth Brethren. After the death of her father, her mother married a man who turned out to be a drunkard. In this new marriage, children are born in rapid succession and Esther has to give up school to help her mother. After various experiences in London, she is accepted as a kitchen maid at Woodview, a country place. She can neither read nor write and her ignorance and piety are mocked in her new situation until the mistress of the house, who belongs to the same sect, takes to the poor girl. The husband and son of the house keep race horses and the whole village has the betting mania. At first, Esther dislikes this atmosphere, but she is finally involved in it through a fellow servant, William, with whom she falls in love. Esther, one evening, is carried away by passion and has an affair with William. When it is discovered that she expects a child, she is dismissed. William, who does not know about the child, runs off with a niece of the Woodview people. Esther returns to her home in London where she finds that her mother expects a child herself, but she is very kind.
to Esther. The step-father is, on the other hand, as fictional step-fathers always are. Esther gives birth to a boy and, after some difficulty, finds a job as a wet-nurse. The woman in whose care Esther has left her boy, neglects him, expecting that Esther, like other unmarried mothers, will want to be rid of him. Esther rebukes both the baby-keeper and the woman for whom she is a wet-nurse, and is again out in the street. After many hard years in ill-paid situations, always one step out of the poorhouse, she finds a job with a female novelist who is kind to her. She meets Fred, a stationer's clerk, who also belongs to the Plymouth Brethren, and since he, somewhat sententiously, forgives her for the child, she agrees to marry him. But then she happens across William, who seems to be making a good living taking bets in his tavern, and when he learns of the boy he wants to do something for him. William and the girl that he left with are separated and, in time, they get a divorce. William wants Esther to return to him, and finally she does for the sake of the boy. She lives with William until the divorce, and then they are married. They have some good years but, at last, William fails in both health and income and dies. Esther is forced back into being a maid-servant; and after some hard years she returns to Woodview where her former mistress is now living alone. They spend the years remaining to them together, finding consolation in their religion. Having brought up her son as best she could, Esther feels
that she has achieved her chief duty in life.

The novel is naturalistic, at least in scientific
description, in its low-life subject, in its emphasis on en-
vironment, and in the research Moore did in order to write
it. But Frierson says, "Moore returned to a naturalistic
material in Esther Waters, but his technique now involves a
happy ending, which is not naturalism at all." Frierson
does have a point, but one might suggest that the ending is
not so much "happy" as peaceful after the troubles of Esther's
life in London. Esther is only thirty-eight at the end of
the book; she has a reasonably long life ahead of her and yet
it seems that she desires only the peace of Woodview. She
has reared her boy well, and the son of the mistress of Wood-
view who is continuing in his father's racing ways, forms a
nice contrast to Esther's boy. But the fact remains that
Esther has sacrificed her own life for her son. In a sense,
her own life has been frustrated that her son might live.

Some light is shed on this frustration when one con-
siders the anecdote in which Moore discovered this novel.
He tells of it in several places and it is always the same.
Moore is walking in Fleet Street, reading a paper, and jost-
ling the crowd, when he comes upon an article in the paper

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"The following account is taken from A Communication to
My Friends. But the same story may be found in numerous
other places, almost wherever Moore mentions the novel."
on servants which asks the public if it considers the number of tasks demanded from servants. Moore begins to think of it from the servant's point of view, asking himself if a servant could not be the subject of a novel rather than simply a comic character. "After all, they are human beings like ourselves, though reduced by riches to a sort of partial slavery." He decides to tell the story of a scullery-maid who becomes pregnant by a footman, and of the maid's love for the child. The essence of the story is to be found in the frustration of the mother's aims in life by the existence of the child and yet the mother keeps and protects the child.

The circle in Esther Waters has been often noticed. Everyone who reads the novel notices that Esther returns to Woodview in the end, and that the same words are used both times to describe her arrival at the station.

She stood on the platform watching the receding train. The white steam curled above the few bushes that hid the curve of the line, evaporating in the pale evening. A moment more and the last carriage would pass out of sight, the white gates at the crossing swinging slowly forward to let through the impatient passengers.

An oblong box painted reddish brown and tied with a rough rope lay on the seat beside her.

Esther Waters, p. 1.
sight, the white gates at the crossing swing¬
ing slowly forward to let through the impa¬
tient passengers.

An oblong box painted reddish brown lay
on the seat beside a woman of seven or eight
and thirty . . . 

Esther Waters, p. 364.

Esther returns to where she began, still a reasonably young
woman, frustrated in all her own ambitions but successful
in rearing her son. It is this sacrifice of her own life
that is emphasized by the circular structure. Esther com¬
pletes the first type of circle, type a, by ending where she
began. Malcolm Brown, in his excellent study of Moore, bare¬
ly hints at the importance of this recurrence by saying,
"EtoteEs Esther's coming to full turn of the circle with
her return to Woodview, following the pattern of eternal re¬
currence . . . " A great deal more will be said of this
"eternal recurrence," which Brown only hints at, in the third
and final chapter of this thesis. Suffice it to say here
that Esther Waters is the story of a woman who frustrates
her own possibilities in life for her son, and that frustra¬
tion is presented by using a circular structure of the first
type we mentioned.

The Lake (1905; Uniform edition, 1932)

The trouble with any general idea is the temptation to
make it stand "pat." The work of Moore's examined so far has,
in each case, shown a circular structure of one of the three types mentioned. In each case, also, the private aims of the protagonists are frustrated, or with Esther Waters, sacrificed. The Lake must stand as the exception in both instances; it is the only novel of the Moore canon which is not circular and in which the protagonist accomplishes his aims. Even the case of Alice, in Muslin, implies a certain frustration in that Alice marries, not the man she first meets and could passionately love, but the doctor with whom she can be comfortable. It is not of particular importance since Alice's circle is complete if she marries at all. But the priest in The Lake is the only character who completely succeeds in his aims.

Perhaps for this reason (his success), or perhaps for others, Moore does not use a circular structure in The Lake. On the other hand, the novel does have an interesting structure and since it remains in the canon it rates examination.

The story is as follows: Before the story opens, an Irish priest, Father Oliver Gogarty, has met and, although he does not know it, fallen in love with a young girl, Nell Glynn. Nell becomes pregnant by a young man who never enters the story; and when Father Gogarty discovers the pregnancy he alludes to her so plainly in his sermon on the following Sunday that she is forced to leave the parish. All of these events happen before the story opens with the priest walking beside the lake and remembering. Gogarty is suffering from
such remorse of conscience that he is overjoyed when a Father O'Grady of London writes that he has discovered, taken care of, and found employment for Nell. An exchange of letters follows between Gogarty and O'Grady, and Gogarty and Nell. The letters are used to tell the story of Gogarty's gradual drift from his life and Church into a desire for the reality of life which is symbolized for him by the lake. Nell takes a job with a Biblical critic and her slow influence, combined with Gogarty's own mind, finally give him courage enough to make a bid for freedom. Before he leaves Ireland, Gogarty watches what is called a "miracle." A fellow priest, an alcoholic, appears at Gogarty's door one night saying that he cannot refrain from drink a moment longer and, in order to save his parish from the scandal, he is going to leave the parish forever. He has only come by to tell Gogarty good-bye. Gogarty starts out walking with the alcoholic priest and they walk right past the bar, Gogarty encouraging his friend all the way. Finally, when they have walked so far that they cannot possibly make it back to get a drink before closing time, the alcoholic priest finds that his urge to drink has gone. The alcoholic is never tempted to drink again and is firmly convinced that the experience was a miracle. Gogarty finds that he cannot believe that it was anything of the sort, although he cannot, on the other hand, explain it. Since he realizes that a belief in the possibility of miracles is close to the base of his religion, the final bond snaps, and he
resolves to strike out for the hope of all run-away Irish, the New World. The novel ends with Gogarty's bid for freedom. He goes to the lake, leaves his clothes as if he had gone for a swim and drowned, and swims to the other side to take up a new life.

A yellow disc appeared, cutting the flat sky sharply, and he laid his priest's clothes in the middle of a patch of white sand where they could be easily seen. Placing the Roman collar upon the top, and stepping from stone to stone, he stood on the last one as on a pedestal, tall and grey in the moonlight—

Brown remarks that this return to the neo-paganism of Confessions of a Young Man, after Esther Waters and the simple Irish stories of The Untitled Field, makes a full circle in Moore's own life. Be that as it may, the novel itself is only circular in the way mentioned by Moore:

I will proceed a little further into literary sin, confessing that my reason for liking The Lake is related to the very great difficulty of the telling, for the one vital event in the priest's life befell him before the story opens, and to keep the story in the key in which it was conceived, it was necessary to recount the priest's life during the course of his walk by the shores of the lake, weaving his memories continually, without losing sight, however, of the long, winding, mere-like lake, wooded to its shores, with hills appearing and disappearing into the mist and distance.

The action of the novel takes place always around the
lake, the symbol of the pagan freedom open to Gogarty. Just as his thoughts head always around the possibility of escape, so his body must circle the lake. In the sense that the story is constructed with the lake as center, the structure of the novel is interesting and worth this study, but The Lake must remain an exception to the main point of this paper; it is circular only in that the story moves around the lake—but that is not the kind of circle we are discussing in all the other novels.

The Brook Kerith (1916; Uniform edition, 1927)

The three volumes of Hail and Farewell (Ave, 1911; Salve, 1912; Vale, 1914) were written and published between the Irish stories and The Brook Kerith, but Moore called them autobiographical works. A good case could probably be made for calling Hail and Farewell a novel, but it would take both time and space and be inconclusive; so it is best, for the present purpose, to avoid the whole issue and consider only those works which Moore himself called "fiction." An interesting, if somewhat waggish, remark by Wayne Shumaker\(^{20}\) deserves to be mentioned before we dismiss the subject. Shumaker has little doubt that Moore left Ireland when he did to give a perfect denoument to Hail and Farewell. Again the perfect circle? from England to Ireland and back to England? and, in a sense, he was frustrated in all his attempts to
revive the Irish language, to "kick the priests out of Ireland," or to prove that Catholicism has not produced a work of art. Only a suggestion, and a not very serious one at that, but interesting to play with.

The Brook Kerith, sub-titled, significantly enough since it denies the divinity of Christ, "A Syrian Story," was Moore's first venture into the "historical novel." With characteristic overstatement, Moore must have no less than the Christ himself as the subject of his first "historical novel."

At various times during his life Moore had rejected Catholicism, called himself a pagan, discovered Protestantism, and said that all of Christianity was based on Palestinian folk-tales. Though he moved off and on, in and out, and around these subjects with an ease which is difficult to understand, his basic argument in The Brook Kerith is that Christ was not God. But perhaps it is best told in Moore's own words; and notice again, a whole novel is born of an anecdote:

It was one day in the old library at Dublin; I thought that perhaps Christ had fallen into a cataleptic fit and recovered in some three hours. There was at least no reason to suppose he died. "My God, yes," I said, "that's it. And he meets Paul twenty years afterwards." Now I had it all complete—it was all done in five minutes."

Not quite in five minutes, Moore had to make a trip to Palestine first, but in essence, the novel is here, in the
anecdote. From this anecdote and the descriptions of the Near East, a five-hundred page novel was written. The idea was first tried out in a play as early as 1911 (The Apostle) and the play was revised as The Passing of the Essenes for the Uniform edition (1931). So, not counting revisions of the novel, Moore milked the anecdote of three complete works.

Most of the story has been already given, but the rest of it had best be quickly told. The story, at first, is of the boyhood and growth of Joseph of Arimathea. Moore, wisely, refrains from re-telling the Gospels and recounts only a few stories which filter to the Joseph's ears. Joseph, after meeting all the Apostles and finding them to be stupid men, meets Christ. Joseph is overcome with the power of the man and becomes a follower until he is called back to tend his sick father. Joseph believes in, but never actually sees, the miracles. Finally, he is freed from attendance on his father and goes to Jerusalem on business. He arrives in time to find Christ upon the cross, to convince the soldier and, later, Pilate that Christ is dead, and to spirit the body away from the tomb after everyone else leaves. Joseph takes the body to his own villa, and Christ is cured by a slave girl who is an expert in native medicine. Christ returns to the Essenes, a monk-like group living in the hills, from where, according to Moore, he came. There, as has already been said, he meets Paul who is on his way to Rome. Paul refuses to believe that this Jesus and his Christ are the same and the two
The Brook Kerith operates on a structure of the second circular type--type b. The main character ends at a point exactly opposite his beginning and another character completes the full circle by coming back to where the main character began. At the end of the novel Christ has, as Moore would have it, "reformed" and ceased to desire to be God. He becomes again a simple shepherd with the Essenes, so that we may say that he ends again at his beginning. But since we never see this early-simple-shepherd Christ in the novel, we should say that, within the terms of the novel, Christ ends at a point opposite his beginning. Paul, on the other hand, completes the circle of the novel by preaching what Christ has rejected. As Brown says:

In The Brook Kerith Jesus is originally seized by an overwhelming zeal and an urge to asceticism, both "blasphemies against life," but in the end he has learned to repent his sins in full humility, while his first life-denying ambitions are taken up by Paul and passed to posterity in a poisoned stream.22

Héloïse and Abélard (1921; Uniform edition, 1925)

Héloïse and Abélard was Moore's second historical novel. His first had been set at the beginnings of Christianity; for his second, he skips to the Twelfth Century to write of the two famous lovers. The novel is of particular
interest to this study because, in telling a love story that was already known, Moore was already given part of his story. True, Moore has written a novel, but it will be interesting to note where Moore decides to end his story. But first the story:

Moore researched this novel carefully, even down to the argument between Realism and Nominalism. Background is very important to the historical novel, and Moore writes of the three interesting and exciting aspects, at least to the layman, of pre-Renaissance centuries. He uses all three as background for the love story. First, there is the Church which Moore presents as it was, the somewhat worldly protector of knowledge and the discoverer of Aristotle. Next, there is the rise of Scholastic philosophy—about which Moore has a good deal to say—or at least he writes of the colorful wandering scholars and teachers if not so much of their learning. Finally, there is the Courtly Love tradition which Moore presents, not only in his telling of the love story, but in the adventures of Abélard before he became a monk and a philosopher.

Héloïse, the daughter of a knight killed in the Crusades, is put into a nunnary by her uncle, a high Churchman in Paris. When she comes to visit her uncle, she shows such an interest in Latin that he allows her to stay. She meets Abélard, and when she hears him teach she falls in love with him. Abélard makes friends with the uncle and is invited to
live with him to instruct Héloïse. The two become lovers; and when Héloïse becomes pregnant they are forced to run away to Abélard's family, who shelter Héloïse until the birth of the baby. Abélard, who cannot return to Paris for fear of the uncle, wanders again as a ballad-singer, remembering the days of his youth when he did the same. After the birth of the child, the lovers return to Paris where they are forced to marry and then separate, Héloïse going to a convent and Abélard to a monastery. Héloïse agrees because she does not want to stand in the way of Abélard's greatness, and Abélard agrees that there is no possibility of becoming great save as a priest. The book then centers on Héloïse's long wait for Abélard's return, comforted only by her child. Finally, her son is lured away by the Children's Crusade and Abélard returns again. He tells her of all that has befallen him and of his castration. Since now they cannot live together, they ride together for a while on the way to place her in a new convent, and he is to try again to teach. Thus Moore ends the novel, wisely, before the letters begin.

Moore says of ending the novel where he did:

My original intention was to carry to the death of Héloïse; but as I was composing the narrative of their last ride together, to the convent of the Paraclete, there came to me the thought: Here I must leave them, for the rest of their lives is known from the letters; and what better place is there for me to break off than this.
The novel, despite the title, is for the most part the story of Héloïse. During the crucial separation of the two lovers, Moore chooses to write about the placid life of Héloïse in the convent rather than to follow Abélard, whose teaching, wandering, and castration are certainly more dramatic. Héloïse, just as Esther Waters, sacrifices herself for her beloved. She repeats over and over again throughout the novel that women have always held great men back from their destinies. She would have Abélard be great and not have history condemn her; thus the sacrifice, story, and frustration are Héloïse's.

The circular structure of the novel is fairly obvious; Abélard begins by trying to teach and ends by trying to teach; but the novel is really about Héloïse and she begins and ends in the convent. She is drawn forth for a while in hope of love and greatness, but she must sacrifice and frustrate herself for Abélard. It is significant that Moore did not write, as he had originally planned, to the death of Héloïse. Not only does this original plan show that Héloïse was Moore's chief concern (as women are almost always the chief protagonists of Moore's novels), but the rejection of this plan, the ending of the story on the lowest level for Héloïse, shows that Moore deliberately chose to end the novel when he had completed the circle from convent to convent. Certainly, writing of the letters, would have been not only artistically difficult, but also something of an anti-climax to the novel.
which is so neatly tied up as it stands.

*Aphrodite in Aulis* (1930; Uniform edition, 1931)

*Aphrodite in Aulis* was Moore's last novel, another historical novel set, this time, in Pagan Greece. Moore began advocating paganism in his poems and his first autobiographical book, *Confessions of a Young Man* (1888), and he returns to this theme in his last novel. It is interesting to notice Moore's own development and his constant interest in Paganism. Briefly, it seems to have gone something like this: rejection of Catholicism as a boy and the embracing of a neo-Paganism (*Confessions of a Young Man*); discovery of Protestantism and violent anti-Catholicism (all the work through *Hail and Farewell*); return to Paganism (*The Lake*), rejection of all Christianity, and continued anti-Catholicism (*The Brook Kerith* and *Heloise and Abelard*); and finally the Paganism of *Aphrodite in Aulis*. Paganism would seem to be one thing on which Moore was consistent.

The circular construction of this last novel is of the second type, in which the protagonist ends at the opposite point from his beginning. Just as in *The Brook Kerith* another character completes the circle back to the beginning, so here the circle is completed by Kebren's sons. Here is a summary of the story:

Kebren, a young student of Homer, feels the call to
go from Athens to Aulis. He wants to wander the world teaching the beauty of Homer and he is sure that this is his first chance. He arrives in Aulis, meets a rich man with a beautiful daughter, and is invited to rest with them a while. When Kebren feels it is time to move on to his work, the rich man persuades him to stay in Aulis for a year. As the rich man well knew they would, the daughter and Kebren fall in love and are married before the year is out. Kebren joins his father-in-law's business. Two sons are born who grow up to be talented, the elder a sculptor, the younger an architect. They prove their talent and are allowed to go off to study in Athens. After learning from many teachers and constructing many buildings, they return to build the temple of Aphrodite in Aulis. Kebren's wife has grown tired of him and worships the greatness in her sons just as she first loved the budding greatness of Kebren. In the last scene of the novel, Kebren stands on the steps of the temple his sons have built and watches them leave for the greatness he once desired.

The only part of the novel that is up to Moore's best work is the gradual turn of love in Kebren's wife from her husband to her sons; she loves them not only as sons, but also as young men who have the same desires and possibilities of greatness that she saw in Kebren. In fact, she falls in love for a moment with a passing prophet in whom she sees these same qualities. She makes a circle in her life in that she, at the end of the novel, loves her sons for the qualities
which first attracted her to her husband. But the point is that in this last novel, as in his first, Moore uses a circular structure. Kebren's ambitions are carried on by his sons when Kebren ends at a point opposite that where he began.

Part III
The Short Stories

Strictly speaking, this thesis is a study of the structure of George Moore's novels, but since a large number of his short stories survived his almost yearly purges of the canon, and since it would be enlightening to see if Moore's regular use of circular structure carries over to the short stories, a brief examination of a handful of his stories follows.

Four volumes of short stories remain in the Uniform edition—Celibate Lives, 1927, revised from In Single Strictness, 1922, which was in turn a revision of Celibates, 1895; The Untilled Field, 1903, 1926; A Story-Teller's Holiday, 1918, and in two volumes, 1928. It would be needlessly long to re-tell all of Moore's short tales, but a few are especially worthy of notice, not only as good stories, but for immediate interest to this paper.

In Celibate Lives Moore tells a number of stories, the common subject of which is people incapable of marriage. Two stories from this collection are of particular interest here,
Wilfred Holmes, the last of many children, was the particular pet of his mother. Wilfred, while all his brothers and sisters were making their way in the world, remained at home with his mother, never choosing a profession. When his mother died, Wilfred, who had finally interested himself in something (the flute) took cheap lodging in London on a check which came from his aunt at regular intervals. Wilfred leads a life, harmless and happy, of writing the melody (he cannot do more) for his operetta, *The Mulberry Tree*, and investigating the source of *Tristan and Isolde*. He has been at work for twenty years on both, uninterested in anything else. One horrible day the expected check from the aunt does not come and Wilfred finds himself without support and in immediate danger of having to work for a living. After two or three frantic days, Wilfred hits upon a scheme; he will write to a newspaper saying that he heard a blackbird singing a certain passage of music which he could not identify. With this letter Wilfred hopes to solve both his problems; he hopes that the published letter will arouse such interest in the form of replies that the editor will be forced to consult Wilfred, and when the editor consults Wilfred he will be so impressed with Wilfred's knowledge of music that he will hire him as music critic for the paper. The passage is from *The Mulberry Tree* and Wilfred hopes thereby to introduce it to
the public. The idea works to a certain extent; the editor does receive enough letters to cause him to send a reporter to interview Wilfred. While the reporter is there, fascinated by Wilfred's life though unimpressed by his knowledge of only melodies, the long-delayed check comes from the aunt, who has been ill. Wilfred immediately forgets all else but his operetta and his theory of Tristan and Isolde's origins. The reporter leaves, wondering at this strange man, and humming the passage of music to himself:

Dancing around, Dancing around,
Dancing around the mulberry tree. 24

To the journalist, "the musical phrase ... seemed to represent, and completely, the man he had left." 25

It is easy enough to see that here, too, in the short story, Moore uses the circular structure; a circular structure of the first type, for Wilfred Holmes ends where he began. The passage of music itself is significant, Wilfred goes around and around a circle that will end only with his death.

The other story, "Albert Nobbs," is more complicated to tell, but the structure is almost as simple. Albert Nobbs is headwaiter at a Dublin hotel and one of the best possible, always kind and giving the best of service to the guests. One day the owner of the hotel asks Albert to share a bed with a guest for one night because the hotel is so crowded.
Albert at first holds back (until the hotel-owner becomes angry), and then is forced to give in. In the room that night we discover Albert's reason: Albert is a woman. Fortunately, in a double surprise, it seems Hubert Page, the guest, is also a woman. They become friends, both explaining that they found it easier to earn money as men. Albert has never married, but Hubert ran away from her husband and is now living with another woman in a "marriage." Albert, who is lonely, is taken by the idea and, after Hubert leaves, decides to find a "wife." The rest of the story is about Albert's chasing of a young hussy, who does not know that Albert is a woman, and the ironic situation of Albert, a woman, being taken for every penny, in the classic tradition, by another woman. The hussy milks Albert dry and then leaves her, broken-hearted, for another. The irony of the situation is nicely handled, and Albert is as sorely treated by the hussy as any young man in a similar situation. It is only when Albert dies that her secret is discovered and then Hubert Page, whose "marriage" partner has died, comes looking for Albert to form a new relationship. Sorrowed by Albert's death and discouraged by her fate, Hubert returns to her real (masculine) husband.

The story is confusing, but the structure is fairly simple and obvious. Albert ends where she began, without a "wife," and Hubert ends at an opposite pole by going back to her masculine husband. In a sense, Hubert, too, makes a cir-
cle of the first type, since she began as a real wife, but when we first meet Hubert in the story she is playing the part of a man. The characters do make circles within our definitions, and the importance of this story is that it shows, in capsule form, the possibilities of dramatic irony inherent in the circular structure. The audience knows something that the characters do not, at least that the hussy does not, and the result is dramatic irony. One might say that most of Moore's stories are ironic in that full or half-circles are made, but a discussion of Moore's irony is beyond the scope of this chapter. A few words will be devoted to this question of irony in the third chapter. Let it suffice for now to say that "Albert Nobbs" shows that Moore was not unaware of the possibilities of dramatic irony within the circular structure.

Only one story in *The Untilled Field* really demands examination, although these stories which Moore wrote to be translated into Irish are, for the most part, worthwhile. They are interesting in that some of them are kindly presentations of Irish priests, and that *The Untilled Field* is probably a direct ancestor of Joyce's *The Dubliners*. But for our present purposes, only the one story, "So on He Fares," is so much to the point that it cannot be dismissed. It is also significant that it was Moore's favorite.

"So on He Fares" is the one that, perhaps, out of the whole volume I like the best.26
or again, from Hone's *Life*:

This inscription is in a copy which he gave to Mr. Philip Gosse in December, 1931. "To Philip Gosse. Philip, Edmund Gosse said that the story entitled 'The Window' was the best short story ever written. I did not agree with him. I prefer 'So on He Fares.' G. M., an old family friend." 27

The story is a fable about a little boy, Ulick Burke, who is hated and tormented by his mother while his father is away at war. One day she punishes his disobedience by putting a bee inside his shirt. Pain and anger force him to carry out his half-made plans to run away, and he hides on the bank of the canal which feeds the Shannon. He is picked up by boatmen who take him away to where he finds a new mother who is as kind to him as his old mother was cruel. Some years later, having become a sailor and seen something of the world, he returns to his home to find there another Ulick Burke, a small boy who is very much like himself when he was ten and had to run away. This little boy will not leave, however, for his mother is kind to him. Big Ulick Burke is not welcome in the house, for his tales of far-away places are too interesting to little Ulick. The mother sends big Ulick away. He goes back to the canal to catch a ride with the boatman, and so on he fares.

Brown sees this story as an allegory of Moore's own life, the cruel mother being Ireland and the kind one France. The return is Moore's own ten year return to Ireland. 28
that as it may, and the allegory seems likely, the point for us is the circle Ulick makes—coming back home only to run away just as he did before, thus ending where he began.

A Story-Teller's Holiday is a collection of wonderful bawdy tales told by Alec, an Irish shanachie or story-teller whom Moore creates. If there was ever any doubt as to Moore's concern with stories, these volumes, even the title, should dispel it. Moore and Alec wander together, telling each other stories and suggesting to each other modifications in their common art. None of the stories are so good as to demand examination here in a paper about the novels, and to choose one of the bawdy tales to the exclusion of the others is very difficult. We might quote, by way of introduction to the third chapter, one of several instances in the two volumes of the interest that Moore and Alec have in the art of their tales. Alec begins speaking here but the printing follows that of Moore and only a moment's study is necessary to see that it is a conversation:

So you think, your honor, that the story did not come down unchanged from father to son? I'm not saying it didn't, Alec, only—But isn't yourself the great story-teller, and should be knowing better than another what end a story should be taking? How would you have me alter the story? Faith and troth, Alec, in that question you have me bet, for Ireland was full of wolves at the time. . . . Let me think. The alternative is . . . Now that I come to think of it, the end of your story seems to me to be the right one. A sad and cruel end; but it may have fallen out just as you relate it.
This is only one of the several instances of this sort of discussion, proving Moore's abiding interest in the art of story-telling, that goes on throughout the tales. But these stories are not novels, and analysis of them hardly belongs here.

In brief, then, we have seen that the structures of Moore's novels are circular in three ways: the character ends where he began; or he ends at an opposite pole; or, while this change is happening to the main character, the minor characters also find that their own destinies are circular. The following and last chapter will try to justify these interpretations of the structures of the novels in the light of Moore's interest in story-telling; his particular interest in the end of a story; and his remarks on "eternal recurrence."
The sun brings back the mallows in the garden, and they live again, and spring in another year. . . . the doctrine that everything that has been must of necessity return, return being the law over all things, great and small, stars and mallows alike, everything returning to unity, to spread out again through space and time again to be collected into unity; and that for ever and ever. A wonderful dream . . . that there is no death and that we are only separated from ourselves by some billions of years.

George Moore,
Conversations in Ebury Street
It is true that not every writer can write a novel, just as it is true that every novelist is not always a writer. People never seem to realize there is such a thing as a narrative gift—the power to tell a story.

The previous study of structure in Moore's novels becomes meaningful to us as we realize the degree of emphasis that Moore put upon the art of story-telling. Moore was, as has been said, a study in devotion to art. No matter how fanciful, unconcerned, or dilettantish he may have seemed to his contemporaries (G. B. Shaw, for example, upon hearing that Moore had written a novel, could only exclaim, "But, I know George Moore!") as they met him at parties—when he was alone he had discipline enough to write and revise an astounding amount of literature. Moore was no Oscar Wilde who preferred conversation to writing; no, Moore had that self-discipline so necessary to a writer which forced him to spend hours alone in a room filling those hopelessly blank pages. Writing was a very serious business for him and not a profession to be entered upon lightly:

But now because the novel is so popular, everyone with any power of expression in writing at all, poets, essayists, historians, and almost everybody who has ever
Moore himself realized, in turn, that he could not paint or write poetry and he had little patience with people without talent who tried to write novels. What was it then, for Moore, that distinguished the novelist from other writers? It was the technique of telling a story.

... and what surprises me is they never seem to realize what the technique of a novel means; how it all has to be planned out to a nicety, every chapter decided on before the act of writing commences. Even then, as in my case, I often find that, in spite of the most carefully laid plans, things begin to go wrong and have to be done all over again.³

It was the plan, the plot, the structure of a novel that interested Moore, that was the important part of the art of a novelist. The quotation at the beginning of this chapter says, "People never seem to realize there is such a thing as a narrative gift—the power to tell a story."

This claim was Moore's own evaluation of his own talent; he believed he was an excellent story-teller and further, that this talent was the most necessary for a novelist. For confirmation of this statement one has only to glance at A Story-Teller's Holiday which, as we mentioned, contains paragraph upon paragraph of discussion between Alec and Moore on the art of telling a story. Perhaps two more instances
of this interest would not be out of place:

What is it?—Well, it was the *story* that held me in thrall, the story that was my *Belle Dame Sans Merci*. I've always been able to conceive, to invent a story, and though I couldn't write, I found that I could learn because I wanted to learn.⁴

or again:

I always did believe that I could write stories, and at a time when the most people were doing was a kind of paraphrasing of Boccaccio, I had more faith in that capacity than ever. In the stories themselves I knew I should have no difficulty.⁵

After this there can be little doubt of Moore's interest in story-telling, or of his belief that this talent is, in essence, what constitutes the art of the novelist. It is not unusual, and probably to be expected, that Moore defines the novel in the terms in which he excelled. But it is just this definition and concept of excellence which will not only clarify our previous study of the structure of the novels, but show how important the technical concept of structure was to Moore. An appreciation of his works cannot then be complete without our taking notice of this claim of story-telling power and its ramifications in Moore's novels. Structure is so important to Moore that he says:

The first thing in writing, to my mind, is a conception of the scene—the environment, the planning of it, the proportioning of it
in regard to itself and the story of which it is a part.°

Here Moore emphasizes not only story-telling but that aspect of a story which requires planning of action and scenes, the structure.

Did Moore then require of a novel only that it be well-planned? The answer must be "no." Moore read enough to know that there are excellent novels which do not have the careful planning of his own. Generally Moore was ready to denounce a lack of plan, but occasionally, when he was faced with a great novel without the obvious careful construction of his own, he, if the novel moved him, was willing to admit that the best writers did not always need well-planned stories. For example, he says in any number of places, "Whoever hath claws and fangs may forswear narrative." This statement explains his constant qualification of his talent as "only" a story-teller's. Moore's idea, in short, was that a handful of writers could do without stories, but the majority of novelists needed stories desperately. He regarded himself as a very good, and sometimes "the best," English story-teller.

One of Moore's strongest dislikes was obscurity. Again, he had full regard for obscurity in the greatest writers, but for the most part obscurity was simply poor planning and careless art. The ironical tone of the following passage is important:
... but before I had reached the best part of my argument Lemoître interrupted my talkativeness with the question: *Êtes-vous clair ou obscur?* and I answered: *Je n'ai pas assez de talent pour être obscur, cher maître!* Moore was quite sure that very few writers had the "talent pour être obscur," and he preferred clarity in even great art. The same instinct which made him prefer a story to the lack of one would make him prefer clarity to obscurity.

In fact, most of Moore's criticism of other writers was on the basis of either obscurity or want of story-telling ability. He disliked George Eliot for bringing philosophy into the novel; and the following criticism of Conrad and James is on the basis of story-telling:

Moore: What is Conrad but the wreck of Stevenson floating about on the slip-slop of Henry James?
MacCarthy (in agitation): There you are again! Why "slip-slop"?
Moore: I have no patience with a novelist who takes out a pack of hounds to hunt a rat. The climax of a Henry James story is that one of the characters offers another a cigarette.

So then, if Moore was as interested in story-telling as we have tried to show; if he considered it the vital aspect of his art; and if it was so important that he based his criticism on it—then surely our discussion of the structure of his novels has been an examination of Moore's work from a necessary point of view.
We have seen that the structures of Moore's novels are circular; one task yet remains, to examine the possibility that Moore's use of structure may be rooted in a philosophical idea of his.

Part II

Surely one of the obvious reasons for the use of a circular structure is unity:

\[ \text{Moore:} \quad \text{One must never forget unity, I withdrew my book \textit{Impressions and Opinions} from the American edition because I thought it lacked the first, the last essential of a work of art.} \]

\[ \text{Goodwin:} \quad \text{And you mean unity?} \]

\[ \text{Moore:} \quad \text{Of course.} \]

Moore certainly must have used the circular structure for the neatness it gave his stories. There can hardly be any neater ending than that in which a character ends either where he began or at an opposite pole from where he began. The end of the story is all-important in this examination. We talk of the structure as circular and, of course, it is only so if the story ends at a point where it began or at an opposite point.

This brings up the question: Was Moore concerned enough with the endings of his stories to justify an interpretation of structure which is so dependent on the end of
the story? Moore says, "The correlation of the end of a story to the story itself is that of the hand to the arm; neither is complete without the other." Or as Brown says, "Moore held a life-long opinion that English novelists were constitutionally unable to conclude their tales."

Moore definitely thought the end of the story to be very important. Most of the discussions of the art of storytelling in A Story-Teller's Holiday are on the ends of the stories; he considered his ending of Héloïse and Abélard (see the study in Chapter II) the best possible; and finally he makes numerous general remarks on endings as, for example, this one:

> English fiction never finishes gallantly; the writers swerve across the course or bolt out of it, or stick out their toes, turn it up, as the phrase goes.

or, as criticism of a particular case:

> The first part of the story Robinson Crusoe could not be improved, but the end is a sad spectacle for us men of letters—the uninspired try to continue the work of the inspired.

The end of a story was of such importance to Moore that he could appreciate it in Nature as well as in Art. Nature, in fact, sometimes gives better endings, from Moore's point of view, than Art does:

> A novel is the story of a man's life, and I think we shall find that Nature provides
ends for lives more strangely significant than any invented by story-tellers.

Beau Brummel, for example:

The end of Beau Brummel at Nice seems to me one of Nature's triumphs; in it she has surpassed anything that I remember for the moment in Tolstoy, Turgenev, or Tchekov, or Balzac. We all have a hearsay knowledge of Beau Brummel. We have heard, or think we have heard, that he came to London with a fifty-pound note in his pocket, no more, and a talent for dressing himself so remarkable that he soon began to set the fashion in clothes and was much sought after by tailors. His wit was ready and he reigned in London for twenty years, till one evening he said, addressing the Regent: George, ring the bell! The Regent rang the bell, and the servant was told to send round for Mr. Brummel's carriage. Everybody wondered and everybody understood that the knell of his popularity had been rung. The friends who had endured the Beau's authority, accepting rebuffs, sarcasms, and insolences of every kind complacently, foresaw their release from tyranny in the incident, and soon after, if not immediately after, the Beau found himself without a friend in London. And for some years, I know not for how many, he lived in Nice with an ever-failing brain, without friends or money, his only entertainment being the donning of his gala clothes of other days and listening to his servant announcing the high sounding titles of his former friends, till the cracking of the sconces restored him to sanity and the sadness thereof."

This story is recounted at such length because the end which Moore admires so is like that of his novels. Moore's presentation here illustrates the first type of circular structure in which the protagonist ends at the same place where he began, in Brummel's case poor and without
friends. It would seem that Moore's appreciation of even biographies is dependent on their being neatly done up in circular structures. For a second example, consider Napoleon:

For another great conqueror, Napoleon, Nature invented an end that equals in beauty the one she devised for Beau Brummel: she placed him on the rock of St. Helena to watch and to listen to the Atlantic, a wonderful end. 18

In this case the end is that of the second type of circular structure in which the protagonist ends at exactly the opposite point from whence he began. At first this story might seem like a complete circle, but in the presentation as Moore gives it, starting with Napoleon as conqueror and not with Napoleon's own humble beginnings, it is the second type. Nature did so well in this story because she placed the "great conqueror, Napoleon," where he could measure the smallness of his power against the might and eternity of the ocean. One final example should suffice:

Tolstoy's end is very wonderful if we connect it with the strange morality that he preached from the Steppes, a veritable Jeremiah, telling that a wife who left her husband would meet a violent end; however kind and good her lover may have been, she could not escape her fate. We are asked to believe in Anna Karenina's suicide, and we do whilst the book is in our hands; but we do not follow the great writer in The Kreutzer Sonata, for the morality preached in that book is that unless we marry a woman who is physically disagreeable to us, we shall plunge of a certainty a stiletto through the exquisite jersey that tempted us in the beginning. Mad indeed is the moralist who would reform our motives; and Nature,
having watched the preacher all the while, decreed an end the significance of which cannot escape even the most casual reader; a flight from his wife and home in his eighty-second year and his death in the waiting room of a wayside railway station in the early hours of a March morning.*

As Moore tells the story, Tolstoy's ending is circular. Tolstoy began by preaching that a woman should not leave her husband and he ends by leaving his wife. He presumed to preach morality and meets a sordid end, a death which he usually associated with an immoral life. A story, then, appeals to Moore insofar as the end gives it a circular structure and a resulting neatness.

Something must be said about the irony present in Moore's concept of a perfect ending. It is undoubtedly ironic that a character ends either where he began or at an opposite pole, but it would be difficult to prove that, in his novels, Moore was consciously trying for irony. There are as many definitions of "dramatic irony" as there are people who write about it, but the perfect endings of Moore's work are not "dramatic irony," at least in the sense that the reader knows something that the characters do not know and is aware that the characters are deceiving themselves. Certainly there is irony in Moore's work, but not so much that it always governs his use of structure.

Similarly the terms "poetic justice" have such a
restricted meaning that we cannot apply them to Moore's endings. There must necessarily be, as we said above, some irony implied in a circular structure, and the three "lives" outlined above show that Moore was not unconscious of the ironical possibilities. But the step to saying that all of Moore's novels, because they use a circular structure, are ironic is too large a step to make. For these reasons we have avoided the use of the terms "dramatic irony" or "poetic justice" in favor of the more precise description, "circular structure." Moore's unusual use of structure justifies employment of an original critical term to describe that use; the other terms, while touching on the problem, carry too many connotations that do not apply in a discussion of Moore.

Part III

Moore was a story-teller, not a philosopher or even a very deep thinker. He wrote a good deal about religion, but the writing does not show an abundance of original thought. As Ransom says:

Mr. Moore is revolted by the spectacle of a writer committing to a literary form his agonies, his ecstasies, his metaphysics, and his faith. His idea of culture is probably an idea as of a discipline that emancipates a man from all this folly and leaves his mind free to work with its highest precision on what is piquant or lovely on the surface of things; but it is obscene to peep under the
Moore was observant (there can be little doubt of that) but he did not make the transition from observance to serious thought. As a story-teller, of course, he did not have to make the transition, and usually his most important insights are little more than reflections on the social actions of people. Even in The Brook Kerith it was the perfect ending of Paul meeting Jesus that attracted him, not any serious speculations on the divinity of Christ. But, as we said earlier in this paper, Moore is sometimes surprisingly consistent in his opinions. He has been called a "man of wax" who changed his ideas and his heroes, one after another; but still, as we have tried to show, he was artistically constant in wanting a perfectly structured novel. So too, in his ideas; certain thoughts, or groups of thoughts, keep turning up in his work. Such a one, of serious importance to this paper, is Moore's fascination with the idea of "eternal recurrence."

Eternal recurrence, or the idea, in its most blatant form, of constant circular action in history, seems to have held for Moore a certain beauty which he could not forget. As early as 1881, in Pagan Poems, Moore says in "Ode to a Beggar Girl":

"Eternal recurrence, or the idea, in its most blatant form, of constant circular action in history, seems to have held for Moore a certain beauty which he could not forget. As early as 1881, in Pagan Poems, Moore says in "Ode to a Beggar Girl":"
Centuries hence, a million centuries hence,
You will dream again the dream of life.²¹

And in roughly the middle of his creative life, in 1906, on
the last page of Memoirs of My Dead Life, Moore concludes
with:

But nothing lasts forever. In some millions of years the sea will begin to wither,
and the vase containing me in ashes will sink (my hope is that it will down to some
secure foundation of rocks to stand in the airless and waterless desert that the earth
will then be). Rameses failed, but I shall succeed. Surrounded by dancing youths and
maidens, my tomb shall stand on a high rock in the solitude of the extinct sea, of an
extinct planet. Millions of years will pass away, and the earth, after having lain dead
for a few weeks under frost and snow, will,
with all other revolving planets, become ab-
sorbed in the sun, and the sun itself will
become absorbed in greater suns, Sirius and
the like. In matters of grave moment, mil-
ions of years are but seconds; billions
convey little to our minds. At the end of,
let us say, some billion years, the ultimate
moment towards which everything from the
beginning has been moving, will be reached;
and from that moment the tide will begin to
flow out again, the eternal dispersal of
things will begin again; suns will be scat-
tered abroad, and in tremendous sunquakes
planets will be thrown off; in loud earth-
quakes these planets will throw off moons.
Millions of years will pass away, the earth
will become cool, and out of the primal mud
life will begin again in the shape of plants,
and then of fish, and then of animals. It
is like madness, but is it madder than Pales-
tinian folklore? and I believe that billions
of years hence, billions and billions of years
hence, I shall be sitting in the same room
where I sit now, writing the same lines that
I am now writing; I believe that again, a
few years later, my ashes will swing in the
moveless and silent depths of the peaceful ocean, and that the same figures, the same nymphs, and the same fauns will dance around me again.  

And finally, in his very late life, in *Conversations in Ebury Street* (first published, 1924; Uniform edition, 1930) Moore gives us a modified version of the same thing. Here, though showing that he has some reservations, he still finds the idea attractive:

According to some there is no death, I replied, but repetition in endless time, and perhaps the moment that called *The Human Comedy* into being may reappear some billions of years hence... The sun brings back the mallows in the garden, and they live again, and spring in another year... A lovely translation from the Greek, beautiful as the mallows themselves, whose beauty concerns us more nearly than the doctrine that everything that has been must of necessity return, return being the law over all things, great and small, stars and mallows alike, everything returning to unity, to spread out again through space and time and again to be collected into unity; and that for ever and ever. A wonderful dream... that there is no death and that we are only separated from ourselves by some billions of years.  

To say that Moore used circular structures in his novels because he believed in eternal recurrence is to push things too far. It is too simple an explanation of Moore's rather complex character. Moore was too interested in a good story and too little interested in philosophy to allow a single idea to affect the basic structure of his novels.
On the other hand, if we are careful, and modify slightly what Brown has said, in the only paragraph of the only piece of criticism that mentions the problem, we may come close to the truth. Brown says:

This idea of eternal recurrence turns into a permanently useful acquisition in Memories of My Dead Life when the circle that Moore planned to track after his death is described in exact and affectionate detail, ending with his return, after billions of years... to his address in Pimlico, to "the same room as I sit in now, writing the same lines I am now writing," preparing, of course, to start running through the same circle again. His fascination with eternal recurrence seems to have resulted in part from its philosophical aptness to his special experience, since it was in better harmony than the cosmic evolution with his conviction, growing out of the situation at Moore Hall, that "life is beautiful at the moment, sad when we look back, fearful when we look forward." He would also discover in due time the practical importance of the idea as suggesting a solution for one of the large and more stubborn problems of narrative form. He held a long opinion that English novelists were constitutionally unable to conclude their tales; his own solution for the problem of ending a novel was to bring it back, according to the principle of eternal recurrence, to the point from which it had started, a solution he was to employ with perfect tact... in the... closing chapters of Esther Waters.24

As we have seen, Moore brings more than one novel back to its beginning. To attribute this technique to Moore's interest in eternal recurrence seems a safe enough statement in view of all the comments quoted in this chapter, but we would suggest, to modify Brown slightly, that the influence
was probably unconscious. The connection can be made between Moore's circular structures and his fascination with eternal recurrence, but if it was as conscious a connection as Brown would have it, it seems strange that an artist as open about his art as Moore was would not have realized it somewhere in his own writings. No, Moore was a story-teller and the influence of a philosophy of eternal recurrence on his art was not necessarily clear to himself.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Criticism of George Moore has tended to be anecdotal simply because the pose he adopted is such a fascinating one. Many of the stories about Moore are extraordinarily funny, but this very fact has delayed objective criticism of Moore as artist. We have had to wait almost a generation for all the people who knew Moore to exhaust their stories.

Moore did change his opinions as he matured, but it is unlikely that he changed any more than any man does in growing older; it is only that he, as Oscar Wilde charged, conducted his education in public. The changes of opinion for which Moore is so famous are interesting, but because of these changes his consistencies are doubly interesting. He was consistent in his Paganism, in his belief in eternal recurrence, and, as this paper has tried to show, in his story-telling. We have been concerned with one of the constants in the variable George Moore, one of the constants in his story-telling, his use of a certain kind of narrative structure.

Any number of times Moore was very definite in his claim to be only a story-teller. Critics have noticed this claim but have generally ignored its significance. For the most part, they have concerned themselves with Moore’s style, the sentences “like ribbons of toothpaste” as Yeats called
them; but little has been done on the structure of the novels of this man who called himself a story-teller by trade. We have tried to show that Moore consistently, whatever his other changes of opinion, used a circular structure in his novels. An examination of all the novels of the canon has shown (always with the exception of The Lake) that Moore used three types of circular structures:

a) The protagonist ends where he began.

b) The protagonist ends at the opposite point and, possibly, the circle is completed by another character.

c) The companion characters also have circular destinies which they complete while the protagonist is ending where he began or at an opposite point.

A brief tabular form would set the novels up this way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type a</th>
<th>Type b</th>
<th>Type c</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Modern Lover</td>
<td>The Brook Kerith</td>
<td>A Mummer's Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esther Waters</td>
<td>Aphrodite in Aulis</td>
<td>Muslin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Héloïse and Abélard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In chapter III we looked at some of the implications of Moore's use of the circular structure. The fact that Moore was fundamentally interested in the story told in his novels was shown first, followed by examples to prove that one of Moore's primary concerns in story, and the one which governed his use of structure, was the end of the story. The possibil-
Ity of irony is always present in the endings of Moore's novels and Moore consciously uses irony on occasion; but the circular structure does not imply irony in all of Moore's work.

A final suggestion is that Moore's use of circular structure proceeded from a philosophical position in favor of eternal recurrence. Moore was too interested in stories and not enough of a philosopher to be preaching a philosophy; rather, the idea of eternal recurrence probably was used by Moore unconsciously when he approached the problem of how to end his novels.
APPENDIX

Evelyn Innes (originally published, 1898; the copy used is D. Appleton and Co.'s 1928 edition)

Moore cut the story of Evelyn Innes from the final canon and thus a study of it is outside the stated limits of the paper; but the novel does have a circular structure and may serve as a partial answer/the question, "But what about the novels not in the final 'canon'?

Evelyn Innes, with its sequel, Sister Teresa (1901), is really one story, the story of Evelyn Innes, published in two separate novels. The story, in very brief form, without any of the curious implications that a novel about music written by a man who knew little about music suggests, is as follows:

Evelyn Innes is the daughter of a music teacher; but she yearns, since she has inherited her mother's voice, to be as famous an opera singer as her mother was. A rich man, Owen Asher, a dilettante in the Wilde manner, persuades Evelyn, although she is devoutly religious, to come abroad as his mistress and study voice. Her rise to fame is rapid, and Owen Asher falls hopelessly in love with her. Evelyn is eventually reconciled with her father and finds herself attracted to an Irish mystic (either Yeats or A. E. sat for the picture) and is stunned that she could have been, not
only the mistress of a man, but find that she has two lovers. Evelyn's studies in self-deception are the best parts of the book. Finally, Evelyn, still an ardent Catholic, driven half by remorse of conscience and half by fascination with a worldly priest, goes to a convent as a retreat. She thinks about staying, but instead, at the end of the novel, she leaves to go back to the world.

In *Sister Teresa* Evelyn, having returned to the world, eventually quits it and the stage and retires to the country to do good works. But even this retirement is not enough and she re-enters the convent to escape from her lovers.

*Evelyn Innes* ends with Evelyn going back to London but convinced that she will be able to stay away from her lovers because the nuns will be praying for her. "She imagined these prayers intervening between her and sin, coming to her aid in some moment of perilous temptation, and perhaps in the end determining the course of her life," (p. 435) This might be true or it might be Evelyn's final self-deception—at any rate this novel ends less neatly than any of Moore's others. But the point is that Moore could not leave it alone—three years later he came out with a sequel which placed Evelyn in the convent, at the opposite pole of her career on the stage. From the top of the world to out of the world completely is the circle which Evelyn makes.
FOOTNOTES

Introduction

1 George Moore's Naturalistic Prose (Copenhagen, 1952).


3 See Gettmann, p. 554.

Chapter I


2 All the biographical facts in this paragraph are from Joseph Hone's The Life of George Moore (London, 1936).

3 Susan L. Mitchell, Aids to the Immortality of Certain Persons in Ireland (Dublin, 1913), p. viii. The incident is mentioned by Moore in Ave.

4 Confessions of a Young Man.

5 Memoirs of My Dead Life.

6 A Communication to My Friends.

7 Mitchell, p. xii.

8 Life, p. 274.


13 Routh, p. 344.

14 Carl and Mark Van Doren, American and British Literature Since 1890 (New York, 1926), p. 165.


19 Georges Paul Collet, George Moore et la France (Geneve, 1957).


23 Brown, p. 73.

24 Brown, p. 74.

Chapter II

1 Conversations With George Moore (New York, 1930), p. 44.

Goodwin, p. 49.

Goodwin, p. 50.

See Beach, and also Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction.*

Goodwin, p. 55.

Mejdefors-Frisk, p. 38.

Symons, 274-5.


A *Mummer's Wife,* p. 35.


Burnsfield, 244-5.

Frierson, p. 44.


Brown, p. 137.

The *Lake,* p. 200.

Brown, p. 168 ff.

The *Lake,* p. viii.

Goodwin, p. 140.

Brown, p. 190.


*Celibate Lives*, p. 25.


*The Lake*, p. ii.

Hone, *Life*, p. 244.


A Story-Teller's *Holiday*, p. 143.

Chapter III

Goodwin, p. 175.

Goodwin, p. 175.

Goodwin, p. 175.

Freeman, p. 71.

Goodwin, 81-2.

Goodwin, p. 101.

*Celibate Lives*, p. vii.
9 Mac Carthy, p. 197.
10 Goodwin, p. 103.
11 Ave, p. x.
12 Brown, p. 78.
13 Avowals, p. 6.
14 Avowals, p. 7.
15 Avowals, p. 11.
16 Ave, p. ix.
17 Ave, p. ix.
18 Ave, p. x.
19 Ave, p. xi.
21 Brown, p. 78.
22 Memoirs of My Dead Life, p. 269-70.
23 Conversations in Ebury Street, p. 8.
24 Brown, 78-80.
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WORKS OF GEORGE MOORE

