

## Modern Mass Media and the Artist's Self-Disintegration in *Fergus* by Brian Moore

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### Abstract

Brian Moore (1921 –1999) was born in Northern Ireland. He immigrated to Canada in 1948, where he was a reporter for the Montreal Gazette. He later moved to settle in the United States. Moore's fame springs from writing about exiled individuals. *Fergus* (1970) is one of his poignant novels that focus on delineating the artist – hero struggle with the mass media in self exile in the States. Moore believes that modern mass media can either be a means of creation or a weapon of self- destruction in any artist's life, whether an actor, a painter or a writer. In his novel *Fergus*, he focuses on delineating rather the negative impact of the life of publicity and mass media on the hero, who is a writer of an Irish descent like himself. He adopts the technique of presenting a hallucinatory kind of reality in which the actual world of the hero is inhabited by visiting ghosts of dead people from his past life in Ireland. Moore's purpose in using this method is to highlight the readers understanding of true nature of the sacrifices that an artist makes for achieving his dream of living a celebrity figure in a place like America. Yet, *Fergus*'s predicament as an artist in exile is intertwined with Moore's personal crises in Ireland. The novel becomes a medium for filtering his passion and nostalgia for his parents' world, despite its stagnation and conflicting realities.

**Key words:** Mass media; Self-integration; Hallucination; Recollection; Impressionism; Pun; Freud, Metaphysical journey

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Here an audience waited for a Broadway producer to eulogist an actor and praise her gift for aping people ...It was the actor who was commemorated here today, not the woman. For who among this audience really knew the woman.

The Mangan Inheritance (p.79) (Note 1)

### INTRODUCTION

The mass media is a unique feature of modern society. Media influence or media effects are used to refer to the theories about the ways in which mass media and media culture affect the thought and behavior of their audiences. Indeed, mass media appears a significant force in modern cultures. Its development in recent years "has accompanied an increase in the magnitude and complexity of societal actions and engagements, rapid social changes, rising personal incomes, but most important of all the decline of famous persons and nations" (Note 2).

*Fergus* (1970) is one of the three poignant novels written by the Irish –Canadian novelist Brian Moore (1921-1999) (Note 3) about the artist's relation to the mass media in contemporary world. The other two novels are *The Great Victorian Collection* (1975) and *The Mangan Inheritance* (1978). Moore believes that modern mass media can either be a means of creation or a weapon of self- destruction in any artist's life, whether an actor, a painter or a writer. In his novel *Fergus*, he focuses attention on delineating rather the negative impact of the life of publicity and mass media on the

central protagonist, who is a writer of an Irish descent like himself. Following the path of many Irish writers before him, the thirty-nine years old Fergus James Madden leaves Ireland in order to follow his dreams for fame, fortune and success in America. Moore's choice of the American wasteland as a setting for the hero's crises is of a great significance. In this particular part of the world, most people, due to their lack of faith and spiritual guidance, are obsessed with famous people and celebrity figures. They are known to be fanatic in their devotion to a hero worship to the degree that they conceive him as a real guiding force, influencing their lives in all directions. Eventually, they treat him as their belonging, an additional collection or an ornament to beautify and color their superficial and void existence. The consequence of this attitude on the artist is amply devastating. He feels himself being dominated by the public via the mass media impact that his real self is annihilated and his integrity and humanity are jeopardized in the process. In other words, in surrendering himself and his aesthetic talent to the mere pursuit of living famous and wealthy, the hero-artist emerges into a shadow of himself, gradually driven to the zone of anonymity or non-existence.

This paper attempts to examine Fergus's predicaments as a writer within the perspectives stated above, prior to his progression to a full understanding of the dramatic sacrifices he has actually made for the dream of being a legend, eternally worshiped by his superficial fans, including the young and beautiful American girl, Dani Sinclair. The final phase of Fergus's awakening in the novel occurs after experiencing a series of hallucinations about his former life in Ireland. They endorse his perception of the importance of endowing his art with higher objectives other than pursuing the personal delusions that condemn him to be an easy prey for the mass media.

The present study is divided into five sections. Section one is the introduction which summarizes the main ideas and objectives of the study. The focus of section two is on the analyses of Fergus's crises with the American girl, Dani Sinclair in California, who seems to be his only remaining hope for a benevolent self resurrection from the chaos of his present existence as a mere celebrity person with nothing else to define him or his art. Section three aims to shed light on the character of the young heroine. It also examines the deceptive dimensions of her incompatible relationship with Fergus. Fergus's birth as a true artist who determines to devote his artistic passion for universal causes will be the main core of the discussion of section four. Section five is the conclusion that summarizes the main findings of the paper.

## 1. FERGUS'S CRISES WITH DANI SINCLAIR

The novel opens at a crucial moment of crises in the central protagonist's life, because of his sudden marriage proposal for his twenty -one- years old American girl

-friend Dani Sinclair in the morning. She is puzzled and thinks that Fergus is naïve and daring in his request to marry him. He is very sad to see her reacting in this illogical and cold manner to his natural demand. At a first glimpse, the problem may appear simply a normal case of misunderstanding, precipitated by the factor of the age difference between the two lovers. However, Moore establishes the fact that Fergus's conflict with Dani epitomizes, in its very essence, his real moral and spiritual degeneration, which he tries to escape through asking her to marry him.

Fergus is a middle-aged Irish writer who lives in his isolated prosperous beach house in California. As is the case of a long line of writers before him, he leaves Ireland in order to fulfill his artistic ambition in exile in the States. America's land of freedom, opportunities and wealth provides Fergus, as he believes, with a fertile soil for the nourishment of his aesthetic dreams, but only he has to learn to pay a high price for them. As Fergus emerges into a successful writer, known for his exceptional gifts of creating alive human beings in his books, the mass media interferes to manipulate his fame for its materialistic advantages. They start to forecast Fergus in the image of a god-like creator of miracles on the pages of his novels, to heighten the public's fever and their elevation of him. Moreover, working with people like Norman Redshields and Bernard Boweri from the Hollywood Production Company causes him to change his novels into film scripts in a manner to increase their profits. In due course, they made him feel that his artistry and aesthetic skills were all under their merciless exploitations. However, at this stage, Fergus appears as overwhelmed with his image as god-like creator of things that he is blinded to the negative results of this propaganda mission on him. He proudly states to his sister Maeve in one of her illusory visitation, "Limited? I am the one in this family who writes books and makes up stories... At the moment, you're my invention" (p.50).

Eventually, Fergus's artistic zeal submerges into a means for feeding this media implemented flashy image of him, which becomes a substitute identity for him in exile. During this climactic period of transition in his life, Fergus conceives Dani Sinclair to be a profound mirror image, reflecting his unique and his imminent celebrity status. For this very reason, he has always thought of himself in control of the situation of their being together. He has never imagined that she will defy or refuse him. The opening scene of the novel proves the contrary to Fergus. He realizes that the girl, who is young enough to be his daughter, is the one who dominates their relationship and threatens to leave him floating in a void of anonymity and nothingness this morning:

*"Look. Women want to be married," he told her ....*

*"Shit!" –*

*"What do you mean, shit?"*

*"What do I mean, shit?" Dani said. "I mean shit! Shit-shit-shit!"* (p.16-17).

The above conversation between Fergus and Dani illustrates Moore's poignancy in manipulating some seemingly simple linguistic vocabularies for delineating the broader image of the existing disparity between the hero and his young beloved Dani. Above all, Fergus uses the word "woman" in addressing Dani, the word supposedly encompasses his own status as an ordinary man who is asking a woman's hand for marriage. In this occasion, the word exhibits his innate obliviousness of this fact in his obsession with his media engendered god-like perception of himself. The word "woman" is also associated with maturity, which Dani proves entirely lacking in her appearances and mannerism. In retrospect, the word 'woman' foreshadows Fergus's utter blindness to Dani's reality.

Likewise, the repetition of the word "shit" by Dani has several levels of interpretations. Dani insists on ending the conversation with Fergus by stating the word "shit" four times; each having a different symbolic implication. The first time she uses the word to allude to her reluctance, as a free young American girl, to be tied by any marriage commitments with him, or probably with any other man at this age. The second mention of this word symbolizes her total carelessness about the future of their relationship together. The third "shit" is the most crucial one for it indicates that, contrary to his imaging, she is no longer seeing him as a hero or overwhelmed with his celebrity status. In other words, her earlier pride in accompanying him has faded. The fourth "shit" refers - as in the case of the heroine Daisy Buchanan in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby* (1925) - to her personal care free attitudes to her own life and environment as a whole.

However, Dani's rejection of Fergus in the morning causes the first crack in his mirror image, which marks a starting point of a stage of confusion and chaos in his life. He starts to wonder if, he is neither the man nor the hero -artist whom she admires, then what or who he is to her and, in retrospect, to his American fans altogether. When Dani leaves, Fergus has a series of apparitions. He imagines that people from his remote past in Ireland have arrived to rescue him from his present panic. Nonetheless, Dani remains the core of our understanding of the true nature of Fergus's predicaments both in Ireland and in the States. For this reason, it is vital to shed light on her character in the following section.

## 2. THE CHARACTERIZATION OF DANI SINCLAIR

The id, the ego and the super-ego are the three parts of the psychic apparatus defined in Sigmund Freud's structural model of the human psyche. The interaction

between the three concepts explains the way the human mind works. According to this model, the id refers to the unorganized part of the personality structure that contains a human's basic instinctual drives (Note 4). It is unresponsive to the demands of reality and acts according to its pleasure seeking principle and the pure satisfaction of its instinctual desires (Note 5). Freud believes that the mind of a newborn child is completely "id-ridden", in the sense that it "is a mass of instinctive drives and impulses, and needs immediate self-gratification or satisfaction" (Note 6). Undoubtedly, this viewpoint equates the id-ridden child with the heroine Dani Sinclair in Fergus. Dani's child-like personality is not only conveyed in her attitudes towards Fergus in the manner depicted earlier in the discussion. It is also ostensibly portrayed in her outward appearances in the following passage:

*When his girl left*

*Fergus wept. He hadn't been talking about her specifically, he had just wanted to discuss the situation. But she got up and went into the bathroom, where she kept her clothes. When she came out she wore a sweater and a very short skirt, and had tied a schoolgirl-bow in her long red hair. He knew he was too old for her. She avoided his eye.* (p.9).

Moore's compelling description of Dani's appearance is the touchstone for the revelation of several important features of her character. Symbolically, Dani's outward appearance catalyzes her belief in the own self-priority and carelessness about others. Her "very short skirt "and" her school girl bow" (p.9) are labels for her immature and child-like personality which stirs doubts in her credibility as a suitable match for the prominent artist-creator, Fergus. In his friend Dick Fowler's apartment, Fergus recalls that, when they first met: "she and I were like children, giggling and making silly jokes" (p.115). From this perspective, her irresponsible approach to their relationship is justifiable; she is too young and too inexperienced to be committed to her seemingly old lover. Dani's "long red hair", which she ties in a childish ponytail style, is another evidence of her immaturity. Indeed, the color "red" is always associated with passion. In line with the above-mentioned Freudian concept, the color red is used as an emblem of the heroine's inclination to be driven by instincts, especially of personal gratification, rather than any moral ethics. Dani's inner spiritual void and obsession with appearances are epitomized in her attachment to the "make up- mirror" (p.90). She keeps examining herself in it, in a manner to reveal, yet, another psychological trauma in her personality; namely her insecurity, due to her problematic relationship with her separated parents, particularly her own mother, Dusty Sinclair. She states to Fergus, "I don't like her. She makes me ashamed. Then afterwards, I hate myself for despising her... What right have I to despise her? I know what it is. I'm afraid maybe, in some way I'm like her" (p.102).

Dani appears to be accurate in her anticipation. Her mother, the eccentric, drunk and aging Dusty Sinclair, has always talked of her overflowing passion for the legend celebrity singer Frank Sinatra. This seems to influence Dani throughout her adolescence that she is instantly captured by Fergus's media heightened celebrity image. However, this is not the only reason for her attachment to him. It is possible that she conceptualizes him as a replacement for the father figure, whom she has missed for a long period in her life. In the Freudian terms stated earlier, she is probably unconsciously searching for the super ego, who while fulfills her basic needs and instincts will also provide some parental direction and control to her spiritually void and meaningless existence. Thus, Fergus's claim this very morning has shattered all her expectations about her famous spiritual male redeemer. His marriage proposal awakens her to the fact that he is not the god-like celebrity person she has imagined, but an ordinary man. He is the ego who strives to bind her with the principles of the reality of marriage, having children and shouldering the responsibilities of a household. Such seemingly vigorous commitments are alien to Dani and stand in opposition with her self-seeking dreams in associating with him. Utterly indifferent to Fergus's wish, she decides to end her relationship with him: "She avoided his eyes. 'Dani?' He called, but deaf to him, she went out of the bedroom .... He tried to smile at her. She ignored his smile " (p.9; p.17). This interesting short passage is an example of another significant feature of Moore's style in the novel. In the earlier quoted extracts, we are made aware of his capacity in playing on words, or employing what was known in Shakespeare's time as the use of puns. Here, Moore appears to be adopting the modern impressionistic technique of using colors, facial expressions and senses in delineating his character's mood and action.

However, Fergus's acquaintance with Dani occurs at a crucial period in his life. He was suffering from the strain of broken marriage. He needed money to pay alimony to support his wife and child. He was also antagonized with the manners that the Hollywood producer, Norman Redshields and the director, Bernard Boweri were treating him. They disappointed him with their demands of revising one of his novels several times in order to go in line with their own perspectives of film making industry:

In the past year, his life seemed to have become some other person's story, a farcical tragedy or tragic farce from which he was trying to emerge and start a new life with Dani. But his hope for a new life had been precisely the cause of this morning's fight with her... (p.16).

For these reasons, Fergus clings to Dani, for he perceives her to be his last chance for salvation from his chaotic situation. He believes that being with her will enable him to go back to the past and capture his former

self and, hence, start his life all over from the beginning. He tries to pose some materialistic temptations in order to persuade her to stay with him and, consequently, assist him in his odyssey to the past:

...happy and optimistic, he had talked of taking her abroad to show her all those places she had never seen – London, Rome, Stockholm, Dublin, and, of course, Paris.... He knew he was too old for her. How did you talk to someone like that? (p.16-17)

When Fergus fails in his effort to convince her to remain with him, he suggests the notion of uniting through eternal matrimony. Her unexplainable reaction to him in the morning has shocked Fergus. He realizes that Dani, like Redshields and Bawori, and all those whom he has known or met in America, are unable to appreciate the human behind the artist. They all embrace the media made impression of him, at the cost of ignoring his innate humanity. Like the heroine of Moore's novel *The Mangan Inheritance*, he begins to ponder, "who among this audience really knew" (p.79) Fergus the man. He has crucified the man and the human for the partial media projected image of him. It is time for him to transcend this image, for it maps his traumatic withering as an artist.

### 3. FERGUS'S METAPHYSICAL JOURNEY TO THE PAST

Fergus's morning's experiences of disappointment with Dani, and the discovery of the reality of his superficial achievements in the land of his dreams exacerbate his sense of loneliness in his secluded Californian beach house, surrounded by few bare mountains. He chooses this isolated residence for Dani and himself so that to begin their new life together, away from publicity and mass media disturbances. At present, due his psychological crises, the place turns into a stage for a series of hallucinations in which he sees apparitions of his own dead parents, brothers and sisters and relatives from his past life in Ireland. These hallucinations become a substitute device for the use of memories and recollections that are known to be striking characteristics of the contemporary stream of consciousness technique adopted in the novel. However, Fergus intentionally recalls these people from his past and shares imaginary conversations with them in the hope of finding some remedy for his present calamities.

Fergus's first hallucination leads to his encounter with the ghost of his mother "sitting at the far end of the terrace" and wearing "a flowered dress", which "she had often used for housework" (p.13). The meeting overwhelms him with nostalgia for the warmth of his former family life in Ireland. He remembers how his loving mother used to reconcile between him and his domineering father, who used his own success as a

standard for judging his son's achievements (Note 7):" When she saw *Fergus* looking at her she crinkled up the skin at the corners of her eyes and smiled as though trying to placate him" (p.13). He also notices that this particular visitation of his mother reveals signs of utter contentment and happiness that probably spring from her selfless dedication to her family. Yet, she reappears in another vision "wearing her black cloche hat [and] carrying two prayer books" (p.35). *Fergus* hears her asking his father, doctor James Fadden, to hurry to catch the eleven o'clock mass, for it is a holiday of obligation. This vision illuminates another crucial aspect of his mother's integrity as a woman. He remembers her being a devout Catholic believer. Inevitably, he starts to compare between her and Dani's shallow and self - obsessed mother. The juxtaposition between these women renders *Fergus*'s painful realization of another significant waste in his life, namely sacrificing his rich past heritage for a life of triviality and appearance in the States. Hence, *Fergus*'s meeting with his dead mother's spirit also engenders his appreciation of the Irish way of devotion to parental responsibilities and faith, when compared to the reality of the shallowness of parents and people in the States (Note 8):

*Dani and Mrs. Sinclair seemed improbable characters in a wide screen color film of American life.... Dani and Mrs. Sinclair - he had known [them] as an adult. His mother and aunt Kate he had seen, smelled and sensed with the special strong perceptions of a very young child* (p.98).

The turning point in *Fergus*'s meeting with the apparition of his mother occurs when she precipitates his realization of the adulterous nature of his relationship with Dani, which is considered a grave sin in Irish Catholicism:

*Until now, he had thought that, like everyone else, he exorcised his past by living it. But he was not like everyone else. His past had risen up this morning, vivid, uncontrollable, shouldering into his present. How can I live a life with Dani? he wondered, if my mother keeps coming into room?* (p.38).

His consciousness of this fact results in the revelation of the cause of his original conflict in Ireland being not only his repressing father but also his catholic upbringing which hinders individuals' spontaneous self - fulfillment. Under these circumstances, he left Ireland and discarded his former faith in order to escape its web of victimization and paralyses.

*Fergus*'s complicated feelings of guilt and doubt at these realizations prompt him to visualize, this time, his aunt Mary sleeping in the lower bunk of his own bedroom:

*Although she was in bed and under the blankets, she seemed fully clothed, wearing a black dress fastened at the neck by a row of small octagonal jet buttons, the sort of dress she wore in the years she lived with*

*Fergus*' parents. He remembered those little buttons: he used to pull them when she took him on her knee to read him a story (p.38).

Unlike his mother, the ghost of his dead aunt appears "fully clothed" in an intricate "black dress". The black is the color of mourning and Moore uses the color to endorse *Fergus*'s memories of her unhappy life with her mad husband who died in an asylum. In a typical impressionistic manner, the color black conveys, once more, the dark side of life in Ireland, reflected in the insanity of aunt Mary's sensitive husband and his following tragic death. He remembers him to be like himself a rebellious person against the austerity of Irish environment. To avoid a fate like that of aunt Mary's husband, *Fergus* determines to live in self- exile. *Fergus*'s conversation with his aunt, in due course, transcends his gloomy vision about life in Ireland. She informs him that her catholic faith has actually sustained her during the crises of isolation and loneliness, following the death of her beloved husband. When *Fergus* declares that her life is a waste in Ireland she reiterates:

*Waste, what's a waste about it? I had my life, you were the funny wee articles, the four of you. God is good, Fergus. Yes, God is good. What I pray for is to see us all together again, someday, the whole Fadden family, the way we once were, but with even more of us, my own father and mother, my sisters and brothers, my friends and relations, and you children, my little nieces and nephews, all of us reunited in heaven in the sight of Almighty God. Yes, and God willing, we will be* (p.42).

The next person whom *Fergus* conjures up in his journey to the past is his sister Maeve. She is actually forty-three years old and lives with her family in Ireland. He wishes to recall her because she is the one, amongst all his brothers and sisters, who understands him. He contemplates that "...the real Maeve is not a ghost; she is alive at this very moment in the town of Dundalk in Ireland, probably driving her Mini to the parochial school to pick up two of her four children" (p.50). The Maeve whom *Fergus* materializes, eating a plum on the beach in California, is aged sixteen and wearing a school uniform and a school badge, showing "a heart, a cross, and a wreath of thorns" (p.49). Her recollected image is almost similar to that of Dani's in her "short skirt" and a "schoolgirl- bow" in the opening chapter of the novel. The only major difference is that his sister's uniform is distinguished by the school badge which bears signs of conformity to her world, in spite of its suffocating reality and rigidity. However, the contrast between these two girls highlights Dani's earlier stated superficiality when compared to Maeve's rich and responsible character. Maeve's personality is skillfully embodied in her typical Irish name. In the color spectrum, mauve stands for the unbiased and calm natured people. In the novel, it is used to its literal dictionary meaning to symbolize the

intoxication of life in Ireland. Now Fergus discovers that his sister's actual worth stems from her moral and ethical complacencies with the demands of her catholic faith and stagnant environment. In retrospect, Maeve becomes a means for delineating Fergus's own naivety in seeking to be rescued through his shallow American sweet-heart Dani. Moreover, "the heart, and the wreath of thorns" (p.49) are symbols of Irish culture. Maeve's devotion and acceptance of them as part of who she is in the present and in the future bring into Fergus 's focus his mistake in choosing to denounce his glorious past in order to be his own god and inspirer in an alien culture. She tells Fergus, prior her departure:

*Would you listen to the wee tin god?" Maeve said. "Hey, can I have some of this cheese?"... "If you died this minute, I would cease to exist for you. In that sense, I'm your invention. But, in fact, I would still exist. Heaven depends on Your trouble is, you can't be sure of anything. You have no laws, no rules, no spiritual life at all. You have to make up your own rules of conduct. You have to become your own wee ruler, and found your own wee religion. You are your own God" (p.50-51).*

It is worth mentioning here that Fergus's intentional invocation of the image of the adolescent Maeve constitutes a serious turning point in his metaphysical expedition to the past. All the dead persons whom he has recalled were mere ghosts or spirits seen in forms of hallucinations about the past. His sister Maeve is an actual recreation of his imagination. Fergus appears to be testing, in this occasion, his own creativity. He wants to be certain of possessing the extraordinary imaginative power to create real and alive human beings. He states to Maeve: "I'm the one who imagines you there, eating that plum right now. At the moment, you're my invention." (p.50). Indeed, the presence of Maeve verifies the notion that Fergus's aesthetic gifts are not diminished or forever lost. The reality is that people in America like, for instance, Dani, her mother, Redshields, Boweri and others are solely obsessed by his media engendered super - idealized image that they fail to embrace the genuineness of art and applaud him for it. The real artist in him is mercilessly obliterated or crucified in his acquisition of superficial fame to impress his American fans and his sweet heart Dani.

Another important step in Fergus's progression toward self-awareness occurs when he suddenly observes Dani's mother conversing with the ghost of his dead artist friend, Paddy Donlon, who arrives on the same problematic day in Fergus's life. In her stage-like approach, Mrs. Sinclair seems to inform Donlon of her need for some minor roles to console her in her old age. The scene intensifies Fergus's earlier perception of her superficiality and indifference to Dani's real needs as a mother. His frustration prompts to imagine his young sister Kathleen, awaiting her turn, together with her other

sisters and brothers, to kiss her father, who occupied a chair in their living room to indicate his authority. He suddenly becomes conscious of the fact that although his sister Kathleen belongs to the generation of suppressed adolescents in Ireland, yet her situation is far more superior to her contemporary American counterpart, Dani. Unlike Katherine, Dani is victimized by too much freedom, parental ignorance and lack of guidance in her life. Thus, she is vulnerable to be taken advantage of by an incompetent old selfish male like himself who plays the role of "Sugar Daddy" (p.147) in her life. Fergus himself states that she was "vulnerable, unprotected. What helps was he? Couldn't even protect himself." (p.129).

Fergus's perception of the nature of his relationship with Dani in this light, moves him to search for other instances in which he has exploited women for his personal satisfaction. In his fantasy world he imagines Mrs. Edna Findlater. She sparks the recollection of a humiliating adolescent experience, when he used to feast his eyes through a bathroom window on her naked body. For the first time in his life, he penetrates into the reality of his own corruption that challenges his own image of self-perfection and legibility for guiding Dani. Yet, the importance of Fergus's reminiscence of his conduct with Mrs. Findlater resides in rendering a wave of flash back into the time when he was a young adolescent boy, at the same age as Dani. While he is in the peak of his new ordeal, Fergus hears Dani crying in the kitchen because of her mother. Her tears contribute to his understanding of the prevailing fact that engenders his ultimate reconciliation with his own father and his past life in Ireland. Dani's calamity with her mother makes him aware of the existence of deep inherited emotional ties to bind between parents and their offspring, despite all differences between them:

*He thought of Dani's surprising tears and looked into the kitchen, where mother and daughter stood, busy at the efficient sinks, handsome, red-haired women, personification of the American way. Affectionate, almost sisterly in their bright play clothes. Yet Dusty can make Dani weep, Dani who never weeps. Why? Because parents form the grammar of our emotions. As mine have mine, Fergus thought, turning away from this pretty picture, this world so different from the old worlds he had known (p.102).*

Dani's attitude in the kitchen also culminates in Fergus's recognition of the undeniable age gap, which hinders proper communication or understanding between them: "No matter how often he told her, there was- no way she could really understand" (p.108). This notion is emphasized in other occasions in the novel to highlight Fergus's realization of his own selfishness in manipulating this reckless young girl, for maintaining his own image of fame and glory, instead of shrouding her with his

compassion and fatherly protection:

*Dani appeared outside the playhouse, searching for him over by the bougainvillea bushes. Seen through the playhouse window, she seemed, not the girl who had been close to tears half an hour ago, but a stranger; there was something very childish about her; seen through the window - her very short dress, her long straight hair; her white plastic Wellington boots which came up to her knees. Something ineluctably sexually titillating. She looked far younger than her years, so young that if he touched her he might be arrested for contributing to the delinquency of a minor (p.108-109).*

Fergus's guilt stricken consciousness towards Dani prompts him to envision three women preparing for a birthday celebration on the beach. These women are his ex-wife Margaret, his daughter Lisa and the first woman he loved, Sophie Lavery. The episode of his encounter with them is led by his younger self. They appear together to remind him of his other deadly sins in the past, starting from forgetting his moral duties as a father towards his daughter Lisa to being an irresponsible husband to his ex-wife Margaret and an indifferent lover to his former sweet-heart, Sophie. There is also the drama of Elaine Rosen: Fergus discovers that he may well have succeeded in drawing some sadistic response from her. Fergus's demeaning attitudes towards these women bring into a clear focus his deceitfulness and degeneration as a man and as an artist. He realizes that he had abused all these women from the past and the present for the sake of imposing his male authority, as his own father. Significantly, Fergus's memories of these thwarting experiences with women precipitate his intuitive sympathy with Dani. He decides to relieve her from the burden of this morning's marriage proposal. It is arguable that the incident in which he imagines himself a chivalric hero rescuing an unknown girl - who could be Dani - from a savage crowd, is a clue to his repentance and wish to be her male savior.

Fergus's indecent treatment of these women from his past substantiates, yet again, his knowledge of the falsity underling his publicized image as a prominent artist. Likewise, he discovers that he is so absorbed with the concept of asserting his chauvinistic male supremacy through his art that he has never considered using it to alleviate, at least, female sufferings, whether in America or back home in Ireland. For this reason, he has metamorphosed into the void and worthless image of an artist, who -as his sister Maeve informs him in one of his hallucinations - will soon be forgotten after his death, for there is nothing in his art to endow it with significance or immortality.

Ultimately, Fergus's understanding of the grave sacrifices he has made in the aesthetics of his art climaxes in his birth as a real artist who learns that the true worth of his creativity springs from its dedication for causes other

than mere self-elevation. Accordingly, these women from his remote past are present this afternoon on the beach to celebrate the birth of the true artist, Fergus Fadden. His birth is paralleled to that of Joyce's hero, Stephen Dedalus. Stephen's transition into an artist craving for aesthetic beauty also occurs in the instance of observing some women, while wandering on the beach. In both cases, this marked moment of the birth of the real artist adds the final touch to the competition of their portraits at the end of the novel. From this perspective, Moore's novel *Fergus* can be considered as complementing James Joyce's semi autobiographical masterpiece, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1920). The major difference between these works is that the portrait of Joyce's hero reaches its completion at a sudden moment of epiphany which exacerbates the need to realize his artistic ambition in a foreign place beyond Ireland. Moore's novel, *Fergus*, traces his interest in portraying the various facets of an artist's struggle to sustain himself and the essentials of art, while actually living in exile. Thus, both novels can be viewed as the two faces of the same coin: while Moore's novel deciphers into the true nature of the crises of an artist in exile, James's portrait depicts the artist - hero's antagonizing struggle in Ireland.

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## CONCLUSIONS

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Brian Moore is a well-known writer of realism. Nevertheless, in his novel *Fergus* he seems to digress from the norm of traditional realism of writing into experimenting with presenting a hallucinatory kind of reality in which the actual world of the central character is inhabited by visiting ghosts of dead people from his past life in Ireland. Moore's purpose in using the hallucinatory process in the novel is multidimensional. In the first instance, it helps to create a pattern of parallelism and contrasts between characters, events and values in the very structure of the novel. As illustrated in the paper, the employment of the hallucinatory discourse proves to be vital for the scheme of the hero's self-discovery and radical transformations at the end of the novel. Fergus's spontaneous envisioning of the apparitions from his past and contrasting them with the relatively few living characters from his contemporary world, during his Mrs. Dalloway (Note 9) like twenty-four-hours ordeals, promote his understanding of the fact that his potential creative talents are not utterly extinguished by the mass media, as he has imagined. The bare fact that he can invoke the apparitions of his dead parents, sisters and relatives any time he desires is a proof of the survival of these aesthetic powers within him, which he determines to dedicate to serving humanity, instead of feeding his delusions about fame and supremacy.

Moore's resort to the hallucinatory method is also of great significance in transcending the time barrier between the past and the present for the establishment of

hero's progression toward ultimate reconciliation with his parents and his former conflicts in Ireland. From this perspective, we can also conclude that Fergus's story is a fictionalization of Moore's own nostalgia for his parents' world and the warmth of his past life in Northern Ireland. Moore believes that the artist can never really resolve the past legacies, which he carries with him in self-exile. He writes in his short story "Preliminary Pages for a Work of Revenge" (1961): "No other postmark can compete in authority with the place of one's birth. It is what we fled: it may, at any time, reach up to claim us" (p.58). He states to his interviewer Donald Cameron that the real world is the place "in which our parents and relatives still live". He adds that he is "anxious to preserve those strong links with real world". (Note 10)

It is worth mentioning here that Fergus's Hallucinatory dialogue with the women of his past, which induces his paramount sympathy with his American girlfriend Dani, alludes to Moore's feminist concern in the novel. He seems constantly preoccupied with the grave issue of female victimization in his novels. He believes that the female members are the ones who pay the sever price of the epidemic ailing of their societies. Ultimately, Moore's experimentation with the realm of fantasy and hallucination in Fergus wins him the high reputation of being a first-rate writer throughout the literary world. It is worth mentioning that Moore was strongly admired by Graham Green who called him "favorite living novelist" of the century. (Note 11)

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