

# BRIAN MOORE IN POLAND

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Brian Moore was born in 1921 into a well to do Catholic nationalist family in Belfast. He emigrated to Canada in 1948, where he worked as a journalist and wrote thrillers under pseudonyms before his literary debut in 1955 with *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne*. Over the course of his life (he died in 1999), he wrote some twenty novels, spending the rest of his life in Canada and the United States (from 1964). In 1946, while working with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, he went to Warsaw and Gdynia. Denis Sampson, in his biography, writes that Moore smuggled two articles, later published in the Dublin *Sunday Independent*, out of the country in the British diplomatic bag in 1947. In one of these he foresaw an ideological struggle ~~between the church~~ and communism in Poland (Sampson 1998: 60–61). Jo O’Donoghue claims Moore met Cardinal Wyszyński at this time, and some 40 years later Moore was to return to the theme of Catholicism and communism in Eastern Europe in *The Colour of Blood* (O’Donoghue 1990: xii). This later period in his writing career also sees something of a return to the thrillers he had written as a young man before *Judith Hearne*.

Western criticism of Moore, O’Donoghue explains, usually concentrates on themes rather than techniques (O’Donoghue 1990: xiii). Two reasons are suggested for this. One is that he is too popular to be taken very seriously; the other is that his art is of the self-concealing kind. Christopher Ricks praised his “transparency” in 1966, while Michael Paul Gallagher described Moore as “a marvellously transparent and non-intellectual dramatiser of some key philosophical issues of our times” (O’Donoghue 1990: xiv). Moore’s popularity is discussed by Christopher Murray in his introduction to the *Irish University Review’s* special issue on Brian Moore in 1988, where he writes: “There are people, however, who hold that a popular author is beneath serious critical notice” (Murray 1988: 7).

The title of Robert Sullivan's 1996 study of Moore's fiction is *A Matter of Faith* and O'Donoghue identifies belief or faith as Moore's most important theme (O'Donoghue 1990: xv). He is considered a Catholic writer (Brown 1988: 37), sometimes compared to Mauriac, and frequently to Graham Greene (Battersby 1987: 10), although ~~he grew tired of this~~ (Sampson 1998: 282). "Brian Moore is my favourite living writer" is a quotation from Greene that features on the dust jacket of, for example, the Polish translation of *The Statement* (the other, probably more faithful, version is "favourite living novelist," quoted in Prose 1990). Critics note his skilful shifting of point of view and he is often praised for his authentic portraits of female characters. Parallels are drawn with Flaubert (*Madame Bovary*) (Cosgrove 1988: 59–60) and with Tolstoy (*Anna Karenina*) (de Vere White 1976: 8). Perhaps inevitably, for an Irish emigrant author, comparisons with Joyce are made (Frayne 1972: 215), though usually with the Joyce of *Dubliners* and *Ulysses* rather than *Finnegans Wake*. The interior monologue that makes up his *I am Mary Dunne*, for example, has been compared to Molly Bloom's soliloquy (Foster 1974: 175).

Catholicism was to play an important part in Brian Moore's career in Poland. With his *Judith Hearne* appearing around the time of the thaw, communism was a less important but by no means insignificant factor. He debuted in Polish in 1968 with *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, published by PAX's publishing institute (see the appendix for details of all the Polish translations). PAX was a Catholic organisation closely aligned with the government. All publishing houses, whether they liked it or not, were closely aligned with the government through such institutions as the censorship office but PAX was more closely and more willingly aligned than others, and enjoyed certain privileges as a result. For example, under Stalinism, PAX was permitted to publish Graham Greene when others could not publish any contemporary western fiction unless it was written by confirmed communists.

Six of Moore's novels ~~were translated in the years~~ 1968 to 1972, all published by PAX. One more, *The Mangan Inheritance*, appeared in 1985, bringing to seven the number of novels published before 1989. Despite the upheaval of 1989, interest in Brian Moore did not disappear, although his sales may have been overshadowed by the likes of new arrivals on the Polish market such as Tom Clancy and Robert Ludlum. *Catholics*, *Cold Heaven*, *Black Robe*, *The Magician's Wife*, *The Colour of Blood*, and *The Statement* were translated and published in post-1989 Poland.

It is tempting to pick out conspicuous absences from the list of his books translated into Polish and speculate why some are missing – always remembering that no one is obliged to translate his entire works. Missing are *Fergus*,

*The Revolution Script*, *The Great Victorian Collection*, and *The Doctor's Wife* from the 1970s, *The Temptation of Eileen Hughes* (1981), and – up until 1992 – *The Colour of Blood* (1987). Publishers seem to have been guided to some extent at least by perceived quality. *Fergus* was panned in the USA (Sampson 1998: 199–200) and Denis Sampson claims Moore's reputation declined in the 1970s in Canada (1998: 230). *The Great Victorian Collection* was a departure for Moore into the realm of magic realism. As it happens, Latin-American magic realism was popular in Poland and it may have been thought that its influence on *The Great Victorian Collection* was a little *too* clear. As for *The Doctor's Wife*, this may have been too sexually explicit for socialist Poland, which had a tendency towards prudishness. The novel has been criticised for its sex scenes, which Moore himself later regretted writing, according to Denis Sampson (1998: 234), and which one critic described as “a regrettable lapse into novelettish escapism and soft porn by a normally more fastidious writer” (Cronin 1988: 33). *The Colour of Blood* is a political thriller set in an unnamed East European country during the cold war. With its obvious echoes of Poland under martial law, it was highly unlikely that it be published in 1980s Poland and somewhat surprising that when it was translated it received so little attention.

Of Moore's earlier books O'Donoghue says they are marked by a “complete rejection of Catholicism” (O'Donoghue 1990: xvii) and yet it is precisely these books that were published by Catholic publishers PAX. Again, one might speculate as to why this was so. One could see the embrace of these novels by a pro-government institution as an attempt to attack Catholicism from within. Some support for this view comes from a study of the fate of Moore's novella *Catholics*. This seems an obvious candidate for translation but PAX never touched it. In fact, it was published before 1989, appearing in 1974 in *Więź*, a Catholic periodical unconnected with PAX. *Catholics* is much more sympathetic towards Catholicism, and in particular traditional, pre-Vatican II Catholicism, than novels such as *An Answer from Limbo*. Kitrasiewicz and Gołębiewski comment that PAX often published polemics with the official church (2005: 17) but it should be noted that it also published Catholic writers not marked by “complete rejection of Catholicism,” such as Bruce Marshall, G.K. Chesterton, Evelyn Waugh and A.J. Cronin.

After 1989 the publishing market fragments and PAX, with its sober dust jackets and measured words of commendation for the author, is no longer the only publisher to take Brian Moore's books. Some of the free market publishers did good production jobs of his works (*Cold Heaven*); some were less attentive to

quality (*Black Robe*). Larger, longer-lasting publishers only took his books in 1998 (Alfa – not a big house but not insignificant either) and in 2000 (Świat Książki). In the 1980s and 90s Moore wrote books that are often described as “moral” or “metaphysical” thrillers. In their Polish incarnations the emphasis is on “thriller.” *The Statement* appeared in 1997 under the imprint of Adamski and Bieliński in a series that includes a dozen Tom Clancy novels and books by other less well-known thriller writers such as Larry Bond and Stephen Coontz. The books in this series bear a large seal of the United States of America on their front cover. This includes *The Statement*, which is set in the Catholic Church in France and has nothing to do with the USA. The jacket blurb does, however, describe it as a “moral thriller” (Moore 1997). Even more telling is the appearance of *The Colour of Blood*, published by “Crime and Thriller” publishers (the name of the publishing house is given in English, not Polish). The cover shows blood dripping from the title and has a picture of a human figure struggling behind the bars of a cell. There is also a picture of a woman, although there is no important female character in this story of a cardinal’s attempts to head off political strife in a totalitarian country. On the back cover is written, “Every time a Brian Moore book appears the critics say it is his best yet!” (Moore 1992) which is simply not true and contrasts with the blurb from PAX’s 1972 edition of *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*: “There is no need to commend the talent with which this is written: Brian Moore is a well-enough known writer” (Moore 1972). On the back of *The Colour of Blood* is a picture of the similarly sensationalist cover of the forthcoming *Lies of Silence*.

Even if the publishers’ emphasis shifted to the sensational elements of Moore’s fiction, the Catholic question was not forgotten. *Black Robe* tells of a Jesuit mission to convert native people in seventeenth century Canada and it was published by “Graffiti,” a publishing house that does not seem to have survived, who tied it in with the film version of the book. *Catholics* was published in 2009 by Fronda, a conservative Catholic organisation, this time most definitely not aligned with the government of the day. Fronda may have been unaware of the appearance of the novella in 1974. At any rate, they hired a new translator for the job, much less experienced than Ewa Życieńska, who did the 1974 translation. This new version appears in a series called “novels with a cross” that includes books by Chesterton and Gertrud von Le Fort. The blurb reads

[Moore’s novels’] critical blade is not, however, contrary to the opinions of some superficial readers, directed at religion and the church. By constructing the narrative in such a way as to highlight widespread hypocrisy, cynical

pragmatism and (...) loss of faith, Moore paradoxically expresses his original youthful longing for true holiness and faithfulness to evangelical principles.

(Moore 2009)

This is the “no-true Scotsman” fallacy: Moore’s early novel, *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, generally taken to be autobiographical, is not at all sympathetic to holiness, though perhaps it is sympathetic to “true” holiness. Even Fronda was not averse to a little sensationalism. An extract from the book appeared in their magazine (also called “Fronda”) illustrated with silhouettes of heavily armed soldiers – images entirely unconnected with the novella’s contents, though they would have fitted in with the setting of *Lies of Silence* (Moore 2009b: 274–275, 283).

Another difference in the treatment of Moore before and after 1989 is the choice of translators. As a general rule, more experienced translators were given his books in the early years than later on (the major exception is Ewa König-Krasińska’s 1972 translation of *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*). For example, Zofia Kierszys, who did *Judith Hearne* and *The Feast of Lupercal*, had many works by William Faulkner to her name before she took on Moore. She is first mentioned in the Polish National Library’s on-line catalogue in 1957: over a decade before she came to Brian Moore. Similarly, Maria Skibniewska is first credited with a translation in the catalogue in 1948, and had translated Graham Greene, J.D. Salinger, Henry James and William Faulkner before she translated Moore’s *An Answer from Limbo* and *I Am Mary Dunne*. The post-1989 translators appear far less often in the National Library’s catalogue. Jan Grabiąo (*The Colour of Blood*) is mentioned only twice. Iona Paczkowska (*Cold Heaven*) has four entries and Tomasz Walenciak (*Catholics*) six. Ewa Źycieńska, who translated *Catholics* in 1974, had been translating since at least 1958, with writers such as William Faulkner, William Saroyan, Graham Greene, Truman Capote, Raymond Chandler, Laurie Lee, and John Le Carré to her name.

Before 1989 publishers were obliged to provide each book with a colophon saying how many copies had been published. This would seem to make the task of measuring popular appeal easier: we can see that Moore’s books in those days generally had a print run of 10,000, typical of translated literary fiction. *The Mangan Inheritance* had a print run of 30,000. However, western books were usually snapped up very quickly anyway, rapidly exhausting a run of 10,000 books, so a better guide to popularity might be the number of editions. While a substantial proportion of Moore’s books were translated, I have only been able to

find a second edition for *An Answer from Limbo*, re-issued in 20,350 copies in 1973. This was around the time publishers' interest tailed off, with only one more of his books published before 1989. After 1989, with no requirement any more to state the number of copies published, it is even harder to gauge Moore's popular success in Poland, although "Crime and Thriller" did disclose that they printed 10,000 copies of *The Colour of Blood*. However, only "Crime and Thriller" put out more than one of his books, so commitment does not seem to have been strong. Moore may have suffered from the obscurity of the publishers that got the rights to his books immediately after 1989. For example, *Nowe Książki* ("New Books"), a state-sponsored periodical devoted to the publishing industry in Poland, has only one review of his books in this period. In the years 1991 to 1993 Moore does not even feature in its "Books received" section, even though no less than three of his books were published in 1992. From 1992 *Nowe Książki* also had a supplement called *Kurier* containing publishers' notices of up-coming releases. Neither of Moore's two publishers (Graffiti and "Crime and Thriller") are featured here in 1992. The translation of *Lies of Silence* is not to be found in the catalogues of Mikołaj Kopernik University or the Catholic University of Lublin, which was entitled – in fact obliged – to receive a copy of all books published in Poland.

Zbigniew Irzyk, writing in 1969, feared that *An Answer from Limbo* might share the same fate as *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, published a year earlier; that is, it might pass entirely unremarked (Irzyk 1969: 8). In the event, *An Answer from Limbo*, was reviewed twice (and, as seen, re-issued) in Poland, *Ginger Coffey* not at all, although Krzysztof Głogowski, for example, tried to remedy this neglect by including a discussion of it in his review of *An Answer from Limbo* (Głogowski 1969). For comparison, Moore's early career in Poland roughly coincided with the boom in Latin-American fiction, when the average number of reviews for these books was – it has been calculated – 3½ per book (Gaszyńska-Magiera 2011: 115). I have been able to find a total of 10 reviews in Poland's national press for all of Brian Moore's novels from 1969 to the last review, in 1999. Of these, seven come from before 1989. Two excerpts from Moore's novels were published in the 1970s, one was published in 1998, and another in 2009.

The reviews are nearly all favourable, though not gushingly so, with Żukrowski writing that he is good, but not as good as Mauriac or Graham Greene (1972: 27–28), and Czeszko saying he is "not bad:" it is well made literature (1986: 69). That Moore plots efficiently and writes carefully comes up a number of times in the reviews (e.g. Irzyk 1969: 8), sometimes with the appearance of

faint praise (Czeszko 1986: 69); sometimes defensively, as if critics were asking rhetorically, “And is there anything wrong with being able to write?” This is not so far removed from western reception (O’Donoghue 1990: xiv). For example Maev Kennedy’s review in the *Irish Times* of *The Mangan Inheritance* runs in part, “[Moore is] a splendid story teller” but the novel has “a plot so strong it eventually rises up and chokes the life out of his characters” (1979: 15). Meanwhile in Poland, Lewandowski describes *The Mangan Inheritance* as a “czytadło” (“trashy novel”) but this is a provocation: he follows up by accusing “mędrcy ‘od literary’” (“the ‘literature’ know-alls”) of seeing in this a lack of intellectual firepower. Moore’s novel, in fact, has both a fast tempo and profundity (1986: 17). The emphasis on Moore’s story telling skill is seen also in Anna Misiak’s review of *Cold Heaven* from 1999. She acknowledges the book’s ontological sophistication and compares Moore to Hitchcock in his plot development and slowly mounting tension (1999: 24).

Less favourable, though still generally positive, is Jerzy Jarniewicz’s 1997 review of *The Statement*. It is above all a political thriller, he writes, with tight plotting, sudden reverses and many of the tricks of the trade but after a while the big questions (of guilt, culpability, collaboration with the Nazis) fade into the role of mere pretext for the action (2000: 226). Jarniewicz’s review was anthologised in his own *Lista obecności*, a collection of essays on twentieth century British and Irish prose, and he is outstanding in the field of English studies in Poland so it is likely his verdict of Moore will have a lasting effect. He starts his review by saying Moore is known in Poland, with eight of his books translated (2000: 223). The actual figure was ten, eleven if the novella *Catholics* is included, suggesting that some of his books, probably *Black Robe*, *The Colour of Blood* and *Lies of Silence*, coming from obscure publishers, had passed unnoticed. Jarniewicz name-checks Graham Greene and James Joyce, claiming Ireland is a country difficult to escape; it keeps on returning, even in books like *The Statement* that have no Irish connection (2000: 223–224). The complicity, in the novel, of parts of the French church with Nazis inevitably brings to mind Ireland’s sympathy with Hitler on the basis of the axiom “my enemy’s enemy is my friend,” a theme, Jarniewicz says, that Moore had explored earlier in *The Emperor of Ice-Cream* (2000: 225). Jarniewicz does not go as far in claiming Moore as a true Catholic as the blurb on the Fronda edition of *Catholics* but he does say that although *The Statement* is severely critical of the Catholic Church it is written from a Catholic standpoint (2000: 226).

Moore was usually received and perceived in Poland as a Catholic writer. He is labelled such in 1972's *Życie i Myśl*, which published an extract from his forthcoming *Feast of Lupercal* (Moore 1972b) and the theme is taken up by Głogowski and Irzyk. Głogowski says Catholicism is present in the books though it would be hard to call Moore a Catholic writer (1969: 143), while Irzyk says there is nothing declarative in the Catholicism of the novels: Moore gives no easy answers (1969: 8). A number of Polish critics (e.g. Głogowski 1969: 142; Żukrowski 1972: 28) stress that Moore is non-judgemental. This objectivity does not seem to have been such a big issue for western critics, who frequently mention Moore's adeptness with female characters. This is only mentioned by Żukrowski (1972: 26), though Irzyk does say that both male and female characters in Moore are living and dynamic, unlike those in much modern prose (1969: 8).

In reviewing books Polish critics often take the opportunity to comment more widely on literature and life in general. As seen, Polish critics praised Moore's solid "conventional" lack of "experimentalisms and gimmicks." These are the words of Christopher Ricks (1988: 379) but the same sentiment can be detected in Żukrowski, Irzyk, Czeszko and Lewandowski. It is implied that Moore's contemporaries were a little too free and easy with the craft of writing novels and Czeszko, in a somewhat eccentric review, says explicitly that Moore keeps control of his material – unlike Polish writers of detective fiction (1986: 69). In *An Answer from Limbo*, the writer-protagonist wrestles with the changes his publishers want to make to his debut novel. Referring to such compromises, Żukrowski (1972: 26) says that if not already present, then this will be coming soon to Poland (to be precise, he says his bookseller told him so). This could be read as an oblique reference to another compromise that was already present in literature published in Poland: censorship. Brian Moore's translations were not exactly butchered by the censor but they were, like all books, screened, and cuts were made.

All literature was censored by the state in People's Poland, even if much of it, in the event, passed without cuts or alterations. In Moore's case the most obvious victim is probably *The Colour of Blood*, though I have found no evidence in the censorship archives that it was blocked by the state for political reasons. (It might be worth noting here that *The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne* was banned in the Republic of Ireland in 1958.) Brian Moore's interest in socialism – he sold socialist newspapers in Belfast in his youth (O'Donoghue 1990: xii) – opens his early novels in particular to the attentions of institutional censorship. *The Emperor of Ice-Cream* concerns the bombing of Belfast during World War



Two and this, along with its politics, meant that it suffered quite a few cuts in its Polish incarnation. The Polish censor was particularly sensitive to attacks on the Soviet Union, Russians in general, and on the USSR's conduct of the war, all of which subjects get an airing in *The Emperor of Ice-Cream*, sometimes through the agency of Freddy Hargreaves, the Communist Party member in the book. The equation of communism with free love drawn by the narrator's "Black Angel" (i.e. in his own mind) is cut (Moore 1966: 55). (A similar line – "godless Russia, free love, no morals, rape in the streets" (Moore 1993: 155) – is left intact in the translation of *Judith Hearne* – the censorship was not 100% consistent.) A Mr. Harkness refers to Russians as "ignorant bloody moujiks" (Moore 1966: 56). This is cut. Freddy Hargreaves is twice called Karl Marx – this is cut both times (Moore 1966: 103). The same Hargreaves, when the air raid on Belfast begins, says, "This is the bloody revolution" (Moore 1966: 160) – but not in the Polish version. When he talks of England and Germany going under so the USSR can take over (Moore 1966: 144), the bit about the USSR taking over is missing from the Polish. Amidst the death and destruction of the air raid, Hargreaves becomes disillusioned: "'Bloody Comrade MacLarnon,' he said, suddenly. 'And the other arseholes. So, they think this war is a good idea, do they? Capitalist killing capitalist. Look at this poor bitch (...). Some capitalist'" (Moore 1966: 187–188). This is altered. In Polish it reads, "Niech diabli porwą – powiedział nagle – wszystkie te dupki żółędne. Myślą, że wojny to doskonały pomysł. Popatrz na tę biedną dziwkę (...). Ładna kapitalistka" (Moore 1972: 209) ("The devil take them," he said suddenly, "all those assholes. They think wars are a great idea. Look at this poor whore (...). A fine capitalist"). It is much less clear in Polish that his anger is directed at the Communist Party and its attitude to the war: the key word "comrade" is left out and instead of "this war" we have "wars," making it sound like Hargreaves's anger is directed at war in general. The retention of the words "a fine capitalist" do give a clue to Polish readers (who know that Hargreaves is in the party) about what exactly is going on and might be interpreted as an attempt by the translator to salvage something, at least, of the original's criticism of the Communist Party.

*The Lonely Passion of Judith Hearne* features a good deal of anti-Russian and anti-socialist sentiment. Even if the purpose of such passages is to expose the provincialism of 1950s Ireland, the censors still intervened, being more concerned with surface appearances than the underlying message. No doubt the censor was aware that the characters' uncritical acceptance of all anti-socialist rhetoric was being satirised in the novel but cuts were made on the precautionary principle that

some Polish readers (and especially the individual censor's superiors) might not see the underlying attack on backward, reactionary Ireland. The characters in the novel are permitted their anti-Russian diatribes but some of the detail and some of the extremes are missing from the Polish, e.g. Russians are "worse than Hitler, far worse," Judith Hearne says. When Madden, in turn, says, "But don't ask us [the USA] to help you when the commies come running up this street, yelling 'Throw out your women!'" this is cut from the Polish, as is Judith's reply: "Quite right, Mr. Madden. The Pope himself has denounced them" (Moore 1993: 41–42). By 1971, it seems, the authorities preferred to paper over or hide differences between the Vatican and the Eastern Bloc.

A passing reference to home (Ireland) as "that Moscow of my mind" (Moore 1994: 7) is cut from the translation of *An Answer from Limbo* but Moore's later books have less to say about such touchy subjects as communism and the revolution so the effects of institutional censorship are less visible, though an unflattering comparison of the Metropolitan Museum to "some Soviet Palace of the People" (Moore 1979: 90) is cut from *The Mangan Inheritance*.

Aside from politically sensitive issues, the most noticeable absences from the Polish translations are swearing, strong language, and vulgarity. This is a feature of translations (though not all of them) from before and after 1989. In *I Am Mary Dunne*, translated in 1971, all the obscenities are removed, as is, on occasion, the merely vulgar, such as "Daddy died screwing" (Moore 1968b: 21), which becomes, in back translation, "died in the arms of some woman" (Moore 1971b: 19). In *An Answer from Limbo* the words "none of his goddamn business" (Moore 1994: 7) are translated without the expletive, though the word "damned" was not usually ignored, often being translated with the word "cholerny" (from "cholera," the disease). Over twenty years later *The Colour of Blood* is toned down in the same way, especially in chapter 17. Some fairly mild swearing goes missing too, possibly because the speakers are bishops and it was felt that bishops do not speak like this, or that a Polish bishop would not speak like this. For example, "damned if I know" and "my damned leg" (Moore 1987: 155, 160), are, in back translation, simply "I have no idea" and "it's my leg" (Moore 1992: 125, 129). The swearwords are also removed from *The Statement*, in 1997, though not quite as zealously as they were from *Mary Dunne*.

These changes cannot simply be laid at the door of institutional censorship and are better attributed to conformity to Polish literary norms. In Philip O'Leary's review of Alan Titley's translation of the Irish novel *Cré na Cille* by

Máirtín Ó Cadhain, he discusses the bad language that is more prominent in the English version than in the original:

In such a repressed climate [1940s Ireland], shock comes very easily. Modern English, on the other hand, has if anything grown blasé, and it often takes a good ‘fuck’ to get a rise out of readers. Readers of Irish in the 1940s, and since, have been jolted by the range and unapologetic crudity of Ó Cadhain’s lexicon. To create the same jolt in jaded readers of English, Titley has had to turn up the heat, and this is a decision to which some in search of a more strictly literal translation will take exception

(O’Leary 2015).

The converse might be said about translations from English to Polish: the heat needs to be turned down, since Polish is not yet blasé (or at least was not yet blasé in the years when Brian Moore was being translated). If we accept this line of argument the removal of bad language is not unwarranted interference in the text and loses the stigma attached to the word “censorship.” Rather, we are dealing with a kind of domestication (which has its critics too). Nevertheless, the suppression of bad language does some harm to the texts, in particular *I Am Mary Dunne*. This book takes the form of the eponymous character’s interior monologue. As such, the delicacy of the language, whose nominal addressee is Mary Dunne herself, is out of character. Granted, literary Polish may not use words like “fuck” but these words are not unknown to Poles, who may think them even if they do not write them. Mary Dunne in Polish is less open and honest with herself than in English.

Andrzej Nowak’s discussion of the translation of *Black Robe* hardly mentions Moore or his work at all. Rather, he complains about the translation of the swear words. In the novel the native Canadians swear repeatedly, very explicitly, and cheerfully, a long way from the poeticisms or noble savagery of a James Fenimore Cooper. In English the swearing is jarringly modern, closing the cultural distance between modern day civilisation and the seventeenth century wilderness. The translation, Nowak laments, takes no account of the book’s historical setting. “The translator would be entitled,” he writes, “to tone down and make more subtle (or vary) in this respect the mis-steps and the linguistic poverty of the author. For literary translation is, despite everything, creative work with a large margin of autonomy” (1996: 147). When Moore’s translator has native Canadians say, “Mamy przesrane” (roughly: “We’re up shit creek”) they do so, Nowak says, with the “grace of a drunken teenager” (1996: 147). As can be seen, the demand

for literary, “good” Polish (not the coarse language of modern day drunken teenagers) is quite strong. Moore’s translators, *Black Robe* aside, usually met this demand.

In general, the translations of Moore – both by the more experienced pre-1989 translators and the younger translators that came afterwards – are at least competent, with no major misunderstandings or misrepresentations. An exception is Ewa König-Kraśńska’s 1972 translation of *The Emperor of Ice-Cream* (she has just two books to her name in the National Library, though an Ewa König translated two Harlequin romances, in 2003 and 2013). She was able to translate the straightforward, expository sentences but consistently misses the references to Yeats’s rough beast slouching toward Bethlehem, translating it differently on each of the three times it occurs in the book: “nieokrzesana,” “ponure” and “prymitywne” (Moore 1972: 11, 104, 155). The same is true of the intertextual reference in “changed utterly:” the first time it appears the lines from the poem are given and it is translated by Tadeusz Mieszkowski as “Zmieniamy się w całości” (Moore 1972: 125; before 1989 it was common to have a different translator even for incidental lines of verse appearing in novels). The second time it is embedded in the text and is translated “Zmieniłem się, całkowicie się zmieniłem” (Moore 1972: 202). Even the novel’s title, a line from a poem by Wallace Stevens, is deficient in this respect. It is quoted in the novel in Mieszkowski’s translation but this translation is not used as the title. A key phrase, although it appears only once in the novel, is “England’s adversity is Ireland’s opportunity” (Moore 1966: 44). This is rendered as “śmierć Anglii to radość Irlandii” (Moore 1972: 55) (“The death of England is the joy of Ireland”), while “West British” (Moore 1966: 26) is misunderstood, although the translator gets “West Briton” (Moore 1966: 28) more or less right.

Polish translators (and/or censors and editors) were usually wary of the racist vocabulary used by characters in fiction, as if they were afraid that the reader might not realise the sentiments expressed are actually those of the character, not the narrator or author. An example can be found in *An Answer from Limbo*. Brendan Tierney’s mother has just arrived in the USA from Ireland. In a passage of free indirect discourse she uses the word “nigger”: “She smiled at him, then remembered the black man who had taken her luggage, where was he, had he run off? She was glad of Brendan: this place was foreign from the first go off, what with niggers in red caps asking for your bags” (Moore 1994: 32). The offending word is translated using the neutral “Murzyni” (“black people”) (Moore 1969: 29). When, in the same scene, Mrs. Tierney says the word

aloud (and her son warns her against using it) the derogatory Polish word (“czarnuch”) is used by the translator. It was common practice to avoid using “czarnuch” at all in translations but it is essential to the scene here and so it was used – but only when clearly separated from the narrator’s voice by inverted commas.

In terms of output, Moore enjoyed considerable success in Poland with 14 of his 20 novels published. (For comparison, the German National Library lists German translations of all his novels except *The Revolution Script*, which is not always considered a novel proper.) However, neither his status nor popularity was quite enough to raise him above the contingencies of the day. It is likely his identification as a Catholic writer – especially as one at odds with the official church – helped his career in early years in Poland. In the turmoil that followed the opening up of Poland’s publishing market in the 1990s he was helped but also hindered by his newer identification as a writer of suspense thrillers. His books were taken up, but usually by obscure publishers who do not seem to have had the wherewithal to make his name stick in the public consciousness as a serious writer. In the two decades after 1989, readership, as measured by the gross number of books published, fell dramatically (from 65.2 million in 1990 to 25.4 million twenty years later), but the number of titles published increased fourfold: in 1990 the number of titles classified as belles-lettres was 1,573; in 2000 it was 4,018; and in 2010 it was 6,190 (Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2000: 244; Główny Urząd Statystyczny 2011: 273). Brian Moore seems to have been somewhat lost in this flood of new titles. Critics who did come across his books may have been put off by the sometimes tacky marketing and they paid him less attention than in the years before 1989: *The Magician’s Wife*, translated in 2009, does not appear to have been reviewed at all in Poland.

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