The Lake\textsuperscript{1} was originally conceived as a story in The Untilled Field collection, but it had to be excluded from the volume essentially because of its length. Concerned that the story should not lose “in range and power”\textsuperscript{2} from being published separately, Moore compensated for that eventuality by intensifying “the drama [that] passes within the priest’s soul”.\textsuperscript{3} Instead of focusing on outward conflict between the individual and society, as most stories in The Untilled Field do, The Lake charts the painful struggle to consciousness of a mind enmeshed in prejudices, codes and dogmas. To trace that mind’s awakening, Moore crossed generic borders by including epistolary writing, a genre much in vogue in the eighteenth-century European novel, along with interior monologue, a modern technique supposedly invented by Moore’s friend Edouard Dujardin, to whom the novel’s 1905 “épître dédicatoire” is addressed.\textsuperscript{4} Moore’s major technical achievement in The Lake was to interweave the two

\textsuperscript{1}George Moore, The Lake, London: William Heinemann, 1905; revised edition, William Heinemann, 1921. All references in the text will be to the 1921 edition (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1980), with an Afterword by Richard Allen Cave.

\textsuperscript{2}“The concern of this preface is with the mistake that was made when ‘The Lake’ was excluded from the volume entitled ‘The Untilled Field’, reducing it to too slight dimensions, for bulk counts; and ‘The Lake’, too, in being published in a separate volume lost a great deal in range and power” (George Moore, Preface to the New Edition of 1921, The Lake, ix).

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid., x.

\textsuperscript{4}In spite of James Joyce’s claim that Dujardin was the precursor of Ulysses’ “interior monologue”, Dujardin himself was aware that he had not invented the technique, but only improved and systematized it in Les Lauriers sont coupés. See Jean Paris, “Du Monologue intérieur et de ses précurseurs”, Europe, DCLVII-LVIII (January-February 1984), 56-57. See also Edouard Dujardin, Le Monologue intérieur. Son apparition. Ses origines. Sa place dans l’oeuvre de James Joyce. Avec un index des écrivains cités, Paris: Albert Messein, 1931.
genres successfully by having letters written and read by the three main characters, and having the framing third-person narrative reflect both on the process of writing letters (“a letter came into his mind”\textsuperscript{5}) and on the effect of reading them. What this essay proposes to investigate is first the dialogic interplay created by the fictional correspondence between the letter-writers; turning then to the interplay between letter-writing and narrative, it will examine how the two genres co-operate to foreground subjectivity and render the struggle of the central consciousness towards self-expression and self-fulfilment.

\textbf{Fictional correspondence: pragmatics and dialogism}

Fictional correspondence, like its real-world model, is based on a series of speech acts.\textsuperscript{6} The letters which correspondents write to each other in fiction are fully-fledged speech acts, with one significant difference however: they are simulated, and beyond the fictional world to which they belong, they have no ontological existence or consequence. As speech acts, they have pragmatic properties but as fiction, they are dependent on narrative structuring, notably emplotment.

The letters in \textit{The Lake} are written by three protagonists in two reciprocal exchanges: between Chapter 3 and Chapter 7, Father Oliver Gogarty, the parish priest of Garranard in Mayo, and Father O’Grady, an Irish priest in a London parish, exchange eight letters. All are about Nora Glynn, the former schoolmistress in Gogarty’s parish, who fled to London after the priest alluded to her from the altar as pregnant and unmarried. Fr O’Grady reproves Gogarty for his unnecessary harsh treatment of Nora and for his over-strict conception of pastoral duties.\textsuperscript{7} Oliver Gogarty then starts writing letters to Nora Glynn, allegedly to beg her forgiveness and to provide her with spiritual advice. The latter exchange, the more important by far in terms of number and length (twenty letters in Chapters 4 to 14), establishes much more complex pragmatic interrelations between the two correspondents.

\textsuperscript{5} Moore, \textit{The Lake}, 66.
\textsuperscript{6} Speech act is here taken in J.L. Austin’s sense of “doing things with words”, and “pragmatics” will refer to the objective facts of an utterance (time, space, circumstances of letter-writing) as well as to the interrelations between writer and reader, in terms of the meanings and effects on the recipient intended by the writer.
\textsuperscript{7} Moore, \textit{The Lake}, 31.