

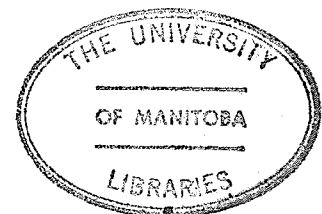
University of Manitoba

The Moral View
in the Novels of Iris Murdoch

by Tom McLauchlan

A Thesis Submitted to
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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Iris Murdoch's Moral Philosophy

Iris Murdoch has become known to the literary world primarily as a writer of Romantic neo-Gothic style novels. I feel that this misconception has very much undermined her acceptance into the ranks of "serious" writers. It is unfortunate that this is so and I hope that the recent growth in Ph.D. dissertations on Miss Murdoch's fictional works is an indication of a more just appraisal of her work.¹ It is also hoped that in a small way the present analysis will contribute to the steadily growing body of critical work which sees Miss Murdoch's novels and philosophic writings as a useful contribution to twentieth century moral philosophy.

It is my argument that the sixteen novels she has had published prior to 1974 can be seen as case studies for her more abstract moral philosophy as expressed in her theoretical writings. These novels may be seen as testing grounds for her moral theory. Given fictional representation, her ideas in moral philosophy achieve more vital dimensions. This she achieves through detailed and varied characterization combined with carefully structured plots. Although the danger exists that her characters may become unreal ciphers carrying their load of Murdochian concepts like allegorical creatures, Miss Murdoch generally does her best to make her characters into fully fleshed out beings. Her protagonists are remembered

long after the plot of her novels has faded from memory.

Theory is given a practical setting in her novels and it is with this in mind that I have divided this thesis into two sections, the first section to offer a description of the Murdochian code of moral philosophy as revealed through her abstract prose, and the second, consisting of four chapters, to search for how her theory has been revealed through the characters and situations developed in her novels.

In this introduction, I hope to bring as many of Miss Murdoch's moral concepts as possible into a more compact and coherent form than she has yet given us herself. It will be seen that from this dissection of her moral theorizings there gradually emerges a moral code which, with due caution, can be used as a reference for assessing the moral behavior of her characters in the novels. Her theory illuminates her fiction and vice versa. I believe her novels are constructed with the express purpose of placing the reader in the position of "judge" of the characters' moral behaviors. Her quarrel with theory is that it is so dry. Fiction alone gives the closest approximation to reality. Her characters are sculptured in words in such a way as to act as exemplars for moral viewpoints.

Certain labels of characteristic types of response to life are of convenience in classifying the large numbers of characters Murdoch has created in her novels. These are not absolute categories as much as characteristic ways of responding to moral situations encountered by her characters in the novels.

It is my intent to place each of the characters analysed within the framework of Murdoch's moral canon and thus to reveal certain patterns of human moral behavior which might otherwise be overlooked with a cursory reading of her novels. Murdoch's novels and her moral theory mutually accentuate each other. The total, as it were, is more than the sum of the parts. Theory is limited by its abstract nature. Fiction is too entangled in its own complexities. Together, I believe they reveal fascinating insights into human moral behavior. This is very likely exactly what Murdoch intends.

The Murdochian Canon of Moral Philosophy

Iris Murdoch is by profession both a philosophy don at St. Anne's College, Oxford, and a rather prolific novelist. Unfortunately, her reputation as a novelist has completely overshadowed her work as a moral theorist. Her theory provides much useful information which complements her fiction. Although a curious reader may be motivated to search out Miss Murdoch's philosophic efforts, he or she might find it difficult to locate a solid corpus of her theory as she has spread her ethical views in fourteen or so obscure journal articles over a fifteen year period. With the publication of The Sovereignty of Good, a more formal recognition of her talents as a moral philosopher is possible.

Miss Murdoch's first philosophic publication was a monogram entitled Sartre: Romantic Rationalist. This appeared

in nineteen fifty-three, one year before her first novel Under the Net, and, in addition to rendering Sartre more readily comprehensible, it expressed a dissatisfaction with the Existential school of French philosophy. Characteristic of this disgruntled tone is the following statement taken from the book:

Sartre takes his heroes up to the point of insight, realization, despair--and there he leaves them. They may₂ fall back, but they do not know how to go on.

But she did not confine her dissatisfaction to the one school of thought only. Equally pernicious were the theories of the British moralists from Hume to Hampshire. Their neo-Wittgensteinian linguistic analysis and rational empiricism struck her as too cold and remote from the murky, turbulent human condition.

Her attitude toward the state of modern philosophy circa the 1950's, particularly that pertaining to moral philosophy, is well summed up in her most recent article "On God and Good", "Much of contemporary moral philosophy appears both unambitious and optimistic...a relaxed picture of a mediocre achievement."³ Moral philosophy, to her mind, has grown flaccid and flabby in a post-war contentment with the power of science and the dramatic posturing permitted by Existentialist thinkers.

Briefly, her criticism of Existentialism is that it errs on the side of being overly optimistic and self-aggrandizing; whereas, the Logical Positivists offer a sterile philosophy which severely circumscribes further exploration in morals

and ethics. What so greatly irritates her about Existentialism is its constant stress on the power of the individual's will. Existential theory sees man as a solitary will struggling to live an "authentic", i.e., morally sincere, life, through the mechanism of a consciously controlled choice. This, she feels, places too heavy and unrealistic a burden on the ordinary human consciousness and leaves out of account such basic things as the nature of the emotions and the unconscious or subconscious mind. Life is fuzzy and moral choices are often made before we have thought about them. What, in fact, happens in an Existentialist universe is an intensification of the ego and a corresponding image of the self as the centre of all meaning and significance. To Murdoch this is mere dramatic posturing which, although comfortable, is nothing more than mankind puffing itself up to appear formidable in a frighteningly purposeless universe. Reading Murdoch on this point, we see she believes that, "In the moral life, the enemy is the fat relentless ego."⁴ She doubts the very integrity of this self: "The self, the place where we live, is the place of illusion."⁵ What she claims is lacking is a sense of reality lying outside the self in the realm of others.

Similarly, Miss Murdoch attacks Empiricism as represented by the school of post-Moore British Philosophers for their emphasis on will as the final arbiter on value:

Existentialism and Empiricism...share a number of motives and doctrines. Both philosophies are against traditional metaphysics, attack substantial theories of mind, have a touch of puritanism, construe virtue in terms of will rather

than in terms of knowledge, emphasize choice, are markedly Liberal in their political bias, are neo-Kantian.⁶

And again, when comparing the two rival schools of Hegel and Sartre, she criticizes them by detecting certain negative similarities,

...both philosophies tend toward solipsism. Neither pictures virtue as concerned with anything real outside ourselves. Neither provides us with a standpoint for considering real human beings in their variety, and neither presents us with any technique for exploring and controlling our own spiritual energy.⁷

To paraphrase her criticisms: these philosophies ignore the world of others and they seal off all possible sources of spiritual power. Modern philosophy, being profoundly anti-metaphysical, cuts itself off from all chance of transcendence. For these reasons, Miss Murdoch finds much of contemporary philosophy inadequate and in need of a thorough reappraisal. However, the assessment she makes of the essential human condition is quite in agreement with these dominant schools of philosophy. Man is still the victim of an unaccountable and unjust fate--"We are what we seem to be, transient mortal creatures subject to necessity and chance."⁸and, "Our destiny can be examined but it cannot be justified or totally explained. We are simply here."⁹ Life, for Murdoch, remains fundamentally enigmatic--purpose or destiny are nowhere revealed. But, whereas Existentialists and Empiricists alike fear "history, real beings, and real change, whatever is contingent, messy, boundless, infinitely particular, and endlessly to be explained,"¹⁰ Miss Murdoch finds these conditions of existence acceptable and necessary parts of the picture. Instead of condemning the

world for the way it is arranged, she simply says that we must live with things as they are and accept the contingency of life and the whole of the "messy phenomenal world."¹¹

It can be seen then that Murdoch, although basically agreeing on the nature and appearance of the world, differs in her reaction to these conditions with her tolerant attitude. To her, it is man's mind, his psychology, which is the most fascinating area for investigation. The world must be accepted with its full load of death, chance, and necessity. However, Murdoch is skeptical of the power and consistency of the mind:

Our minds are continuously active, fabricating an anxious, usually self-preoccupied, often falsifying veil which partially conceals the world. Our states of consciousness differ in quality, our fantasies and reveries are not trivial and unimportant, they are profoundly connected with our energies and our ability to choose and act.¹²

This constant flux within our minds compounds the problem of a contingent universe outside and makes moral behavior that much harder to define or treat rationally. Thus, Murdoch quarrels with both Existentialists who emphasize will, and with Empiricists who emphasize rationality.

Dissatisfaction with existing philosophies and a critical reappraisal of man's mind and nature motivated Murdoch to begin her search for an alternative moral philosophy. As early as nineteen fifty-nine, she was calling for "a more ambitious conceptual picture,"¹³ and more explicitly still, saying, "We need...a framework, a house of theory."¹⁴ In her article, "Against Dryness" she laments, "We have suffered a

general loss of concepts."¹⁵ As far as she was concerned, there was little value in any of the current philosophies of mind; but worse still, there appeared to be a negative atmosphere in contemporary philosophy banning all theorizing--particularly metaphysical theorizing. In justification of her perceived need for this theorizing, Miss Murdoch puts forward the following proposition:

(Moral theory is) the provision of rich and fertile conceptual schemes which help us to reflect upon and understand the nature of moral progress and moral failure and the reasons for the divergence of one moral temperament from another.¹⁶

Moral theory might therefore hold the potential of becoming a way of understanding the infinite variety of other people.

She justifies this centrality of moral theory in any philosophy by observing that it is really a person's "total vision of life"¹⁷ and the "configuration of their thought"¹⁸ which governs their overt behavior. It therefore becomes important to evolve a moral philosophy which attempts to perceive "moral differences as differences of understanding."¹⁹ This in turn necessitates an enlargement of moral concepts and moral vocabulary; as she says, "A morality is a ramification of concepts."²⁰ As far as Murdoch is concerned, the more concepts the better; at least we can thereby avoid hermeneutic philosophies which see only as much as their blinkers will allow. We can then come to grips with real persons in real situations. According to Murdoch, the purpose of theorizing is "moral clarification and understanding,"²¹ and, similarly, morals and ethics ought to be viewed as "both exploration and analysis."²² Such

an attitude of renewed vigor on the part of moral philosophers would break the thrall of what she considers sterile contemporary theory.

However, Miss Murdoch has a particular type of theory in mind when she calls for more concepts. What she desires is, "a post-Kantian unromantic Liberalism with a different image of freedom"²³ and,

...more concepts than our philosophies have furnished us with. We need to be enabled to think in terms of degrees of freedom, and to picture, in a non-metaphysical, non-totalitarian, and non-religious sense, the transcendence of reality.²⁴

These are the stiff requisites which she in her own theory attempts to satisfy. It is therefore understandable that much of her theory consists of a proliferation of concepts and the establishment of a hierarchy of values centering around these key concepts.

Discontent with contemporary moral philosophy made Murdoch appreciate the need for a new set of moral concepts to provide the framework for a more adequate moral philosophy. The recognition of this need provided her with a starting-point in her search for moral criteria for behavior and for the establishment of some sort of moral order that could support man in all his weakness and inspire him to maximize his potential as a moral being. She has conducted this search both through her philosophic writings and through her novels, using many intriguing juxtapositions of her own ideas and those of Simone Weil and Gabriel Marcel. The former writer's works suggested Murdoch's concept of "attention" or the loving regard for others; and the latter, Marcel, proffered the immensely

valuable viewpoint of man's discovering himself in and through others.

Murdoch's general discontent with contemporary moral theory led her to an elaboration of moral concepts which she chose to express both in her works of critical philosophic analysis and in her novels. In the introduction to Sartre: Romantic Rationalist, Murdoch gives us an idea of why she decided to experiment with the fictional format for her moral musings,

"(The novelist) has always implicitly understood what the philosopher has grasped less clearly, that human reason is not a single unitary gadget the nature of which could be discovered once for all."²⁵

Yet both theory and its fictional counterpart are only parts of a larger whole which is life. All, according to Murdoch, would be bound together by her central concept of "attention".

Recognizing the need for theory is a different thing from actually creating a coherent theory of one's own. It took Miss Murdoch a good fifteen years to elaborate her presentation of a moral philosophy. She selected as her starting-point the word "attention" as used by Simone Weil to express "the idea of a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality".²⁶ She fully endorsed Weil's stipulation that, "Morality was a matter of attention, not of will. We need a new vocabulary of attention."²⁷ This idea of "attention" seemed to offer to Murdoch a larger scope for a more accurate appraisal of the nature of the world and its relation to man's mind. The flux within us and the contingent

universe without might be brought into clearer focus through this concept of "attention". The suggestion of a vocabulary of attention was very quickly realized in her own writings with the inclusion of approximate synonyms for "attention" such as "gazing", "looking", and "seeing". Murdoch tends to use the words interchangeably and all have equivalent meanings : "seeing more and more deeply into the sense which is before us".²⁸ The actual object of this "sense" is for Murdoch the world of things and of others, with all their contingency, "there"-ness, and infinite particularity. If we admit to the potentially negative power of the ego as an inflated and distorted self, and, if we accept without hostility the idea of the universe replete with infinite particularity, then the stage is set for a new understanding of the immense importance of others. This, combined with the concept of "attention" rather than will as central, allows a different set of moral definitions and concepts to emerge.

Attention itself is seen as a continuous process:

The task of attention goes on all the time and at apparently empty and everyday moments we are "looking", making those little peering efforts of imagination which have important cumulative results.²⁹

It is also depicted as being at least partially involuntary by nature. It is the process of seeing freshly and with an unprejudiced, unclouded vision the reality of the world: for example, its contingency, randomness, particularity as well as its capacity for relatedness and form. Attention, besides

being often uncontrolled, is often taking place at different levels of awareness, "...we often apprehend more than we clearly understand and grow by looking."³⁰ Even while passively observing events and people, our total awareness of them may be growing without our conscious awareness.

In further explanation of the meaning of attention, Miss Murdoch explains, "We learn by attending to contexts."³¹ By "contexts" she means the whole psycho-social environment of persons outside ourselves. We learn by focusing on the entire "Gestalt" of the event, scene or person. But more than that, Murdoch is calling for an effort of imaginative empathy. Empathy or empathic understanding is not a new word in mankind's moral vocabulary. It has been around at least since Jesus Christ and probably could be traced to the pre-Socratic thinkers.³² What she is doing is revitalizing a powerful concept and incorporating it into her moral philosophy. Where she differs somewhat is in her tying together of empathy and the imagination. In one of her articles, Murdoch states, "There must also be a willed imaginative reaching out towards what is real."³³ Obviously it is a delicate point whether will or imagination can be so harnessed. What is essential is that imagination must be controlled by the desire to "attend" to something or someone. It is this element of control that creates the difference between Murdoch's theories involving empathy and those of other thinkers. Empathy is defined in Webster's Dictionary as, "the imaginative projection of a subjective state into an object so that the object appears to be infused with it" and, "the capacity for participation in

another's feelings or ideas."³⁴ We can see that Murdoch has expanded considerably on this basic definition. What is called for is a willed imaginative focusing of our attention on contexts of real persons, events, and things. With this ability, Murdoch maintains, will come the potential for real growth as moral agents. She maintains that, "Attending is the characteristic and proper mark of the active moral agent."³⁵

Murdoch is skeptical of our ability to communicate or understand in any authentic manner the real individuality and opacity of other people if we cannot somehow imaginatively step into their worlds. Murdoch uses the word "opacity" in a very special sense. Man's nature to modern science and to some of the more brutal psychologies is perfectly "clear". Man is to them simply a collection of particles arranged in strict accordance with immutable laws. To Murdoch, man is "opaque" or possesses "opacity". She also strongly believes that science and materialistic philosophies and psychologies are simplistic. For her at least, man's true nature will forever remain impervious to the crude tools of science and technology. Indeed, to her, man's fundamental opacity lends him the quality of mystery and uniqueness that shall ever preserve him from too rigorous or reductionist analysis.

The imaginative capacity of seeing into another person's world introduces the idea of the tragic freedom of man--"an indefinitely extended capacity to imagine the being of others."³⁶ It is a tragic freedom in that it exists as a potential which may never be tapped. We can choose whether we use it or not.

The penalty for not using this marvellous capacity according to Murdoch is an empty egoistic or fantasy-ridden life. She offers no proof for this opinion other than her own experiences and convictions. However this may be, there can be little doubt that we do have the potential to "grow by looking",³⁷ and, it is readily conceivable that attending to the world of others will yield large rewards in terms of understanding and communication. The isolated self, as she says, is often a "place of illusion" and can constitute a totally enclosed environment, severely restricted in its inability to get beyond its own walls.

If we can accept the conceptual schema which Miss Murdoch makes, we can move on to her next set of statements which further elaborate a moral vocabulary. Having accepted the image of man as a being capable of attending to others in an imaginative sense, and fully appreciating the flux of man's mind and the contingency of the universe, it is now possible for Murdoch to attempt a definition of real virtue and goodness. Murdoch simply states that virtue "is concerned with really apprehending that other people exist."³⁸ Goodness could therefore be defined as the characteristic quality of a person who best apprehends or "attends" to the reality of others.

Where Murdoch is perhaps naive is in her belief that once a "loving gaze" is directed at the reality of the other person, that the gazer will not then act in an unloving, amoral, or destructive fashion. The obvious question follows as to whether the mere act of focusing imaginative empathy upon another can preclude or inhibit violent acts such as manipulation or causing

psychological damage to the other person?

I believe the realization of this problem with pure theory motivated Miss Murdoch to seek further confirmation of her moral theory in her works of fiction. The format of the novel provided her with the needed "mock-up" conditions where she could create at will the necessary contexts where her characters could struggle in life-stimulating circumstances with the enemies of "right" moral action.

In the following chapters, I have established, for the sake of simplicity, six basic categories which best sum up the psychological approach to life of a number of her characters from her novels. Admittedly, these categories are somewhat arbitrary. However, they do serve the useful purpose of providing parallels and correspondencies among various characters from her different novels and of stressing the moral view informing character and plot. Her main characters tend to become exemplars of certain moral attitudes toward the world and others. This makes it easier for us to see Murdoch's theory in action. It is also useful in clarifying some of Murdoch's more abstract conceptions and will give the reader an insight into how moral concepts realize themselves in action.

CHAPTER 2

Escapists: An Unofficial Rose, The Italian Girl

Escapism often is a negative reaction to the pressures of life. It is the seeking of shelter in a secure world of one's own and in this sense is shared with conventionalists. It is characterized by withdrawal from the real world into either fantasy or a heavily patterned way of life. There are many characters in the novels of Iris Murdoch who would qualify as escapists but perhaps the purest of these, that is, those not exhibiting too many other readily definable types of behavior, are Hugh Peronett and Edmund Narraway. As shall be seen, their desire to escape into private worlds limits their perception of the Good and, although both find something of salvation in the resolution of the story, neither is ever definitely redeemed to a "virtuous life."

Hugh Peronett in An Unofficial Rose is already sixty-seven years old when we meet him and, as we learn, had spent most of those years escaping life through the consolation of convention. The one event that really shook his life to the foundations was his brief affair with Emma Sands. This episode Hugh had savored over the years and deleteriously tried to forget. Emma's reappearance, after so many years' absence, at the burial of Hugh's wife, Fanny, recalls all the romance Hugh had imagined into the affair and he determines to resume his love for Emma at the point where he left off.

Hugh escapes into false memories and deceives himself into believing that all his years with Fanny amounted to a mere nothing. In his reminiscences of married life, he condenses long, relatively happy years into statements like the following,

He had passed years in a resentment against his wife which had gradually deadened his tenderness into pity into a dull resigned companionship. Their marriage had become a hollow frame. It was for that sordid but echoing framework, its painted exterior so bravely held up to the world, that he had given up the peril of a great love.¹

Even should the fact of the "great love" be beyond dispute, the reader would be right to be skeptical that a marriage of such long duration could be entirely wrong or entirely the wife's fault. Why should anyone want to remain in misery when they need not? Within pages, Hugh changes his mind again and in a more charitable mood, ruminates, "His marriage, whatever its shortcomings, had been a real living thing and not an empty shell."² This sudden about-face underlines the fluctuating quality of Hugh's memory and warns the reader to distrust all further absolute statements coming from Hugh. None too soon for within seconds in his flow of thought, Hugh once again dismisses the reality of Fanny by saying, "Poor Fanny had had no secrets. She had been a woman without mystery."³ This confusion regarding such an important event in his life as his marriage would indicate to Murdoch a more profound confusion regarding his relation between his self and other people. Falling back on non-threatening convention

is far easier than confronting the reality of his inability to communicate with people. Hugh describes himself as basically conventional and, with some bitterness, as "always the spectator."⁴ Murdoch with a certain degree of irony makes this into a literal truth by having Hugh obsessed with the beauty of a Tintoretto painting. He invests this painting, described as Hugh's "golden dream of another world,"⁵ with far greater reality than any person in his life and, as a result, it becomes the focus for much of the drama interconnecting his son's life and his own.

The Tintoretto enslaves Hugh and offers him a readily accessible escape from the world in the form of abstraction into beauty, sublimity and perfection. Although Murdoch in her theory of art would endorse the value of art to make us aware of perfection, she would certainly condemn complete abstraction into art at the expense of living. His worship of artistic perfection has served to enthrall Hugh rather than enlighten him as to the particularity of others. He abuses art and uses it as a blindfold to keep him from seeing the beauty of other "real" people.

Both Mildred and Randall understand Hugh's failure to perceive the world and others. They react oppositely. Mildred finds Hugh an object of love and compassion and pity--"There was, in his obliviousness, in his utter failure to discover what was going on, a kind of beautiful stupidity."⁶ Randall seeks a kind of Oedipal vengeance upon his father through the Tintoretto and through Hugh's twenty-five years in the past

mistress. Mildred pities him and Randall seeks to destroy the falsifying image--like a child smashing the television set his football crazed Daddy is watching. After Hugh sells the Tintoretto and Randall becomes temporarily rich as a result, with greater truth than he knows Randall "felt as if he had killed his father."⁷

Hugh escapes into faulty memory and the abstraction of artistic beauty and, by so doing, he devalues, or undervalues, people, and tends to omit them from his considerations. His treatment of Mildred amply illustrates his self-delusion. With her he is platonically friendly and totally unaware of the love she so obviously has for him. Similarly he is oblivious of Ann's misery with his son and keeps as far from trouble as possible.

With Emma, however, things are different. He is hypnotized by her in the same way as a bird when confronted with a snake. He deceives himself deliberately into believing that love still existed between them and that they have not changed. Oddly, he is aware of the process of self-deception but does nothing to stop it:

He was well aware that his selective memory retained for him, from that strange episode of the far past, only what was joyful and what was tragic.⁸

When he actually confronts her in her London flat, he is paralysed and at first can only stare. She is real, she has changed, she is autonomous. He is shocked, "It was more like the snapping of a cord than like a reunion."⁹ The cord that almost snaps is the cord of Hugh's "selective memory"

which has only retained the fanciful images of the old romance. Hugh does not count on Emma's power and the swiftness with which she is capable of striking and taking advantage of a situation. Perhaps he has an intimation of this manipulativeness when he recalls what attracted him to her in the first place: "her moral otherness." She is all that Fanny was not; she was dangerous, original, free, and "dark, perhaps twisted."¹⁰ Emma's power lies in her willingness to manipulate people in order to achieve her convoluted plans. She treats people like pawns to be played in her carefully contrived schemes. Whether Hugh appreciates the danger he is in, is no matter as he is caught in her snare once again through his fascination with her. She is like his Tintoretto in possessing a mysterious beauty all to herself. She has the power to enchant and she makes a worshipper out of Hugh.

Hugh feels that he is free when he is with her but the freedom he discovers is really quite empty, "he is free only to starve."¹¹ For Emma wants only his presence not his love. Emma's moral code is as follows, "As for other people, either they're with me or they don't exist."¹² For instance, when first she meets Hugh in her apartment, she refuses to see him again unless it is on her terms. These are quite rigorous and their motive is suspect. She wants to visit Randall's home and meet his wife Ann and his daughter Miranda. Such a visit would complete her understanding of the dynamics of Hugh's family life and thus give her greater manipulative leverage. Her motives are purely destructive. Hugh fails

to see this and readily agrees to her terms, thus again becoming Emma's victim. Behind this reaction is Hugh's overwhelming desire to escape from reality. He refuses to see Emma as the evil schemer that she is. He prefers the comforting delusion that there exists remnants of a long-dead love between them. According to the Murdochian code, Emma is immoral and evil and guilty of enchanting Hugh only to wreak a twisted vengeance on him. She accomplishes this by carefully structuring a situation where Randall's love for her assistant Lindsay will reproduce the conditions of Hugh's love for her. Once the stage is set, she allows the characters to take the scene and they predictably behave exactly as planned.

When at last Hugh regains his sense of balance by admitting that "It was impossible to remake the past."¹³ it is too late to save Randall or Ann from their own weaknesses. Emma has won. Memory and love of beauty have for Hugh provided poor directions in guiding his life. He is as blind as before to the reality of others. Even his trip to India with Mildred offers no guarantee of a change of attitude. He still seems to undervalue people, "Mildred would be waiting for him."¹⁴

Hugh is not a particularly admirable character and fails to achieve moral enlightenment within Murdoch's conceptual framework. He possesses apparently infinite ability to deceive himself with escapes into false memories and dreams of artistic perfection. Like everyone else in the novel, he "survives", but, as we take leave of the book, there is the strong suspicion that mere survival is not enough. Each of the characters could have achieved goodness had they paused and taken the

the time to "attend" to the reality of the other person. Hugh could have seen the evil motive present in Emma. Emma could have seen the weakness of Hugh and helped him overcome it.

Edmund Narraway in The Italian Girl had similar traits to Hugh Peronett but differs in the method of his escapist reaction to life. Edmund isolates himself through his art and conceives of himself as a recluse, "I lived a solitary life."¹⁵ What he is isolating himself from is the disarray and chaos of life which he, like E.M.Forster in his novels, termed "muddle". His brother, Otto, also an artist, lives a life filled with muddle and when Edmund returns to the parental home to hear his mother's will read out, he encounters nothing but muddle. Isabel is estranged from Otto; Otto is having an open affair with a girl named Elsa; and Flora, Otto's daughter, is pregnant and wants money for an abortion. Each of them appeals to Edmund for pity, for understanding, for solutions to their problems. All threaten to force him to break out of his splendid isolation, drop his "security blanket" of non-involvement, and attend to their reality. Edmund's struggle with himself is hard on him for he has lived many years with ingrained habits of responding to others. Indeed, he is thoroughly panicked by the contingent, the messy phenomenal world of other people and their private lives. Witness his reaction to his own brother: "Otto's laughter, Otto's reek

of alcohol, the messy, muddled, personal smell of it all seemed suddenly to represent everything (he) detested."¹⁶

With comments like "I was, after all, only a passer-by,"¹⁷ he keeps trying to convince himself that he is justified in his lack of concern for the happiness of others. His sojourn in his brother's house proves to be his moral battleground where he actually discovers his moral nature. A forewarning of this comes when he exhibits a very neat ability for self-analysis: "Otto too had his labyrinth, his metaphysical torture chamber. Indeed, I had my own."¹⁸ This is definite progress in a self-styled "recluse".

Many events conspire to move Edmund from his escapist existence into the real world of other people. Edmund can scarce do otherwise as he passionately embraces an adolescent girl (Otto's pregnant daughter), is attacked physically by his violently angry brother, endures revelations of sexual philanderings, and is caught in a fire where Elsa, the mid-European maidservant and sister to the apprentice to Otto, receives fatal burns. His sensorium is completely deluged and, like a compulsion neurosis patient receiving electric shock treatments, his mind is blanked to its cyclic pattern and for the first time in years he is capable of reworking his attitudes to reality and others. The "escapist" chain of habit and avoidance is finally broken. Edmund "sees" Flora in a just and loving light and rejects her adoration. He recognizes Otto's newfound peace of mind, and, finally, he commits himself to loving Maria.

He learns many things during his stay, the most important of which is the importance and sanctity of others. His conversion to a life tolerant of muddle and others is part way completed when he says, "No man has a right to happiness or the right, for that matter, to trample upon other lives."¹⁹ This is undoubtedly the beginning of wisdom for Edmund and marks his dawning awareness of the existence of other people and his moral duty toward them.

Part of Edmund's difficulty in "seeing" other people derives from his habit of taking them so much for granted. His attitude toward Maggie, the Italian girl of the title, demonstrates this. For at least half of the novel, Edmund does not even register her proper name and treats her as a domestic slave indistinguishable from the numerous Italian girls who made up his childhood environment. During the dramatic escape from the fire, Maggie and Edmund are literally thrown together. It is from this point that Edmund begins seeing her as a real person. He discovers she has a name of her own--Maria. In the household she has become known as Maggie and this name had stuck. Again, with this re-naming of part of his old world, Edmund is forced to release his escapist world of childhood memories. With his love for Maria comes new potential--"Now I could act humanly, think, wish, reflect, speak."²⁰ Dramatically, Edmund has emerged triumphant from his personal battle with his escapist tendencies. Just as does Jake Donahue in Under the Net, Edmund comes to accept the "muddle", the contingency of existence as well as the uniqueness of individuals.

Conventionalists: The Sand Castle, The Bell

Miss Murdoch contends that retreat into convention can be another way of avoiding genuine recognition of the reality of others. Convention itself may be a useful and even necessary concept in law or finance but in the realm of human relationships, it tends to be characterized by a stereotyped response to situations demanding more acute perceptions and reactions. It tends to be a behavioral trap into which morally weak individuals fall, or, to use a more exact image, it is like a shelter under which these types of people can hide from any authentic and fully-conscious decision-making, especially in the matter of morality. In the sense that convention can be used as an irresponsible response, it is an evil which will damage the moral nature of its user. What is more, it may unnecessarily limit the reality of other people by ignoring their substantiality, individuality, and mysteriousness. Convention when employed at a personal level prevents its user from actually "looking" at another person so that he never actually "sees" them in all of their otherness and never perceives their "unutterable particularity."

Miss Murdoch's fiction contains a fair proportion of characters who resort to convention to solve their moral dilemmas and her treatment of these characters always shows convention to be a poor substitute for a morally aware choice. The path to "Goodness" in her fiction is littered with the corpses of "conventional" characters. As we shall see,

Bill and Nan Mor in her third novel, The Sandcastle, are the only married couple in all her novels who represent the evil of convention. Bill Mor, or simply Mor, is a superb example of how conventionalized responses to situations demanding decisions recognizing the full particularity of others can effectively kill "good" relationships and possibilities for moral growth into a more virtuous person.

Through his sudden unaccountable passion for the young portrait painter, Rain Carter, Mor is thrown into a moral quandary where he must choose between wife, children, political ambitions on the one hand, and mistress, freedom, and fully conscious life on the other. The choice between the consolations of convention and the risk of breaking through the imprisoning pattern of routine confront Mor with his own moral cowardice. His excessive need for ritual and social approval represents his either/or challenge. Either he risks his image or he retreats into a life of prescribed convention.

The central struggle of the novel is the problem of moral action. Can a man will right action or are moral decisions in reality made through inertia and passivity? Mor and Nan's close friend, Tim Burke, sets the case in straightforward terms when he says, "If you really will a thing, Mor, that thing will be."²¹ Tim is talking about Mor's political ambitions with the Labour Party but his meaning could also be interpreted in moral terms. The real test for Mor comes when he becomes more deeply involved with Rain whom he meets at his superior's home. Her spontaneity and her eccentricity open fresh layers of Mor's stifled personality and make him aware

for once of alternative modes of being.

After all, Mor is rather the epitome of conventional living. He is a don at a posh school, has been married for a good number of years, has political intentions and is well respected for them, and has gone the usual round of dinners, parties, and bridge games. He is entrenched in his conventionality when Rain captures what is left of his adventurousness. Their flirtation at the school, their quite comic episode where Mor manages to accidentally sink her old car in the pond, and the new mutual sharing of experiences opens Mor to a real world he has forgotten.

A sign of his shifting position is his new attitude toward eccentricity:

Eccentric people, he concluded, were good for conventional people, simply because they made them able to conceive of everything being quite different. This gave them a sense of freedom. Nothing is more educational, in the end, than the mode of being of other people.²²

What Mor had discovered was the tragic freedom of being able to perceive other people and to acknowledge that others have the right to exist. It is a tragic freedom in that it is so subject to the flux of the perceiver's personality and can be blown away with the first gust of selfish egoism. At his evening class, Mor demonstrates his awareness of this evanescent nature of freedom. He says, "Freedom, . . . , is not exactly what I would call a virtue. Freedom might be called a benefit or sort of grace--though, of course, to seek it or to gain it might be a proof of merit."²³ Recognition of the power of freedom to approach the Good should logically lead

the moral agent toward the Good. We possess according to Murdoch, the freedom to perceive the reality of others. However, we may choose never to heed that freedom. Retribution of sorts will inevitably follow in the form of our continuing to dwell in illusions, remaining locked into convention, and/or blinding ourselves to the real meaning of actions and events. This voluntary castration of our moral sense, Murdoch would contend, invariably leaves its scars be they physical, mental, or spiritual.

There is ample evidence to support the argument that Mor in his perception and love of Rain's individuality is in possession of a sharper, more potentially "good" moral vision than he had previously had with his conventional and boring life with Nan and family. With Mor he seems to be filled with the sense of purpose, of meaning, he so lacked with Nan. The highway becomes the metaphor for his newly opened horizons--"...the still summer air...changed...the noisy, menacing mainroad to an open obedient highway that for once really led somewhere."²⁴ And later he ruminates that, "Obscurely in the instant he was aware of the future suddenly radiant with hope and possibility."²⁵ In fact, the vision never fades. Right up until the climax of the novel in the boardroom scene, Mor has faith in Rain as the only right action,

He wanted to be the new person that she made of him, the free and creative and joyful and loving person that she had conjured up, striking this miraculous thing out of his dullness.²⁶

She is the one who could break down th walls of his convent-

ionality. When Nan triumphs through her brilliantly-staged public announcement of her husband's political intentions, Mor fails miserably to make the necessary moral commitment to Rain and dooms himself to the limbo of the moral coward or the morally coerced. Pathetically he begs Rain not to believe his wife's commitment on his behalf,

You've made me exist for the first time. I began to be when I loved you, I saw the world for the first time, the beautiful world full of things and animals that I've never seen before.²⁷

But even this second opportunity for making a moral stand for his love he destroys simply by failing to predict Rain's reaction. She leaves and he is left with Nan, his children, and a political future. He has failed to use his freedom and fallen back into the worn path of comfortable ennui.

Mor's final capitulation to convention is his trite and irresponsible answer to Demoyte's question of "Why did you leave her?"²⁸ Mor answers,

'It was inevitable.' he said dully.
'Coward and fool!' said Demoyte. 'Nothing was inevitable here. You have made your own future.'²⁹

So at the end of the novel, we leave Mor in the sad position of the moral coward. He has failed to understand the commitment freedom demands. Freedom is a grace and a terribly delicate thing as Mor himself had said. It requires determination and conscious decision-making, and, according to the Murdochian code, hinges on our ability to focus our "attention" on the reality of others. In Mor's case, he failed to focus this attention with his whole being. Only his conscious self "loved" Rain. His old self, that self formed through years of habit, loved convention much more.

If Bill Mor fails to perceive the Good through his unconscious convention-seeking nature, his wife, Nan, fails in the same direction on a far larger scale. In her mind, convention achieves the status of a major goal of life. Nan, like most of the characters analysed so far, is no simple case but a combination of various characteristics. Classification is only a means of isolating the most obvious of these. For instance, Nan is part manipulator, part sadist, part egoist, and a great deal--conventionalist. What qualifies her for the last category is the way she directs the force of her manipulations, her selfish habits, her sadistic actions toward the achievement of one goal--normalcy according to conventional standards. For her this spells the perpetuation of what has become for Mor an uninspiring, boring marriage, the unrewarding business of raising his family, and the petty grubbing for professional and political status which equates with and represents normalcy and security. For Nan all these things are admirable things to seek after. The actual quality of her relationship with Mor, with her children, with the "significant others" in their marriage--these things do not seem to matter as much as "getting on", "moving up", and doing the "right" things. She is locked into convention. Therefore, any threat to her cosy vision of the real world, especially by the key figure in this status game--her husband, throws her into a state of complete panic. Nan reacts to Mor's progressive alienation from herself, the family, and his career by throwing herself into a frenzy of manipulations to recapture his loyalty to her cause. It is not unusual that, as James Hall comments

in his article, "Blurring the Will," "Every attempt at change sets off chaotic counteractions in behalf of normalcy."³⁰ This is precisely Nan's reaction.

Nan cannot tolerate anything out of the ordinary. "Nan hated eccentricity which she invariably regarded as affectation."³¹ At least Mor, as we have seen, made an attempt at recognizing the value of difference in others. For example, he treats Mr. Everard (Evvy), an eccentric retired professor, with considerable respect and attempted understanding. Nan, by contrast, cannot be bothered and even reacts to normal family quarrels and bickering which, after all are healthy breaks from conventional harmony, with prolonged bouts of sulking. She punishes Mor heartlessly for any minor breach in routine or etiquette and marriage becomes a state of enslavement rather than happy recognition of each other's individuality.

CHAPTER 3

Neurotics: The Unicorn, A Fairly Honourable Defeat

There is another possible classification of characters, in Murdoch's fiction, known commonly as neurotics. The neurotic personality, according to Murdoch, possesses most of the attributes of the medical definition and enlarges it to mean anyone who lives in a fantasy world of their own composing to the extent that their private fantasy influences their overt behavior and their perception of others.

Fantasy operates either with shapeless day-dreams or with small myths, toys, crystals. Each (neurotic personality) in his own way produces a sort of 'dream necessity'. Neither grapples with reality.¹

It can be the deliberate or unintentional avoidance of direct confrontation with the messy contingent world. It is a self-gratifying soother which offers consolation from the vicissitudes of life. In Miss Murdoch's moral vocabulary, fantasy is evil and represents "a bad use of the imagination."² Imagination to be "good" must be directed toward others and should be used for increased awareness of the real world.

The term "neurotic" may therefore be given meaning in the Murdochian canon as anyone who allows fantasy to overwhelm and misdirect their perception of others. Once again let me stress that these categories are only useful ways of distinguishing various personality types in reference to

Murdoch's moral theory. It is broad enough to include hysterical, depressive, and compulsive types of behavior, and is represented by such characters as Dorina from An Accidental Man, Mortan from A Fairly Honourable Defeat, and Marian from The Unicorn. The list could be extended but these three characters are fairly representational of the classification as a whole.

Marion Taylor in The Unicorn falls under the spell of a fantasy-myth that surrounds the occupants of an Irish castle named Gaze. Marion is hired under the false understanding that she will act as governess. It evolves that she is really there to act as custodian to Mrs. Hannah Creon-Smith, a rather odd creature of middle years who is being held "captive" by her absent husband. The set of circumstances Marion finds at Gaze is peculiar in the extreme. Hannah is almost a dream figure who floats in Ophelia-like abstraction through the castle. Her beauty and mystery make her the object of pure love in an almost courtly love fashion to her admirers.

Hannah's real situation is somewhat different. She is being held prisoner by her husband Peter whom she had tried to kill years before by pushing off the cliff outside Gaze Castle. As her warders, her husband had selected his homosexual friend, Gerald Scotow, and some poor relations, Violet and Jamesie Evercreech. This much of the story remains true to reality; the rest, the enchanting part, is a product of everyone's fancy. Hannah is conceived as unattainable and mysterious. She is almost a damsel in distress. The others surround her

as retainers and create an artificial medieval world of almost Gothic dimensions.

For the unstable Marian, this is an ideal fantasy, abstracting her sufficiently from the real world of people. There is an intimation of Marian's instability when she recalls what her London boyfriend had said to her before leaving, "Stop thinking that life is cheating you. Take what there is and use it. Will you never be a realist?"³ Gaze only reinforces the weaknesses of her personality. It answers her need for a dream-fantasy that will take her out of the world with all its problems into a structured, readily understood society:

She had wanted...some kind of colourful uplifting steadying ceremony, some kind of distinction, of life which had so far eluded her.⁴

Marian finds life at Gaze attractive. Murdoch tells us as much when using the authorial voice, she says, "The place, somehow, resembled her strangely, it was nervous too."⁵ Already it can be seen that Marian's imagination is working in devious ways to realize her fantasies.

Marian is quickly assimilated into the weird household and is soon caught up in the mystery, foreboding, and timeless quality of the place. She loses interest in her former life; the stages in this growing isolation being marked by the gradual irrelevance of Geoffrey's (her boyfriend) letters. It comes as no shock or hurt that he should suddenly announce his engagement to one of her friends. From the moment of entering Gaze, Marian became absorbed into its fantasy life.

Once she has become part of the fantasy machine, she can do little but perpetuate it, committing the same crimes against the reality of others as does everyone else involved in the "story" When Effingham is rescued from the swamp, where he almost dies, Marian is amongst the woman who distract him and fail to hear what important message he has to give. While struggling in the swamp, Effingham had a vision where he saw the need for the death of the self. The world then became automatically the object of perfect love. Such a message, besides being pure Murdoch, would have without a doubt broken the spell at Gaze. But no one listened and it was lost.

Marian's desire to release Hannah causes her to make an accomplice of Effingham, thus hurting the only genuine person in the group--Alice LeJour. She seduces Denis and makes him break faith with his love for Hannah which she fails entirely to perceive because she is so abstracted into her role in the drama. Marian believes the gothic web of mystery so sincerely that she entirely fails to recognize reality when confronted with it.

Nevertheless, Marian does have some moments of genuine insight into the moral questions posed by her position; for example, she muses on the sad situation of Hannah:

No one should be a prisoner of other people's thoughts, no one's destiny should be an object of fascination to others, no one's destiny should be open to inspection;⁶

Yet the irony is that this is exactly how she treats Hannah.

She does try to pry out the secrets of the murder attempt; she does try to force Hannah into escaping from Gaze, and she does derive pleasure from probing the emotional values of her mistress.

The question becomes who exactly is Hannah's gaolor? The answer is--everyone at Gaze, everyone involved with Hannah except Alice. For some unknown reason, Hannah has stimulated all these people to attempt to realize their fantasy worlds through her. Possibly, Hannah wants it this way. However, we really never find out. For Max, she becomes his vision of spiritual good; for Effingham she is the source and centre of his Courtly love fantasy; for Marian she is, as mentioned before, the dream-goddess of a stable, feudal society. Hannah is the prisoner of all their thoughts, and, fantasy is the mechanism of this evil. Hannah is allowed no reality of her own until she loses all control and makes a final statement of rebellion by killing Gerald Scotow and herself.

Gaze can be seen as a house full of neurotic individuals all fantasizing one human being out of existence. Marian shares the guilt for this crime against the autonomy and mystery of others. Hannah's death releases them from their private day-dreams and throws them back in the real world. Seen in this light, Hannah's death was a final blood sacrifice planned by Hannah to break the spell and throw the weight of guilt back onto her gaolors. Reluctantly, Marian returns to London to "dance at Geoffrey's wedding."⁷ Marian will

have time to suffer for the sin against others she has committed.

Marian's crime against the "other"ness of the people at Gaze, specifically Hannah, is that she circumscribes their freedom by actually reinforcing, holding up the mirror so to speak, to their fantasies and thereby completing or helping to complete, the circle of their imprisonment. She assumes all their beliefs about Hannah's role are fixed and immutable and never tries to get to the core of the mystery. She never really challenges Hannah in her stake in maintaining such a ridiculously contrived fantasy world. She plans an escape for Hannah without really thinking out where Hannah would go and what she would do there. If she had thought about the situation with any depth of insight into the being of others, she would have known that Hannah was a voluntary prisoner. The problem was in Hannah's mind. Perhaps Hannah was mad. This thought never seems to strike Marian. She never really assumes responsibility toward freeing others of their illusions.

Marian's one act of charity toward Hannah is granting her a moment's respite to act as she freely wishes--she lets Hannah escape Gaze and go to the sea. Yet even then she is not sure,

Had she done right to give Hannah this last thing, the freedom to make her life over in her own way into her own property?⁸

For Marian, the society surrounding the mystique of Hannah is satisfying and consoling and assuages her own incompleteness and inadequacy in the society of real people. Her

fantasy need is of such intensity as to confuse her morally and it makes her unconsciously the perpetrator of countless violations upon the reality and individuality of others. Therefore, within the Murdochian thesis, the neurosis of fantasy limits Marian's capacity to act for the Good.

If Marian falls heir as it were to a ready-made fantasy, Morgan Browne in A Fairly Honourable Defeat has no such excuse. She fantasizes deliberately and prolifically and is altogether a far more complex personality than Marian. Her behavior is neurotic to the extent that she allows her personal need for a controlling form for reality to be found in self-satisfying fantasies. Her morality when judged in the light of Murdoch's theoretical code of moral behavior, is evil and illustrative of the neurotic mechanism whereby a person may separate self from the real nature of others and therefore from the Good.

Morgan's fault, her specific "sin", is her adeptness at fantasizing other people out of existence. This happens to almost all the characters in the story who come into contact with her. With Rupert's son, Peter, she tries to create what she terms an "innocent love"⁹ which she claims will be edifying to both parties but in reality makes the emotionally sensitive Peter suffer. He adores her and she shamelessly leads him on never thinking how very seriously he might take her casual flirtations. With her estranged husband, Tallis, she behaves coldly and remotely not because she does not love him but because she fears the happiness they might have with

one another, "like animals in a hutch."¹⁰ She seems to actively dislike reality. Tallis himself is no fool and sees exactly what she has done, for at one point he says, "She's got a picture of what she wants me to be and I'm just not it."¹¹ In other words, she has an image of her ideal fantasy lover and Tallis definitely does not "make the grade." Julius King, her ex-lover, whom she had worshipped like a god, accurately analyses her behavior, "Morgan has a remarkable capacity for making false images of people and then persecuting the people with the images."¹² This is precisely what she does to all three of these men and to Rupert as well. She becomes involved in the finally destructive relationship with Rupert because she finds the situation interesting and because it offers her an opportunity for testing out her policy of loving everyone indiscriminately. She and Julius had made a pact that they would test out the belief that any loving couple could, given the right circumstances, be split apart.

In reality, her "love" is nothing more than vanity and self-seeking and has no real respect for Rupert's well-being. Certainly Morgan has qualities of egoism in her as well. She could easily have terminated any love Rupert supposedly had for her simply by refusing to meet or correspond with him. Instead, she deludes herself into believing she is acting rightly seeing Rupert as a test-case for her latest fantasy. She reciprocates his love with her idea of "love" and leads a good but vain man to his own destruction.

What is perhaps even more dangerous about Morgan's fantasies is their erratic and temporary nature. Not only

does she abuse people by involving them in her private fantasies, she also drops them as soon as another more attractive victim for her imagination appears on the scene. This is one possible interpretation of the symbolic meaning of the London Underground episode when Morgan, inspired by the idea of freeing the trapped pigeon, only succeeds in getting her handbag stolen. The pigeon is her dream of freedom and the purse the valuable reality she has lost in her vain efforts to realize a temporary passion. She is attracted by Julius because he is like a bird in gaudy plumage as compared with the dull Tallis. Suffering rejection by Julius, Rupert is the next best thing. Morgan wants continual drama even if she has to manufacture it herself. Only drama will mask the true contingency of living. Her flair for drama is well illustrated in her blatant attempts to recapture Julius' sexual interest. She simply greets him at the door with no clothes on. However, he is not moved and returns the surprise by taking all her clothes.

Julius accuses her of just this; he says, "You are always wanting other people to act in some drama which you have invented."¹³ Tallis says the same thing in different words; he says, "I think you're hopelessly theory-ridden."¹⁴ Be it theory or drama, the essence is the same--Morgan is continually involving others in her neurotic fantasies.

Her emotional instability adds to the risk of her hurting others. Within minutes she can shift from a Sartrean nausea at the "loathsomeness at the heart of it all"¹⁵ to an affirmation of the sublimity of a truly "free innocent love"¹⁶ and

from there to the sudden conclusion that "love is a form of madness."¹⁷ Such rapid shifts of moral grounds is bound to affect her interactions with others, and it does. It makes her unpredictable and morally callous. She hurts Simon by her flippant and injudicious farewell after his intimate confession to her. She obtains money from Rupert to repay Tallis and then only gives him a quarter of the debt she owes him. She becomes irresponsibly involved with Peter. She strikes the bargain with Julius which is openly treating humans like guinea pigs. The list could go on; sufficient it is to say that Morgan's instability is destructive and neglects the ordinary rights of others. Simon only wants her as a friend while she envies his stable relationship with Axel and flaunts her femininity very cruelly before him. Tallis at first only wants either her love or a divorce but she gives neither, wishing as she does to have him but not have to be with him. With Peter, she does not do the obvious thing of rejecting his love and devotion but tries to capture him too and to make him her slave. Rupert she encourages because it is flattering. She thinks about Hilda only later when things have complicated themselves beyond mending.

I mention all this simply to indicate how Morgan's instability, her unpredictability, her dramatizing, theorizing, and fantasizing, all derive from the same source--the moral void at the centre of her life. She has no moral concepts with which to analyse and control her behavior. Murdoch would say that Morgan's search for identity is really a search for values and a conceptual schema which will make whole her world.

Not finding them and not having the discipline or power to focus clearly on the nature of the world, she is left with the search itself and, seeking becomes both goal and reward. Julius is partly right when he states, "the metaphysical search is always a sign of neurosis."¹⁸ Certainly Morgan substantiates this claim. However, it is the mode of being which the searcher brings to the search which determines the extent to which he sinks into neurosis. I would argue that the metaphysical search in itself is morally neutral. The seeker is not. He may bring with him innumerable private fantasies which interfere with his perception of reality.

This is the case with Morgan for her searchings are discontinuous and impulsive. She never sees others because she is too busy involving them in her own dream-worlds. She never accepts the reality of the "unutterable particularity" of the world since that would be destructive of her privately fabricated scheme of things. She never really understands love or freedom and Tallis' accusation holds much truth-- "You don't understand the meaning of the words you use."¹⁹ Morgan uses the right words for the wrong reasons and subverts their meaning into rationalizations of her own fantasies. For example, her conclusion that "The world is crazy but good,"²⁰ leads her by a rapid series of mental jumps to the illogical proposition, "Madness can be a kind of spiritual strength"²¹ which bears the marks of what psychologists call a self-fulfilling prophesy. She is really condoning her own neurotic behavior.



With all these reality distortions constantly in progress, it can readily be seen why Morgan could never satisfy Miss Murdoch's criteria for the "good man." Morgan is a destroyer assimilating things and other people into her private world of fantasy. What is more, she is so apparently in control of her fantasies that the reader too is drawn in and becomes a fellow conspirator. But the reality is that she ignores and mistreats the best man in all of Murdoch's novels--Tallis, destroys Rupert, and hurts numerous others.

Morgan's neurotic behavior and thinking create an almost inescapable web from which she may never escape. Murdoch provides in Morgan an example of evil and how that person can damage others without really being aware of the crime they are committing--so complete is the neurotic fantasy they project into life.

Sado-Masochists: A Severed Head, An Accidental Man

Sado-masochism as a character trait shares many common features with neurosis and egoism but differs to a marked extent in its propensity toward self-punishment and violence. It merits a classification of its own simply because as a mode of behavior and response to others, it has dramatic and destructive consequences. The two characters in the corpus of Iris Murdoch's fiction who seem most to embody this trait are Martin Lynch-Gibbon from A Severed Head and Austin Gibson Grey from An Accidental Man.

Very early in the novel, A Severed Head, the reader is alerted to Martin's sado-masochistic desires when his mistress, Georgie Hands, astutely says, "The trouble with you, Martin, is that you are always looking for a master."²² During the course of the novel, this is exactly what he does. Martin moves from one master to another and punishes himself by demeaning his will to theirs; first Antonia (his wife), then Antonia and Palmer, and finally Honor Klein, the awe-inspiring anthropologist and sister to Palmer Anderson. Of Antonia he says, "I could feel her will upon me like a leech."²³ of Palmer, he asks, "You aren't hypnotizing me, are you?"²⁴ In his relations with Antonia and Palmer, he falls into "my role, my role of 'taking it well', which had been prepared for me by Palmer and Antonia."²⁵ It is Martin's will that crumbles when confronted with a stronger personality and it is not at first apparent what Martin's real motivation for this passivity is. He seems a ready and willing victim. It takes the relatively clear vision of Georgie to cut through Martin's protests of sincerity:

This "without bitterness" idea just seems to me rather obscene,... And I suspect you of wanting to play the virtuous aggrieved husband so as to keep Palmer and Antonia in you power.²⁶

Even masochism can be viewed as a form of sadism.

Perhaps it is the painful accuracy of Georgie's analytic mind that causes Martin to use her in such a sadistic manner throughout the novel. He punishes her for forcing him to see her as a real person not just a thing that he possesses. That he does regard her as a "thing" to possess is evident in the following quote made over Georgie's drugged body, "I looked

at her extended familiar hand, the palm uppermost and open as in a gesture of appeal or release. All these I had possessed."²⁷ Even at the beginning of the novel when first we meet the two together, Martin's motives are suspect. His flippancy and lack of consideration for Georgie as a person show through in such a statement as, "Wonderful stuff, flesh."²⁸ It is her hair which Georgie cuts off and sends him as a final gesture of appeal. Only something tangible, physical, and sensual could move Martin to any generous deed. It is Georgie he pushes out of his room when he is startled by a knock on the door. To use a popular cliché, he treats her "like dirt."

Martin's desire for punishment is obsessive and reveals itself in dreams and fantasies. When Georgie has an abortion for him and survives it marvellously as though nothing had happened, it is Martin who suffers sleepless nights and bad dreams,

I was left with a sense of not having suffered enough. Only sometimes in dreams did I experience certain horrors, glimpses of a punishment which would perhaps yet find its hour.²⁹

But Martin does not go further and express his attitude toward these dreams. It is unclear whether these tortures give him pleasure or pain. At one and the same time, he wants his fantasies realized and yet recognizes the danger of them coming true. He envies Georgie's robust health and sees it as,

What I required to pull me out of the region of fantasy which I was increasingly inhabiting and return me to the real world...I unutterably wanted some simplicity of consolation.³⁰

In this wish, he is unconsciously repeating the words and thoughts of Palmer, for it is Palmer, who, earlier on when

speaking to Martin about the nature of the psyche comments, "It [the psyche] automatically seeks its advantage, its consolation. It is almost entirely a matter of mechanics."³¹

Fantasy for Martin is his consolation and his way of ensuring that the advantage will always be in his favor. When finally Martin is struck by an intense love for Honor Klein, it is because he takes masochistic delight in thinking he is being deprived of consolation;

I was, it seemed, to be deprived of consolation. I was to be stripped, shaved, and prepared as a destined victim; and I awaited Honor as one awaits, without hope the searing presence of a God.³²

But in truth what has happened is simply that all his other fantasies have been occluded by the giant myth he has created around Honor. He has made her into a god, the "severed head" of which she speaks. He views himself in images that recall the flagellate Monks. When he thinks of her, his thought becomes "a round pain to the periphery of which the torn fragments of my being adhered like rags of flesh."³³ He speaks of being "brought...to my knees."³⁴ Honor has indeed become his master. This is the masochistic love to which he has so long aspired. There can be little doubt that this is no normal love for even when Martin describes it, it sounds perverse and coldly remote,

Yet it was in truth a monstrous love such as I had never experienced before, a love out of such depths of self as monsters live in. A love devoid of tenderness and humour, a love practically devoid of personality.³⁵

Even the development of this so-called "love" for Honor had an abnormal history. Her scorn for him when he

meets her at the station records itself in his memory as "the first judgement."³⁶ As early as this Martin had mythologized Honor into his master, this being his first punishment at her hands. Honor loses no time in delivering more judgements of his behavior, his phoney magnanimity, and he tolerates it all very evenly until the night when he meets her after he has taken wine to his wife and lover in his own bedroom. She once again judges his behavior, and with heavy sarcasm says, "You are heroic, Mr. Lynch-Gibbon. The knight of infinite humiliation."³⁷ This is too much even for Martin and he attacks her and in this fit of violence strikes her three times. It is a sadistic action and its after-effects of guilt and desire for further punishment drive Martin in a fever of masochistic delight to the conclusion that he is indeed in love with Honor.

His next step, his surprising Honor and Palmer in bed together in Honor's Cambridge flat, places him in a position of power over them both which he does not fail to utilize. With Palmer, he becomes quite brutal and eventually works up enough courage to strike him after which Martin experiences "the complete surrender of his will to mine."³⁸ This apparently gives Martin some satisfaction; at least it succeeds as a manoeuvre to retrieve his wife.

Most of Martin's sado-masochistic actions derive from distorted fantasies which twist reality into some dreamlike or mythic pattern. For example, the scene where Honor slices the napkin in two with the samurai sword is described by Martin in melodramatic words betraying his wish for the scene to have mythic significance; for ordinary events

to be imbued with meaning gives Martin the sense of consolation he so much needs.

As a moral approach to life, Martin's sado-masochism fails on many counts to measure up to the moral concepts for "goodness" proposed by Miss Murdoch in her theory. He consistently views others as things upon which he can practice his perverse delight in self-punishment and fantasies. Although he does not often manipulate people, he commits the equivalent crime of forgetting that they exist. He simply ignores them. It is only at the end of the tale when he has been left entirely to his own resources and has taken to drinking for consolation that he comes to recognize the absolute freedom of individuals to create and change their own worlds. Left in isolation, Martin seems at last to have conquered his distorting fantasies and when Honor comes to him, he says, "We have lived together in a dream up to now. When we awake will we find each other still?"³⁹ At last he admits it was a dream in which he was living and not reality. Martin has the last word in the novel and that is in answer to Honor's challenge, "You must take your chance!" He replies, "So must you, my dear!"⁴⁰ thereby giving the reader some hope that he has replaced the consolations of form through fantasy with a healthy acceptance of contingency and chance.

Austin Gibson-Grey from An Accidental Man lives his life in much the same manner as Martin Lynch-Gibbon,

deriving pleasure both from punishing others with his dream-fantasies of them, and from punishing himself through a role he has conceived for himself.

That he is basically a sadistic man is evidenced in his treatment of the three women who love him in the novel. Dorina, Mitzi, and Mavis all fall into his web of destructive fantasy. Mitzi is the only one who escapes into a new life and this comes about only through the rather drastic action of a suicide attempt. Austin forces Dorina, his second wife, to obey his will and become, in a metaphorical sense, his prisoner. Since she is weak and unstable, she is very cooperative in this regard. At one point she writes to him saying, with greater truth than she knows, "I am happy always in your will."⁴¹ Garth, Austin's son, sees through the subtle web of compulsion Austin has built around Dorina and is quite explicit in his analysis of Dorina's problem:

You could break this circle if you wanted to--

You must stop being so afraid of him...Your fear sets him off. It excites him like a tiger smelling blood...wake him bloody up.⁴²

But Austin, with malign accuracy, has assessed Dorina's basic fear of life and of things and caters to it by placing her in the secluded and almost other-worldly Valmorina away from the world, away from others, and audience only to him. Mavis is appalled at Dorina's captive state and admonishes her, "You need the ordinary things of social life, having a talk, having to dress. You're becoming a dream figure."⁴³⁴³ But it is too late; when she does finally manage

to escape Austin's clutches, it is only to die by accidental electrocution while taking a bath. Having forgotten the ordinary practical things of life, Dorina causes her own death by foolishly setting an electric heater in a precarious position next to the bathtub.

Austin treats Mitzi in a despicable fashion, making use of her generosity and leeching off her love without any thought of returning it in kind. He unfailingly abuses her kindnesses to him and then blames her for his troubles. He really does not conceive of her as a person at all. For him, she is part of a myth which he has patterned after the Ulysses-Penelope-Calypso story. When he is drunk he blurts the whole thing out and there are so many similarities between the real people and the myth figures that there can be little doubt that for Austin, the myth is real. Mitzi is Calypso keeping him comfortably contented and separate from his wife, "He was on Calypso's isle."⁴⁴ Dorina, of course, is Penelope loyally unravelling the threads every evening to keep away the suitors. Garth is Telemachus out in search of his father and, incidentally, himself. Troy is Valmorina. The whole myth corresponds with Austin's imaginative fantasies and both together distort and blur reality. Mitzi quite rightly objects to being so treated and with justifiable anger says to Austin,

I'm the only person who really sees you and really loves you... You're a liar as well as a parasite. You prey on women.⁴⁵

He preys on them not only in a materialistic sense but also

in the sense that he immobilizes them through some overpowering and mystifying fantasy, numbing their will by fitting the person into the fantasy regardless of their objections. Within the Murdochian code this form of behavior is wrong on several counts. First, it denies the reality of people, molding them as it does into sadistic fantasies. For example, Austin keeps Dorina immobilized and functionally isolated at Valmorina. Second, it represents a bad use of the imagination which should be used to see into the being of others and into the particularity of the world, not to distort it.

Austin is afraid of the contingency of the world and goes out of his way to play the role of the victim. Like a petulant child who has been refused some treat, Austin decries existence--"Life was misery and muddle, it was misery and muddle."⁴⁶ Austin wishes to see only the bad side of life and to martyr himself on its cruel and accidental aspects. As long as he can see himself as life's victim, he is happy. The following conversation between Austin and Mavis is a good example of this masochistic tendency:

"I am an accidental man" ... "What do you mean, Austin? Aren't we all accidental? Isn't conception accidental?" "With me it's gone on and on."⁴⁷

This self-pitying attitude accounts for his paranoid fantasies centering on his brother, Matthew. Austin prefers to see things as happening to him unjustly; thus the childhood

accident at the gravel pit becomes exaggerated into a damaging fantasy where his brother acts the role of the villain. This false view readily expands into imagining his brother having first an affair with Betty (Austin's first wife) and then with Dorina. In this way he can sadistically refuse to "forgive" Matthew and at the same time, indulge his own masochistic desire to act the victim.

Austin's sado-masochism is a shield with which he fends off the true nature of events and people. Unfortunately for others, the effects of this attitude are often lethal. All the so-called accidents in the novel may be worked back to Austin's negligent or sado-masochistic behavior. Having had too much to drink he accepts Matthew's polite but foolhardy offer to drive Matthew's new car. In order to impress his son, Garth, he drives too fast and strikes and kills a child. Purely through good fortune, he escapes punishment for this crime. Later, in a fit of childish fury, he "accidentally" strikes the child's blackmailing father on the head and sends him to an institution for the rest of his life. In the first of these two examples, Austin was driving too fast as a sadistic reprisal to his finding Matthew and Garth in conversation. The second "accident" can be seen to have been in a sense motivated by Austin's anger at being accurately summed up by Norman. Norman taunts him,

The trouble with you is, you've never grown up. You're not mature. You're still like a little brother running along behind and crying "Carry me!"⁴⁸

This deflates Austin's masochistic balloon and precipitates the violent scene.

As for the two other major "accidents" of Austin's life, those involving his two wives, these too can be seen to derive in great part from Austin's behavior. Responsibility for Dorina's accidental electrocution can be traced to Austin's treating her like a captive and effectively making her an innocent to the ordinary practical details of life. The case against Austin with regard to the accidental drowning of his first wife is harder to prove but there are ample suggestions throughout the novel that the evidence was by no means conclusive that it was accidental. Betty as we learn at the end of the novel was a good swimmer and very much in love with life. Judging from Austin's behavior throughout the novel, Austin might have murdered her while in a fit of petulance, or provoked her suicide by his paranoid suspicions of an affair with Matthew.

Austin is a dangerous man in that everything or everyone he touches with his weird personality suffers in some way or another. Within the Murdochian morality, he is amoral and far from any perception of the "Good." He lacks any set of moral concepts besides his own fantasy needs and has no incentive to explore the world of real people. He is completely unprepared to cope with the contingent reality of life. He surrounds himself with heavy plates of fantasy and in this way, blocks off anything extraneous to himself. When he is

for a moment drawn out from his protection into the real world of misery of Mrs. Carberry and her son, Ronald, he loses little time retreating back into it,

Austin returned to himself. For several whole minutes he had been thinking about something else. Now the old buzzing cloud swept blindingly about him once again.⁴⁹

Austin is enclosed by his own elaborately-constructed "cloud" of sado-masochistic fantasies.

CHAPTER 4

Egoists: Under the Net, An Unofficial Rose, Bruno's Dream

Both literature and life abound with egoists, people who place personal, private goals, needs, ambitions, over the essential reality and particularity of others; who fail to understand that any other person other than themselves actually can exist, or, understanding, still persist in using the other person for their own selfish goals. If we agree with Murdoch's statement that "the self is a place of illusion", then the danger of egoism becomes obvious, especially when seen in the light of her moral theory. Egoism, or "self"-ishness interferes with the unclouded perception of others. It is the mirror which reflects the "loving Gaze" turned inward upon the gazer--a closed circuit response which eliminates the need for anyone else.

Perhaps the character in all of Murdoch's fiction who is most oblivious of the existence of others is Jake Donahue in her very first novel Under the Net. With greater truth than his flippant tone would imply, Jake says,

I hate solitude, but I am afraid of intimacy. The substance of my life is a private conversation with myself which to turn into a dialogue would be equivalent to self-destruction.¹

There is little doubt that Jake means the word "self-destruction" to be read literally; i.e., destruction of his private solipsistic self. For him, this is an intolerable idea. He is perfectly honest in his resentment of such an invasion

of his private sphere, "I have never wanted a communion of souls. It's already hard enough to tell the truth to oneself."² But his honesty is not an admirable quality, for in this case, it only blocks off all possible receptivity to others. Jake's self, his "fat, relentless ego"³, is doubly defended first by its own nature and second by an involuted defensive air of irony which cynically and flippantly dismisses the need for others. It is a terminal policy which begins and ends in the narrow cell of the self.

The problem with Jake is the problem of anyone caught in the coils of egoism. Right action and moral choice are in the egoist confined to the solving of immediate personal dilemmas through self-satisfying means. The simplicity of the formulation itself reveals the weakness of the solipsistic argument. The egoist is in charge of the situation only so long as he can control and direct the being or will of others in accordance with his own fancy or whim. This is patently impossible and can only lead the self-seeking person into false understanding. R.L. Widmann sees Jake in this unfortunate role: "Jake, in actuality, is a person bound by nets of delusion. He is mistaken about almost everything."⁴ In fact, the novel's main theme involves showing Jake's delusion-making mechanism in operation. Jake perceives neither the love of Anna for Hugo, nor the love of Hugo for Sadie. He himself fails to see the reality and autonomy of his close friend, Finn, to whom the reader is off-handedly introduced with, "He isn't exactly my servant."⁵ Far from it, but Jake

is content to use his friend as a servant and is shocked and confused by Finn's sudden departure for a life in Ireland. Jake just cannot be bothered to look into any other life than his own.

Jake himself is a translator of French novels. This work earns him very little but he makes up for the lack by sponging off others and taking the very occasional odd part time job such as hospital orderly. He is flippant and casual in his treatment of his friends and drifts in out of their lives with little thought for tomorrow.

Jake's conversation with Lefty Todd, the flamboyant Marxist politician is illuminating for its capsule presentation of the final hypocrisy of Jake's morality:

"So you admit that you care?"

"Of course," I said, "but..."

"Well, it's the chink in the dam," said he.

"If you can care at all you can care absolutely. What other moral problem is there in this age?"

"Being loyal to one's friends and behaving properly to women," I answered quick as a flash.⁶

Lefty, of course, has Miss Murdoch's hearty approval. Caring enough would indeed rank high in her moral philosophy. Jake in his quick reply reveals his own degree of confusion as to his own behavior. His treatment of Finn, Hugo, and Magdalene hardly show him as honest toward his proclaimed intentions. Jake certainly is neither loyal to his friends nor does he behave properly with either Magdalene whom he uses and pities or Anna whom he conveniently forgets and then remembers only when he is looking for lodgings. He thinks nothing of inconveniencing others with his presence. He is so involved

with his self-love that he can not see how his usurious treatment of his friends betrays his disregard for them as real persons. It will be seen that Jake even deludes himself as to his own motives, let alone those of other people.

Jake is wonderfully gifted with the ability to theorize about people and place them in situations, positions of his own creation. He has the remarkable capacity for distorting the truth in a situation and then clouding his own perception with this distortion. His delusions regarding Hugo Bellfounder are an excellent example of how this works. Jake terminates a perfectly good relationship with Hugo simply because he feels Hugo ought to resent the book which Jake had written using Hugo's thoughts from past conversations between Jake and Hugo. What Jake fails to recognize is that Hugo is not that kind of person and values friendship more than recognition. Not only that, but Hugo did not even recognize the thoughts as being his own. The tragedy of the situation lies in Jake's refusal to find things at their source and his ensuing belief in his own fabricated theory which was a rationalization of guilt anyway. The double irony of the situation is that the book itself, The Silencer, gave the solution to the problem, for in the conversation between Tamarus and Annandine, pseudonyms for Jake and Hugo, Annandine says,

All theorizing is flight. We must be ruled by the situation itself and this is unutterably particular. Indeed it is something to which we can never get close enough, however hard we may try as it were to crawl under the net.⁷

Jake cannot conceive of ever not placing things and people in a web of theory. "(T)heory is death."⁸ says Annandine and captures the problem of Jake's egoistic morality. Jake, by theorizing, by forcing everyone into his carefully constructed mold is distorting reality in all its muddle and disconnectedness and, metaphorically speaking, killing life and spontaneity.

Jake resents the powers of chance and necessity which appear to him to rule the life of man. At the outset of the novel Jake is commenting on the various kinds of far-flung suburbs of London and he says with greater truth than he knows, "I hate contingency. I want everything in my life to have a sufficient reason."⁹ It might be nice but it is hardly the way things are. All lives are mortal and subject to the laws or lack of laws of a contingent reality. Jake poses as flippant individualist in front of the mirror of self but makes the error of mistaking the reflection he sees for truth. Only at the end of the novel when all the loose ends of his theorizing about others are slipping out of his grasp does he give up the pose. His trusty Mrs. Tinckham asks him why her cat's litter of kittens should be exactly half Siamese and half tabby. Jake answers, "Well, I said, 'it's just a matter of...'" I stopped. I had no idea what it was a matter of."¹⁰ Perhaps Jake has finally stopped his theorizing and come to accept a reality which is both contingent and full of autonomous, equally idiosyncratic individuals.

Randall Peronett, the unhappily married son of Hugh Peronett in An Unofficial Rose, is an altogether different and more difficult case of moral egoism. This is partly so as very little of the book actually deals with him in character-revealing dialogue. It is the parallel love-story of Hugh and Randall to Emma and Lindsay which forms the plot of the novel, yet amazingly little time is devoted to any of the key figures besides Hugh.

However, what is given is sufficient for the reader to form some conception of Randall's morality and to see its mainspring lies in selfishness. Randall's problem is that he fails to see others in their full reality because he is obsessed with the need for form and meaning in his life. Ann is the one who first states this, "Randall wants everything to have form."¹¹ For example, he likes only the perfect roses in his greenhouse gardens and is nauseated by what he terms sloppy hybrids and wild roses. The highly structured courtly love scene which develops around Emma's London flat temporarily satisfies Randall's need for form and structure. The severance of the neat ring of relationships created by Emma although providing Randall with money, Lindsay, and freedom from Ann, also left a great open void in his life. He was thrown into the contingent, messy universe. Predictably, he finds this intolerable and reacts with violence. But this violence is psychic and moral, not physical. It is witnessed in his changed attitude toward Lindsay. She no longer figures as part of his fin amour:

He had loved Lindsay as the enticing but un-touchable princesse lointaine which Emma had ...made of her; and in now possessing Lindsay, Randall experienced,..., the touch of a disappointment analogous to that of the girl who desires the priest in his soutane, but wants him no more when he has broken his vows to become, less ceremoniously, available.¹²

This childish delight in the seduction routine, the deflowering of innocence is part and parcel of Randall's almost autistic egoism. Randall uses people to supply him with form-satisfying relationships, once he begins to approach too near or allows them to approach too near, he reacts with an eruption of violence which generally terminates the arrangement. It is too much to say that this is not a planned manoeuvre for it happens too many times; first Ann, then Emma, and finally Lindsay; for even Lindsay is destined to be found wanting in Randall's very private world. Her stay in Randall's life is obviously almost over when in the hotel in Spain, Randall lies awake wondering why he felt Lindsay was perhaps not the ideal consort,

What here impeded him was, he was fairly sure not the demon of morality. It was more like some restless rapacity...Randall felt restless, he wanted, now more than ever, to have everything ...: the world is large and there are other women in it besides Lindsay.¹³

Randall is really a child. His mentality is that of a possessive, demanding, and self-centered boy of ten. In his eyes, people are there to be used or made to fill some fanciful stage he has prepared for them. Ann, like "Mommy", "would always be waiting."¹⁴ and his Dad would always be willing to sell a prize painting to launch his son in the world. It is fitting that Randall should receive his greatest consolation

from his two teddy-bears.

Randall's attitude towards others contrasts sharply with those of the two suitors after his wife. Felix tells Miranda, "Other people are what matter about life, and that's the best reason why one just can't contract out of it"¹⁵ and Douglas Swann tells Ann, "We must not expect our lives to have a visible shape...Goodness accepts the contingent."¹⁶ Randall has no capacity for the contingent nor can he tolerate the messy, formless lives of other people, notably Ann, and therefore rejects both and takes in their place a self-structured image of reality and others that satisfies only himself. This is clear from his reverie in the hotel room in Spain as mentioned above. He has used Lindsay as his escape from Ann and he has dismissed Ann as a dead end.

Miles Greensleave, son of Bruno Greensleave the central figure in Bruno's Dream, would best be classified as a typical Romantic figure cut in the Existentialist block. As he appears in the novel, he is isolated, alienated, seeking meaning, and living off the tragic sense of fatality given him by his first wife's death. A writer and poet by profession, he sits in his garden gazebo and contemplates and makes pompous descriptions and philosophic comments in his journal which he has called the Notebook of Particulars. With characteristic irony, Miss Murdoch puts a part of her moral theory, in this case Miles' awareness of particularity, into the hands of characters who then distort the original power for good

contained in this awareness into something evil. Miles is quite correct in his determination to "take in the marvels that surrounded him"¹⁷ but, even then, he is more caught up in the beauty of his words than in the object he is describing. The problem is that this is as far as he gets in understanding the importance of particularity. People remain outside his vision. He treats his second wife, Diana, with a cruel detachment and limits her ability for development by his preconceptions of her character. He deliberately allows the memory of Parvati, his first wife, to cloud his relations with others, including his dying father, Bruno.

That this behavior is a function of a profound egoism seems to me to be quite obvious. Consider first the case of Parvati. Did Miles really know his wife? It would be more true to say that he worshipped her and venerated her for what she represented rather than what she was--an ordinary human being. In the following quotation, Murdoch's ironic undercutting of Miles's Romantic vision gives the lie to Miles' exaggerated poetic sense:

Parvati ironing her saris in a room in Newnham. Then ironing his shirts. 'You represent the god.' 'What god?' 'The god - Shiva, Eros ... All poets have angels. You are mine.' ... Parvati talking about swaraj and the fundamental problems of an agricultural economy."¹⁸

From this brief passage we have the intimation that Parvati was anything but romantic. Practical perhaps but definitely not the delicate flower cut down in bloom. The death was tragic but even this sad event could not stop Miles from "cashing in" on its sentimental and tragic aspects--"He

transformed the plane crash into a dazzling tornado of erotic imagery."¹⁹ His Notebook of Particulars is really a series of self-indulgent musings on details and would seem to be rather pompous and fatuous. His art becomes his consolation.

His egoism is a variant of self-pity. Miles completely misses the point that other people exist as separate, autonomous, and mysterious beings with unique perceptions. His inability to get beyond the narrow bounds of his own self causes him to feel sorry for himself and to seek consolation in subjective visions of people.

The strained relationship between Miles and his father is another example of Miles' agility at prefabricating and distorting issues to suit his purpose. Miles, like Randall, seeks to invest pattern with meaning. It is far easier to see people as part of a pattern, especially if you yourself have created the pattern, than to allow each being its freedom. Ever since his marriage to Parvati, Miles had conceived of his father in the role of the irate father, angry at a colored girl entering the family. Bruno indeed was temporarily angry but he soon got over it. He had not answered Miles' letters because "They were lying letters."²⁰ But Miles actually appeared to enjoy the roles he had cast for his father and himself. His visit to Bruno's sick bed recalls his role to him. He muses as he enters the room, "He had determined to play and pictured himself

playing some politer, more abstract version of his old role."²¹ What actually happens is that he sees his father hopelessly and repugnantly dying from malignant cancer. He registers Bruno's mute demand for tenderness, pity, and love but finds himself unable to react with these emotions:

He had relied upon dignity and dignity seemed at the first moment to be vanishing, revealing beyond it some awful naked demand of one human being upon another which he was totally unprepared to face.²²

Miles cannot step outside the convenient roles he has fabricated for himself and his father. He is terrified with the reality of others and the stark fact of death and the acute human need for love.

Miles survives in life only by remaining aloof from it. Diana understands this for it was this fundamental "aloneness" about him that first attracted her. It was "his inability in some ways to take hold of life at all"²³ that made her pity and love him. Fear of life and an accentuated self-pity because of the fear drive Miles farther and farther from any real contact with people. His visit to his father turns into disaster,

It was like a doom, it was more terrible than he could have imagined. He was back in that awful world of stupidity and violence and muddle. He was utterly utterly defiled.²⁴

Only in his sudden love for Lisa does Miles seem to genuinely value a person for their "otherness." But no sooner does he recognize freedom in others than he determines to possess that object. His logic in the matter was a four-step process beginning with, "She was lovable. She was

free." and ending with the conclusion, "He loved Lisa. Lisa was his."²⁵ Once again Miles finds it necessary to reduce everyone to his conception, his pattern, for their lives.

That Miles' love for Lisa is really a reflected love for himself is borne out by his ruminations on the subject,

The experience of falling in love, or as it seemed here to Miles, of realizing that one is in love, is itself however painful also a preoccupying joy. It increases vitality and sense of self.²⁶

Love, traditional or Murdochian, seldom centres on the self. It is generally imagined as an absence of self, a desire to grow into the other person. Miles once again has twisted meanings and even feelings to suit his purposes--that of aggrandizing his ego. The physical resemblance between Miles and Lisa is more than just a neat authorial twist, it is a statement of the reality of Miles' so-called "love." Lisa is so like him physically and mentally that she is the perfect object for his desires. For example, Miles creeps into Lisa's bedroom and the two fall into a lover's embrace, confessing their long-felt love for each other. During the conversation, Miles says,

"Do you know what I noticed long ago, that we resemble each other, physically I mean?"
 "Yes. I noticed too that we resemble each other. It's because I've thought about you so much."²⁷

Miles may now love himself with impunity for he is simply gazing at his reflection when he sees Lisa. His belief that their love "would give meaning to everything"²⁸ is simply a ruse to draw Lisa into the web of his private drama.

The marvellous and faun-like Nigel captures the essence of Miles' personality when he says to Diana,

A human being hardly ever thinks about other people. He contemplates fantasms which resemble them and which he has decked out for his own purposes. Miles' thoughts cannot touch you. His thoughts are about Miles.²⁹

He also sees through the "love" of Miles and Lisa. In answer to Diana's assertion that "They love each other terribly." Nigel answers, "Each loves himself more."³⁰

When finally Miles and Lisa part and Lisa goes to Danby whom she conceives as the only one offering her a full real life as a person, Miles outwardly pines but inwardly rejoices for Lisa has become another Parvati--someone whom he can worship at a distance. Lisa herself sees this when she says, "His peace depends on seeing me as unattainable, as an angel. It will hurt terribly when it turns out that I am only a woman after all."³¹ Miles' love of self clouds his mind to the reality of others and leaves him clutching the empty image that is his self-love. We leave him at the end of the novel engrossed in his private visions, putting it all down in writing and perfectly content in his self-love.

Manipulators: An Unofficial Rose, A Fairly Honourable Defeat

There is another type of character which has brought much criticism to Miss Murdoch's fiction. This is the type known as an enchanter. Almost every novel Miss Murdoch has so far produced contains its representative of this class of character with the result that it has come to be seen as

a standard plot device. It may be true that Murdoch places too heavy stress on this type of personality. However, every so often, in perhaps every third novel, Murdoch succeeds in making even these stereotypes come partially to life as with Honor Klein in A Severed Head, Emma Sands in An Unofficial Rose, and Julius King in A Fairly Honourable Defeat.

As a character type, "enchanters" exhibit one common feature: they all act, whether consciously or not, as centres of power and possess a strange magnetism that attracts and binds people to them. Their personalities seem to entrance certain types of weak-willed or neurotic individuals much as the spider does the fly. The relationship formed from such a liaison is very much predator-victim.

However, not all enchanters are totally self-willed. For instance, Honor Klein forms a source of fascination for the vacillating and morally-weak Martin Lynch-Gibbon. She herself does little to further his veneration and devotion and, in fact, repels his advances at almost every step. Characters like Emma Sands and Julius King on the other hand, compose a distinct sub-group within the "enchanter" classification since both are what could be termed "demonic enchanters"

"Demonic enchanters" are a special breed of enchanters who deliberately use their powers over other people to further their own ends; and, in the sense that they are trampling on other people's wills and subverting their motives, they are what Murdoch would term "evil". For the purpose of this analysis, manipulator will still be used to define their

behavior.

Emma Sands is just such a manipulator. She successfully constructs an elaborate mechanism of vengeance to punish Hugh Peronett for abandoning her twenty-five years before. Her power over others largely rests in her ability quickly to grasp, subvert, and control their motives. Her cunning intelligence rapidly assesses situations and, as in her own detective fiction, applies situational drama to complete a plot.

Meeting Randall, Hugh's son, ostensibly on the subject of his plays, Emma readily takes the measure of his dissatisfaction with his home life and his wife, Ann, and, recognizing Randall's impetuous Romantic nature, perceives him as the ideal instrument for her revenge. She employs a girl as companion-cum-secretary, Lindsay Rimmer, to act as the bait for her trap and Randall rapidly gets caught. Randall believes himself in love with Lindsay but is really firmly bound in Emma's web of enchantment for it is in truth her, his father's mistress, in whom he is interested. He is both fascinated and emotionally involved in an Oedipal relationship where he can metaphorically become his father's mistress's lover...the perfect symbolic murder. Why else does Randall so easily adapt to the otherwise highly unsatisfactory menage a trois which Emma imposes? Emma "takes over" the Randall-Lindsay affair and,

(Lindsay) was become suddenly as inaccessible as a Vestal Virgin. He was certainly still loved. Only now he was loved by both; and at times he wondered whether he were not coming... to be in love with both.³²

However Emma accomplished this feat, and we are later led to believe she resorted to beating Lindsay; she has Randall in complete obedience. Randall seems to relish the almost "courtly love" set-up at Emma's apartment. Lindsay is like the medieval princess to whom he must pledge his love while worshipping her in the court of the Queen (Emma). Emma does succeed in becoming "the centrepiece of the relationship."³³ Randall appears satisfied with this artificial arrangement. It may be that his desire for form and pattern is met by this highly ritualized and formal arrangement.

Whereas most people who come into contact with Emma readily admit to the "moral otherness" or the "holiday from morals" they sense in her presence, few suspect or even glimpse the real Emma beneath the exciting and morally dangerous exterior. When situations occur where her cruelty, bitterness, and vengefulness do appear, the other people are generally so much under her spell as to be completely unaware. For example, when she tells Hugh of the existence of the Randall-Lindsay affair, "She said it with a sort of icy brutality, watching Hugh as if for signs of pain."³⁴

Certainly Hugh would experience pain as it is his own son she is talking about and the affair would parallel Hugh's own affair with Emma many years previously. It would seem to him that the scene was constructed by Emma especially for his punishment and torment.

Incredible as it seems, Emma had spent the twenty-five years after the break-up of her affair with Hugh, brooding and becoming more and more bitter. When we meet her at the

time of the novel she has evolved a plan for recouping her emotional losses and making Hugh suffer just as she suffered. To this end, she manipulates people until her final triumph which consists of Randall running off with Lindsay, Ann apparently falling in love with Felix, and the inheritance being left to young Penn. Although she does not control these events entirely, they are at least partially the result of her planning. She has succeeded in disrupting Hugh's family. She has even managed to bereave Hugh of his precious painting, the Tintoretto. Indeed, she appears in the novel as a fantastically spiteful woman capable of much vengeance.

Emma uses people heartlessly and refuses to see them as anything but ciphers in her plot of revenge. There is never any question of whether she recognizes the existence and individuality of other people, as she herself says: "As for other people, either they're with me or they don't exist."³⁵ Emma is hard and cruel and within the Murdochian canon, totally lost. She is lost because she knows exactly what she is doing and cares not a jot to change her behavior.

Emma admits her culpability as a manipulator when she says,

'One must not play the god in other people's destiny. In any case, one can never do it properly.' She spoke in a tone of rather casual disappointment.³⁶

Emma does play god; in fact, she thoroughly enjoys playing god. She has plans for everybody and sees nothing particularly condemnable in her actions.

What sort of philosophy of life allows her to be so free with other people's destinies? She labels herself a "perfect phenomenalist"³⁷ or someone whose concern extends no further than present things and events. She also says that she is "not a continuous being."³⁸ By that she means that past and present for her need not connect. It is a statement of moral indifference and bankruptcy. She is without recourse to any moral concepts and, consequently, may behave in any manner she deems fit. There is something pitiable in her aloneness and moral otherness, for she is the one who loses. There is little enough in the novel to give grounds for pitying her but perhaps the most explicit example of Emma's consciousness of what she has sacrificed is the following:

Emma was grave for a moment. 'Randall may be saved in the end because at least he loves something...Now you can give me some whisky. Did I tell you? I've decided to take to drink.'³⁹

She is pathetic and her conspiracy to harm a man who twenty-five years ago had offended her is petty and vindictive. Her final act of vengeance tips the scales and Hugh sees through her enchanting exterior. He looks in her eyes and wonders, "Did he see there pity or cruelty?"⁴⁰ She offers him a life as slave to her whims and the intolerable ménage à trois with the new companion, Jocelyn. Wisely Hugh decides on India with Mildred and escapes Emma's further influence.

In all of Murdoch's fiction, there is no greater enchanter and manipulator than Julius King in A Fairly Honourable Defeat. Julius has a deep cynicism about the meaning and

significance of love. He joins forces with Morgan, Tallis' estranged wife, to test out the theory that no love relationship is invulnerable to destruction. They jointly set out to "test" the relationship of a homosexual couple they know, plus the stable, conventional relationship of her sister Hilda to her brother-in-law, Rupert. Axel and Simon, the homosexual couple, stand the test and survive. Hilda and Rupert are not so lucky. Rupert drowns accidentally in his backyard pool after he discovers Hilda has truly left him thinking that he is in love with her sister. The whole nasty escapade was engineered by Julius who used old love letters from Morgan to himself to draw the unsuspecting Rupert into incriminating clandestine meetings with Morgan. Julius stays comfortably out of the centre of action but is in full control of his helpless victims. He walks away from the mess he has created and is unscathed and unrepentent.

It is difficult to determine exactly what Julius' source of power over others is. Morgan in describing her feelings for Julius while they were living together in the United States says, "It had been like a mystical vision into the heart of reality...and then...to be shown a few mouldering chicken bones lying in a dark corner covered with dust and filth."⁴¹ Elsewhere she describes the process of falling in love with Julius as a "cosmic explosion."⁴² He would appear to be a man of some considerable powers bearing the marks of the Existentialist Romantic hero. Julius appears as the man who knows all the answers, and, since he is confident there is no justice, no retribution, believes he can do anything

he wishes with impunity. The "chicken bones"⁴³ bears striking resemblance to Sartrean "nausea" experienced when Existentialists are confronted with the contingency of things and people.

Julius deliberately takes the pose of the isolated, rational man dependent on his own will for all moral decisions. His power lies in his confidence in his pose. He is so confident of the validity of his stand that he can make statements such as:

I have no general respect for the human race. They are a loathsome crew and don't deserve to survive...One day some really sensational virus, the absolute pet of some biochemical hack like myself, will get out and all human life will cease in a matter of months...That's why the whole thing will go merrily on until it brings the whole rotten human experiment to an end for good and all.⁴⁴

Julius is more than a cynic, he is openly contemptuous of everything. Rupert becomes his perfect foil. It is Rupert's cross to bear that he is a man wrestling with philosophy, metaphysics and the nature of the Good. Julius cannot tolerate this "Good"-seeking and rails at Rupert,

Good is dull. What novelist ever succeeded in making a good man interesting? It is characteristic of this planet that the path of virtue is so unutterably depressing that it can be guaranteed to break the spirit and quench the vision of anybody who consistently attempts to tread it. Evil, on the contrary, is exciting and fascinating and alive. It is also very much more mysterious than good. Good can be seen through. Evil is opaque.⁴⁵

It should be obvious from the above that Julius is not only Rupert's challenger but also Miss Murdoch's. Most of the concepts Julius challenges are the very ones that form the core of Miss Murdoch's metaphysical theory discussed earlier.

He even goes so far as to question the possibility of conceiving of the Good at all,

It is not just that human nature absolutely precludes goodness, it is that goodness, in that extended sense, is not even a coherent concept, it is unimaginable for human beings, like certain things in physics.⁴⁶

This is spoken like the scientist and rationalist that Julius is in his everyday life. Typically that which cannot be seen or measured cannot exist. Yet the case is stated and the solution is by no means easy. Murdoch has set up the stage for a moral struggle and the second half of the book is the tough game of "Truth or Consequences" that follows from the meeting of two such opposite personalities as Julius and Rupert.

Julius, inspired by the devotion and presence of Morgan, decides to engineer a few marital catastrophies in order to prove his theory of which there are two basic tenets:

There is no relationship which cannot quite easily be broken and there is none the breaking of which is a matter of any genuine seriousness. Human beings are essentially finders of substitutes.⁴⁷

Every man loves himself so astronomically more than he loves his neighbour. Anyone can be made to drop anyone.⁴⁸

Part I of the book ends with the striking of the bargain: ten days to split the couple Axel and Simon or ten guineas. Axel and Simon live together in a perfectly harmonious homosexual relationship. Julius manages to compromise the weaker partner, Simon, by making overtures to him.

On his own initiative, Julius decides to enlarge the selection and determines on setting up a parallel experiment on Rupert and Hilda. The moral drama is ready to begin; the reader knows each of the characters' personalities. The question becomes who will survive.

Julius then quite ruthlessly and with considerable curiosity manipulates events to jeopardize both Rupert/Hilda and Axel/Simon relationships. He manages things with such efficiency and malign skill that both couples are on the verge of splitting even before the ten-day period is over. He treats the whole business as if it were one of his chemical experiments; i.e., throwing people together in novel and compromising circumstances and seeing how they react. Airily, he sums up the arranged Morgan/Rupert rencontre as a "midsummer enchantment"⁴⁹ as though it meant no more than a scene from a play. Simon, called to witness this embarrassing rendezvous, is rightly horrified and protests, "You can't play with people like that."⁵⁰ This is the real question about Julius and his mode of perception. Can he get away with it? It appears he can as the plot thickens with his added bit of stirring and as the experiment's subjects proceed to get more and more deeply involved in deception and complicity.

Julius is incredibly astute in his analysis of human psychology. He appears to understand completely the emotional dynamics of his victims as he correctly assesses Simon's sexual interest in himself and his incompetence in coming to

moral decisions; he recognizes Hilda's need for flattery and her innate suspiciousness; he uses Morgan's foolish, melodramatic temperament to involve her more deeply with Rupert; and he knows Rupert's vanity. About Rupert, Julius has this to say,

Mix up pity and vanity and novelty in an emotional person and you at once produce something very much like being in love.⁵¹

Once he has damaged if not destroyed Rupert's marital life, Julius experiences a moment of victory where he tritely lectures Rupert,

You have expected too much of yourself, Rupert. No marriage is as perfect as you have imagined yours to be and no man as upright as you have posed to yourself as being.

A little realism, a touch of shall we call it ironical pessimism, will oil the wheels. Human life is a jumbled ramshackle business at best and you really must stop aspiring to be perfect.⁵²

But if Rupert is guilty of pride, which is after all a fairly normal human failing, Julius is guilty of the far greater crime of cynicism which destroys wantonly. Rupert was at least trying to create an answer. Science as defined as objective experimentation and observation and as represented by the arch-scientist Julius does not provide a framework for morality. In her theory, Miss Murdoch warns against enlarging science beyond its bounds, "Moral concepts do not move within the hard world set up by science and logic. They set up for different purposes, a different world."⁵³ Julius oversteps the limits of science and with his human experiments, he demonstrates his callous disregard and

disrespect for the mystery and opacity of persons. He is correct insofar as he recognizes that human beings are subject to many mechanical laws and that much of behavior is structured and patterned. Where he errs is in the totality of his vision of a circumscribed, deterministic universe. The amoral "will" which he brings to bear on the personal, phenomenal world can never replace the just and loving "attention" of one person for another. This is demonstrated in the case of Axel and Simon who survive the holocaust of Julius. Rupert's tragic "accidental" death and Julius' complete nonchalance and absence of guilt feelings, demonstrate what a complete monster the man is. The final stroke of colossal evil--Julius profanes Rupert's memory by dining alone in Rupert's favorite Paris restaurant. The reader is left with the appalled conviction that in Julius rests the spectre of total evil. Julius does escape punishment and an essentially good man does die.

Perhaps the experience of Belsen permanently warped Julius. Those who experienced the camps saw human life at its most degraded level. This is the only feasible excuse for Julius' behavior. He fails to perceive the Good because he has witnessed so much evil, and he has no wish to perceive the Good since it would break faith with his scientific credo. To believe in Good would require an act of faith of which Julius is incapable. Since Good is unimaginable, Julius dismisses it as non-existent. It almost seems that Miss Murdoch has so planned the novel as to force the

reader to choose between good and evil. It is left to the reader to decide whether the paltry sin of vanity for which Rupert unnecessarily dies equates with the great sin of treating people like molecules in a chemical formula.

In *Julius*, Iris Murdoch has given us a terrifying spectre of evil. In this characterization of evil, Murdoch is bluntly and honestly presenting the problem of the Good. Good is soft and vulnerable. Evil is cold and hard. In *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*, Good is defeated. Julius does win his case in the Rupert/Hilda/Morgan manipulation. Retribution seems to be non-existent. Evil deeds truly can go unavenged. Still, Axel and Simon survive through understanding and sincere communication. Murdoch leaves us some ground for hope but implies that the struggle between good and evil is heavily weighed in favor of evil.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

It might be said with a reasonable degree of confidence that Iris Murdoch has succeeded where many other contemporary authors have failed. She has brought metaphysics to the layman. Through her many novels, she has voiced her philosophic beliefs in a manner far more powerful than trenchant Oxford debates. Although I have not written to Chatto and Windus or Penguin Books to obtain statistics on her book sales, I would judge from the very fact that the novels have all been produced in paperback as well as hardcover, that Miss Murdoch has done very well. Certainly she does not have the popularity of a Nabokov or Updike. However, I would hazard a guess that her total sales in fiction alone would exceed the total sales of philosophic titles written by her metaphysical mentors--Weil and Marcel. Weil's theory of loving attention to others might have been lost in the dust of academia had not Murdoch sought to revitalize it with her own writings. Likewise would Gabriel Marcel's ideas of man's essential being have been volumes on a shelf in the philosophy department. Murdoch has given Mr. John Q. Public some very useful tools in understanding the reality of his own life. All this she has done through the blending of her fiction and her philosophy. What contemporary writer dares speak openly of virtue, goodness, moral choice, the meaning of life and love--especially in their novels?

Critics such as Byatt and Wolfe have drawn attention to Murdoch's unique literary blend of philosophy and narrative. Frank Baldanza, in his excellent critical work on Miss Murdoch, has given her such accolades as, "Miss Murdoch certainly ranks among the top five novelists writing in England today: and to my tastes would head the list in quality."¹ Here is his final comment on Murdoch--"Miss Murdoch is this era's most profoundly moral spokesman."²

We have seen how six distinguishable character types emerge from a study of Murdoch's novels. There are more as well. Not touched upon are the good and virtuous men, the saint, and the martyr--all of whom are represented in her novels. Iris Murdoch might be seen as a spokesman for a moral philosophy as represented through her vivid characterization. Her characterization has tended to date to be a richly interwoven fabric of attitudes toward moral choice. The Neurotic has been seen to mask reality with a comforting fantasy. The Manipulator chooses to ignore the reality of the other person and instead, treats that person like a pawn. The Conventionalist removes himself from others and life by placing between "him" and "them" a high wall of ritual, habit and pure momentum. Egoists are wholly caught up in themselves. Sado-masochists are playing quirky little private games. Escapists busy themselves with avoiding the complexities of life. In this paper that is all we have explored to any depth. The list could go on.

Iris Murdoch succeeds in offering the reader a rich mixture of moral concepts and exemplars through her fiction.

Her philosophy can be seen to form the backbone of her novels. Her artistry is in her ability to present these concepts and still have people buy her books. Her novels are entertaining while remaining explorative. For Murdoch, fiction amplifies philosophy and vice versa. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1

1. Some recent Ph.D. dissertations on Iris Murdoch are: Thayne Kermit Anderson, Concepts of Love in the Novels of Iris Murdoch (n.p.: Purdue University, 1970), and, Peter Wolfe, The Disciplined Heart: Iris Murdoch and Her Novels (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1966).
2. Iris Murdoch, Sartre: Romantic Rationalist (London: Collins, 1967), p. 32.
3. Iris Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 50.
4. Ibid., p. 52.
5. Ibid., p. 93.
6. Iris Murdoch, "The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited," Yale Review 49 (1959): 253.
7. Ibid., 255.
8. Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good, p. 79.
9. Ibid.
10. Murdoch, "The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited," p. 260.
11. Ibid.
12. Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good, p. 84.
13. Iris Murdoch, "A House of Theory," Chicago Review 13 (Autumn, 1959): 27.
14. Ibid.
15. Iris Murdoch, "Against Dryness," Encounter 16 (January, 1961): 19.
16. Iris Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection," Yale Review 53 (July, 1966): 44.

17. Iris Murdoch, "Vision and Choice in Morality," Dreams and Self-Knowledge, Aristotelian Society 30 (1956): 39.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p. 41.
20. Ibid., p. 48.
21. Murdoch, "A House of Theory," p. 23.
22. Murdoch, "Vision and Choice in Morality," p. 58.
23. Murdoch, "Against Dryness," p. 19.
24. Ibid.
25. Murdoch, Sartre: Romantic Rationalist, p. 9.
26. Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection," p. 34.
27. Murdoch, "Against Dryness," p. 20.
28. Iris Murdoch, "Nostalgia for the Particular," Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 52 (1952): 256.
29. Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection," p. 43.
30. Ibid., p. 32.
31. Ibid.
32. The Sophists of Athens would probably have held few opinions on empathy but the Buddhists in India in the 6th Century B.C. would have understood the concept as it was a cornerstone of their moral code.
33. Iris Murdoch, "The Darkness of Practical Reason," Encounter 27 (July, 1966): 50.
34. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1973 ed., s.v. "Empathy."
35. Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection," p. 34.
36. Iris Murdoch, "The Sublime and the Good," Chicago Review 13 (Autumn, 1959): 53.
37. Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection," p. 31.

Chapter 2

1. Iris Murdoch, An Unofficial Rose (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1964), p. 15.
2. Ibid., p. 19.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 48.
5. Ibid., p. 82.
6. Ibid., p. 83.
7. Ibid., p. 168.
8. Ibid., p. 90.
9. Ibid., p. 93.
10. Ibid., p. 96.
11. Ibid., p. 145.
12. Ibid., p. 191.
13. Ibid., p. 285.
14. Ibid., p. 287.
15. Iris Murdoch, The Italian Girl (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967), p. 24.
16. Ibid., p. 27.
17. Ibid., p. 33.
18. Ibid., p. 42.
19. Ibid., p. 97.
20. Ibid., p. 169.
21. Iris Murdoch, The Sandcastle (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1960), p. 66.
22. Ibid., p. 67.
23. Ibid., p. 53.
24. Ibid., p. 82.

25. Ibid., p. 25.
26. Ibid., p. 237.
27. Ibid., p. 301.
28. Ibid., p. 307.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., p. 264.
31. Ibid., p. 20.

Chapter 3

1. Iris Murdoch, "Against Dryness," Encounter 16 (January, 1961): 19.
2. Iris Murdoch, "The Darkness of Practical Reason," Encounter 27 (July, 1966): 50.
3. Iris Murdoch, The Unicorn (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1966), p. 18.
4. Ibid., p. 28.
5. Ibid., p. 29.
6. Ibid., p. 200.
7. Ibid., p. 264.
8. Ibid., p. 247.
9. Iris Murdoch, A Fairly Honourable Defeat (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), p. 230.
10. Ibid., p. 121.
11. Ibid., p. 359.
12. Ibid., p. 362.
13. Ibid., p. 205.
14. Ibid., p. 190.
15. Ibid., p. 165.
16. Ibid., p. 172.

17. Ibid., p. 174.
18. Ibid., p. 230.
19. Ibid., p. 189.
20. Ibid., p. 163.
21. Ibid.
22. Iris Murdoch, A Severed Head (Harmondsworth, England:
Penguin Books Ltd., 1963), p. 7.
23. Ibid., p. 25.
24. Ibid., p. 30.
25. Ibid., p. 31.
26. Ibid., p. 66.
27. Ibid., p. 173.
28. Ibid., p. 12.
29. Ibid., p. 13.
30. Ibid., p. 60.
31. Ibid., p. 30.
32. Ibid., p. 164.
33. Ibid., p. 137.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., p. 125.
36. Ibid., p. 56.
37. Ibid., p. 110.
38. Ibid., p. 145.
39. Ibid., p. 205.
40. Ibid.
41. Iris Murdoch, An Accidental Man (Harmondsworth, England:
Penguin Books Ltd., 1973), p. 212.
42. Ibid., p. 127.
43. Ibid., p. 235.

44. Ibid., p. 96.
45. Ibid., p. 196.
46. Ibid., p. 94.
47. Ibid., p. 232.
48. Ibid., p. 202.
49. Ibid., p. 134.

Chapter 4

1. Iris Murdoch, Under the Net (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1960), p. 31.
2. Ibid.
3. Iris Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 52.
4. Murdoch, Under the Net, p. 14.
5. Ibid., p. 7.
6. Ibid., p. 98.
7. Ibid., p. 80.
8. Ibid., p. 81.
9. Ibid., p. 24.
10. Ibid., p. 253.
11. Iris Murdoch, An Unofficial Rose (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1964), p. 111.
12. Ibid., p. 261.
13. Ibid., p. 262.
14. Ibid., p. 263.
15. Ibid., p. 221.
16. Ibid., p. 111.
17. Iris Murdoch, Bruno's Dream (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970), p. 52.

18. Ibid., p. 56.
19. Ibid., p. 55.
20. Ibid., p. 106.
21. Ibid., p. 104.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 83.
24. Ibid., p. 107.
25. Ibid., p. 141.
26. Ibid., p. 150.
27. Ibid., p. 153.
28. Ibid., p. 154.
29. Ibid., p. 211.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid., p. 259.
32. Murdoch, An Unofficial Rose, p. 61.
33. Ibid., p. 62.
34. Ibid., p. 96.
35. Ibid., p. 191.
36. Ibid., p. 173.
37. Ibid., p. 190.
38. Ibid., p. 191.
39. Ibid., p. 189.
40. Ibid., p. 267.
41. Iris Murdoch, A Fairly Honourable Defeat (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), p. 131.
42. Ibid., p. 133.
43. Ibid., p. 131.
44. Ibid., pp. 194-95.

45. Ibid., p. 199.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid., p. 233.
48. Ibid., p. 234.
49. Ibid., p. 233.
50. Ibid., p. 237.
51. Ibid., p. 365.
52. Ibid., p. 342.
53. Iris Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection," Yale Review 53
(Spring, 1964): 28.

Chapter 5

1. Frank Baldanza, Iris Murdoch (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), p. 174.
2. Ibid., p. 175.

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- The Bell. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1962.
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- An Unofficial Rose. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1964.
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- The Italian Girl. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967.
- The Red and the Green. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967.
- The Time of the Angels. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1968.
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APPENDIX

Character Graph of Iris Murdoch's Novels

NOVEL	Convention- alists	Escapists	Neurotics	Sado- Masochists	Egoists	Manipulators	The Virtuous
Under the Net					Jake*	Hugo	
Flight from the Enchanter			Annette		John	Misha	
The Sandcastle	Bill/Nan*						Demoyte
The Bell	Michael*		Catherine				
A Severed Head				Martin*		Honour*	
An Unofficial Rose		Hugh*			Randall*	Emma*	
The Unicorn		Hannah	Marian*				
The Italian Girl		Edmund*			Otto		
The Red and the Green							
The Time of the Angels			Muriel			Carel	
The Nice and the Good					Eric		Ducane
Bruno's Dream					Miles*		
A Fairly Honourable Defeat			Morgan*			Julius*	Tallis
An Accidental Man				Austin*			

* indicates characters selected for inclusion in thesis.