

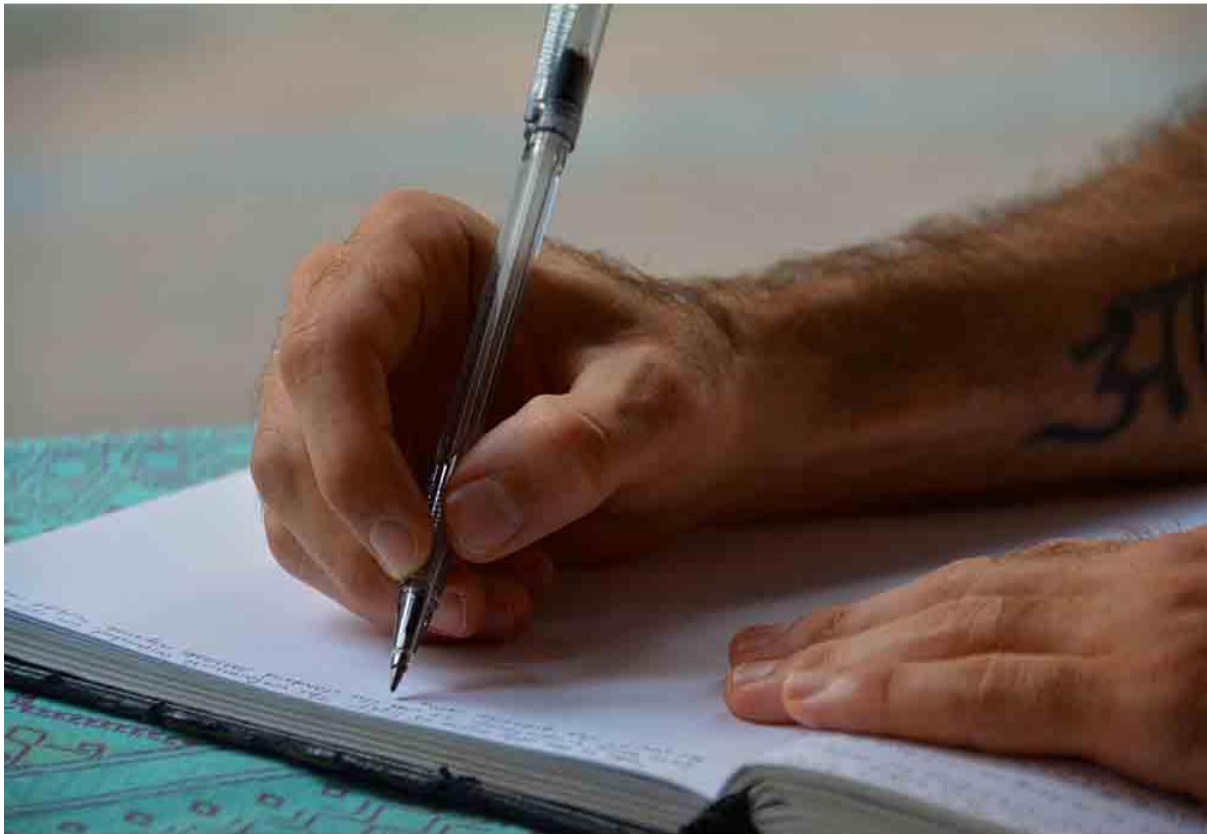
ISSN INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER

ISSN-2321-7065

IJELLH

**International Journal of English Language,
Literature in Humanities**

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed), UGC Approved Journal



Volume 7, Issue 4, April 2019

www.ijellh.com

J. Prithvirajan

Ph.D. Research Scholar

Department of English

Annamalai University

India

prithi201986@gmail.com

Dr. R. Sankari

Assistant Professor (FEAT)

Department of English

Annamalai University

India

rsankari77@gmail.com

Man's Morality and Philosophical Subjects in Iris Murdoch's *Under the Net*

Abstract

Iris Murdoch's first novel *Under the Net* finds the theme of the stress ratio between contingency and necessity. This study explores the different aspects of contingency in the novel. All social beings have a profound need for necessity in their lives. We want to know why we live, we want to realize the world and its secrets, and we want to know our place in the world. Concepts like religion and philosophy are met with those questions and attempt to give answers to them. Our world is dependent, since it cannot be completely understood. Bring out the novel, the protagonist Jake Donaghue searches for his own identity and for a master theory which is able to explain the world (379). End of the story, he realizes that he

has to change his attitude towards contingency. Jake is the protagonist of this novel, has to deal with this problem, too.

Key words: Contingency, necessity, Religion, Philosophy, and World.

Introduction

Iris Murdoch was born in Dublin and brought up in London in 1919 of Anglo-Irish parents. She studied philosophy at Cambridge. She published her first novel *Under the Net* in 1954 and was instantly recognized as a major talent. She has published more than twenty six novels, as well as works of philosophy, plays, and poetry. This study shows that how Iris Murdoch's novel reflects her moral vision. She is one of the famous mid-twentieth century novelists as well as a notable philosopher. Her effective writing style stretches from 1945 to 1994. There she had witnessed the devastating effects of the authoritarian political forces of the twentieth century on human lives. Murdoch's first degree got a job in Cambridge and then Oxford for some years, where she taught philosophy from 1948 to 1963. There was a short period teaching philosophy at the Royal College of Art from 1963 to 1967. She married John Bayley, a Professor of English in 1956. Their life was a commonly most successful.

Iris Murdoch's *Under the Net* first introduced and published in 1954, set in London. *Under the Net* represents an image of the private will, with a moral and philosophical significance. It is the mixture of the philosophical and the picaresque movement, of Murdoch's most popular novels. Her novel reveals to address the real and important problems making an effort to understand human ideas and situations and the way to attempt them best. Jake Donaghue is the protagonist of the novel explores philosophical ideas and morale visions. The story is told by Jake Donaghue, a Bohemian, an Irishman brought up like Murdoch in London and a 'professional unauthorised person', a raffish outsider. He is

talkative but secretive, a weak sentimentalist with ‘shattered nerves’, Jake announces himself as a swift intuitive type of thinker.

This novel begins with Jake returns from France to find homeless. His squire Finn tells him that Madge, with whom they have been living rent-free in Earl’s Court, is marrying and has kicked them out. The novel concerns Jake subsequent journeys which symbolize a mixture of flight and quests (37). These acts seem to him partly embodied in the two Quentin sisters, Anna and Sadie, partly in his earlier friend Hugo Belfounder. Like Jane Austen’s *Emma*, Jake makes mistakes about who loves whom. He thinks that he loves Anne, but he imagines is pursued by Hugo who he thinks must be loved by Sadie. In fact Anna pursues Hugo who loves Sadie who is eager on him, Jake. He has been followed his own fantasies, but he has told all this. Likewise, he thinks that Breteuil will never write a good book and that Finn will never return to Ireland. She returns to Ireland same while Breteuil wins the popular *PrixGoncourt*.

Jake is gradually dissatisfied and ends the book with a newly won joy as such withering into the truth, ready to complete a book on his own, and trying to avoid theory (30). At the end of the book, Jake, who has found two quests- for Hugo and for Anna-has both the objects. His entire search brings out more reality and his relationship to it. The events in Jake’s story are in terms of ideas of freedom, of philosophical approaches to reality, to what we know and what we cannot know (12). The particular use of picaresque movement, gives the extraordinary relations between the two central figures. Jake and Hugo are the central figure of what passes between them, and finally the tale’s open-endedness make the novel distinguish from the novel of nineteenth century.

Murdoch’s work explores the destruction of images, pictures and states of mind is a great and continuing theme. The phenomenal world of the pathos and impermanence of vaguely mirrors, prefigures, the Socratic smashing of illusions and of all theoretical attempts

to dominate reality. Irish Murdoch's *Under the Net*, here "the net" is something reveals the truth. The title 'net' alludes the discourse of worlds behind the hide, a net is in order to elicit and describe them: language and theory both explore simultaneously conceal the world. As Peter J. Conradi says:

‘... Murdoch's bias is Neo-Platonic in the sense that it gives a primary and highly ambiguous place to art itself in the discovery of truth, and also in that it subordinates the argument to the moral psychology of the characters. *Under the Net* enquires into the nature of the Good man vis-a-vis art' (32).

Murdoch has expressed her novels pilgrimage from illusion towards reality, which is pointed out as much is never arrived at in the books, any more than it is in life. In Iris Murdoch's novels human relationships are the main connection with reality. Whereas her plots or individual episodes reach into fantasy, symbolism or allegory. The reality in her novels is associated with human reality – not only with the details of life-styles, attitudes and problems we encounter today, but also with an undercurrent of unanswered questions that stare us in the face, as old as mankind (1).

Murdoch has pointed out his lack of interest in human relationships in her book on Sartre. Murdoch the concepts of internal struggle as a moral activity, of freedom and of love all sphere one important requirement, which is attention to the surrounding world and to the other people. *Under The Net* is much concerned with lies, art for the art sake, and the deceptive nature of all imitation. Murdoch's book on this (*The Fire and the Sun: Why Plato Banished the Artists*) is remarkable for the sympathetic vigour of her explication of Plato's objections to art. It is originated from metaphysical theory about the nature of imitation, art is too removed from the truth, springs from only vivid knowledge, is the product of the inferior part of the soul, and harms by nourishing the passions which should be educated and disciplined (33).

Murdoch pointed out that great art is also lofty, and expresses or explains religion to each generation at the same time. All art and good art also lies. It means into truth, while bad art is simply bogus. Since no art is perfect, moreover all art partakes of moral ambiguity. Jake remarks that his acquaintance with Hugo is the central theme of the book. At the heart of the great richness of comic incident the book affords Jake's fascination with Hugo and the misunderstandings and relative differences between them. Jake's relation with Hugo forms the book. Without Hugo's presence Jake slips in to a range of illusions. Jake is in Anna's presence for only five minutes during the book, so he is in Hugo's for only a few minutes of 'present' time at the film studio and then at the half an hour for Hospital. This half-hour constitutes book's comic reversal, Jake's sadness, and partial recognition of the truth.

Murdoch appreciated humility as 'a rare virtue and an unfashionable one and one which is often hard to differentiate....The humble man, because he sees himself as nothing, can see other things as they are. He sees the pointlessness of virtue, and its unique value, and the endless extent of its demand' (103- 104). Jake and Hugo meet in a cold-cure clinic where Jake takes Hugo for a mental defective for two days. Despite the fact, that they are sharing a room. Hugo puts up with gentle patience and self-possession. Jake engages him in conversation, when he realises he is closeted with a person of great fascination indeed "the most purely objective and detached person" (57). Jake has ever met, who has to tell the whole story. Hugo expresses:

Each thing was absolutely unique. I had feeling that I was meeting for the first time an almost completely truthful man; and the experience was turning out to be appropriately upsetting. I was but the more inclined to attribute a spiritual worth to Hugo in proportion as it would never have crossed his mind to thank of himself in such a light (61).

Take care of that Murdoch has put into picturing Hugo as a man aspiring to be good. This quite explicitly to his scepticism about the act of classification, there is an irony in the way critics have positively rushed to classify him. Jake early notes try to 'place' Hugo, as he at first attempt made failure of taste which showed a 'peculiar insensitivity to his unique intellectual and moral quality'. (58) One critic says that he is an existentialist. Others have related him with Wittgenstein, with whom he certainly shares a quality of 'unnerving directness' in his approach to person and problems. Like Wittgenstein Hugo is a rich Central European attracted to an abstinent ideal, sexually suffered, with a curious care for his *boots*, and a man who worked in his family factory, and had a capacity to renounce.

Despite of Hugo's flat being full of art treasure, is left not simply unlocked but with the door half open position. His wholly severe and not decorated bedroom suggests that he is inwardly neither jealous nor attached. He has given up the weapons factory he received before the action commences and converted it to fireworks, and then, when these are celebrated and pretentiously classified, lost interest in them too. End of the story he is giving up some remaining attachments: his passion for Sadie, film industry, money, friendship with Jake, London itself. This is a diverse mode of aloofness from Jake's; both are 'outsiders'. Hugo is the child of German refuges, Jake is an Irish expatriate. He spends much time wondering, who will sleep during the tale. Jake's loneliness makes him extraordinary to himself; Hugo is nobly unselfconscious. This noble unselfconsciousness makes him the world would be good man who sees objectively alarming ordinaries, and an odd, dogged, animal intelligence.

Conclusion

Iris Murdoch's *Under the Net* deals with the stress ratio between contingency and necessity, but his point of view highlights the different aspects of contingency in the novel.

All social beings have a profound advancement for necessity in their lives. The protagonist of the novel *Jake* noted that Hugo is devoid of general theories. An early discussion finds the difference between them and concerns the problem of describing states of mind or feelings. That description belongs to the novel as a form, as much as to moral philosophy. All these descriptions are so dramatic. 'The whole language is a machine for making falsehoods' (60) Hugo states. *Jake* reveals Hugo's puritan suspicion of language life-giving because it is in the service of love of truth and a love of the real. For Hugo everything was astonishing, delightful, complicate, and mysterious.

Works cited

- Murdoch, Iris. *Under the Net*. London: The Book Club, 1954
- Lawrence A. B. (1986). Iris Murdoch and the domain of the moral. *Philosophical Studies*, 50.
- Murdoch, I. (1954). *Under the Net*. London: Chatto & Windus.
- Murdoch, I. (1956). Vision and Choice in Morality. *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* *suppl*, 30.
- Murdoch, I. (1989). *Sartre Romantic Rationalist*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Murdoch, I. (1992). *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*. New York: Allen Lane/ The Penguin Press, 1992.
- Panwar, D. (1974). Human Relationship and Moral Goodness in Iris Murdoch's Novels, *The Criterion: An International Journal in English*.
- Wittgenstein, L., 'Lecture on Ethics', *Philosophical Review* 74 (1965) 3-12.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology & Religious Belief*, ed. Cyril Barrett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1966).
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, transl. C. K. Ogden, with an Introduction by Bertrand Russell, F.R.S. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922).