The term ethics is derived from the Greek 'ethos' (character). It is the systematic study of the nature of value concepts such as 'good', 'bad', 'right' 'wrong'. It can also be termed as moral philosophy. This chapter attempts to deal with the general aspects of Greek, Hebrew and Christian ethics and also of Murdoch's own position within the literary world. The main concern of this chapter is to focus upon the similarities and also of the differences between the theological world of the Hebrews, the Greeks and the Christians and of the literary world of Iris Murdoch. It does not focus itself upon a detailed, historical sketch of ethics as a whole.

I shall begin by elucidating upon the Greek ethics and then go on to both Hebrew and Christian ethics. I shall conclude with Murdoch's literary standpoint. As pointed out earlier, Murdoch has always based her fictional background on ethics and the novels analysed in this thesis bear particular references to the Greek, Hebrew, Christian traditions. The history of European ethics can be conveniently divided into three periods each within its own special characteristics. Each period had its
ethical institution. To the present day our ethical thinking is largely determined by two influences. The free reflection that arose in the Greek city states and the moral tradition of Jews and Christians that was taught by the Church of the middle ages. It was in ancient Greece in the fifth century B.C. that European ethics really began. The Sophists were a group of teachers who were primarily concerned with the education of young men for a political career in Greece. The Sophists raised the moral question by asking "what the good life was according to nature, and what was merely a matter of custom and convention".¹ Socrates considered that a thorough understanding of the nature of goodness was a necessary condition for living a thoroughly good life. He expressed this view in the maxim 'Virtue Is Knowledge'. His personal goodness of character seems to have concealed from him the fact that in the case of most men goodwill, or the purpose to do what is right is needed along with knowledge of the nature of goodness to secure practical goodness of living. He quoted with approval the saying 'Know Thyself' and this suggests that he realized that a knowledge of human nature is important for the good life. Or perhaps that goodness is natural in the sense of being based on human nature.

Plato and Aristotle pursued systematically that knowledge of ethical matters which Socrates considered to be useful for virtue. For Plato, this

¹. As denoted by Rashdall, in The Theory of Good and Evil.
knowledge, was a metaphysical knowledge of the understanding that the real world is not the world perceived by our senses, but a world of realities, which Plato calls 'ideas' and which are corresponding to those things that exist in imperfect forms in the world that is known to us through perception.² The most fundamental of these realities is the 'idea of the good'. It implies that goodness is natural in the sense that it is the most fundamental fact about the universe. Aristotle was more interested in the concrete details of the moral life rather than the abstract underlying principles. In his Ethics we have an analysis of the moral life, while Plato’s Republic describes the ideal community. It is essential to note that Socrates, Plato and Aristotle taught the need and the understanding of the nature of goodness and also of the truth that goodness belongs to the nature of things. To understand goodness "means to understand the nature of the universe and that part of it we call human nature".³ There were two groups contemporary with Aristotle and Plato. They were the Cyrenaics and the Cynics. The Cyrenaics held that a good action is one which gives pleasure and this is the view called hedonism. The Cynics held that the good life consisted in being independent of human desires and their satisfaction; so for them pleasure had no connection with goodness. The Epicureans held the theory that pleasure was the one good

². As explicated by Rashdall in The Theory of Good and Evil.
³. Ibid.
at which men ought to aim, the Stoics found the good life in the avoidance of feeling and rational pursuit of duty. They taught that goodness is natural, and in their emphasis on rational knowledge were true followers of Socrates.⁴

The spread of Christianity in Europe meant that a new emphasis was given to the individual. This helped to change the Greek outlook which had identified the good man with the good citizen and had regarded ethics as a part of politics. During this era, more attention was given to this inner aspect of morality, it was a man's inner motives that indicated his true spiritual state and fitted him for the life of heaven, which was the aspiration of every good man. Ethics, were deduced from the principles and illustrations provided by the Bible and the Church, the particular applications of these to individual cases, thus in this age the teaching of applied ethics took predominant root. The three primary manifestations of Christianity namely, Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism have recognised that the Christian faith involves a particular way of life. The good news of salvation in Christ calls for a life of discipleship. The Scriptures point out that Christian believers are to live and act in certain ways. The Bible is the book of Christianity and it includes moral teachings and descriptions of the moral life of Christians.

⁴ Encyclopaedia Brittanica: as derived from the essay on ethics.
The subject matter of Christian ethics is the Christian moral life and teaching. The relationship between Christian ethics and philosophical ethics is most important. All Christian ethics recognize the Christian scriptures, traditions and Church teaching as the revelatory sources of moral wisdom and knowledge. The three major expressions of Christianity namely - Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism and their corresponding traditions emphasize different sources of Christian ethics. 5

The Eastern Orthodox tradition puts emphasis on tradition in both its Greek and Russian approaches. Distinctive among them being its relationship to spirituality. It calls for "constant deepening of the believer's participation in divine life. The anthropological basis for this movement toward deification is the creation of human beings in the image and likeness of God". 6 In the orthodox tradition Christian morality is not heteronomous, for it brings the human to its fullest perfection. In the same way such an ethics stresses both the providence of God and the responsibility of Christians. Law in general has a significant role to play in orthodox ethics. Law is found in the ten commandments, the Beatitudes, the teachings of the New Testament. Orthodox ethics has

5. Encyclopaedia Brittanica, Volume VIII.
been accused of lacking world transforming aspect and failing to develop an adequate social ethic but they deny this charge. As for the Roman Catholics, their character of "moral theology" as Christian ethics have come to be called in the Catholic tradition, are an insistence on mediation, acceptance of natural law and the role of the Church. Mediation is "perhaps the most characteristic aspect of Roman Catholic theology in general". 7

There is a distinctive emphasis on conjunctions of scripture and tradition, faith and reason, faith and works grace and nature, the divine and human, Jesus, the Church and Mary and the saints. Love as well as the virtues and the commandments. In the Roman Catholic tradition, natural law can best be understood as human reason directing human beings to their end in accord with their nature. In the classic tradition based on Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) human nature has a three fold structure—that which is shared with all substances, that which is common to humans and all animals and that which is proper to human beings as such. 8

In practice, Catholic moral theology often considered life in this world as almost totally governed by natural law and not by the gospel, or

8. Ibid. p. 344.
by any explicitly Christian considerations. The Roman Catholic moral theology also insists on a relationship with the Church. Catholic ecclesiology recognizes a special teaching office in matters of faith and morals that is given specifically to the pope and the bishops. Church rites and practice have also influenced Catholic moral theology. Ever since the 17th century, the primary purpose of moral theology text books have been to train confessions for the sacrament of penance with emphasis on their role as judges. This was aimed at determining the existence and gravity of sins.

Protestant Christian ethics has as its distinctive character an emphasis on freedom, the primacy of scripture and an emphasis on the theological nature of the discipline. Martin Luther (d. 1546) and the reformers in general stressed the freedom of the Christian and freedom has characterized much of Protestant life and ethics. There is a great pluralism and a diversity of approaches. The freedom of the believer as well as God is safeguarded in Protestant ethics. It has often been described as an ethics of inspiration, primarily because it does not usually get into a minute philosophical discussion of the morality of particular acts. Protestantism in general gives more significance to the theological aspects of Christian ethics than did traditional Roman Catholic ethics.

Catholic ethics tended to see the moral life of all in this world in the light of the natural law, whereas Protestantism has generally understood life in this world in relationship to the Bible and to theological concerns. Protestant ethics for instance tends to see sin primarily in theological categories as a lack of faith, whereas Roman Catholicism understands sin primarily as actions that are morally wrong.

The relationship between Christian ethics and philosophical ethics is most important. The significant differences between the two result from the different sources of ethical knowledge and wisdom employed. Philosophical ethics is based on human reason and human experience and does not accept the role of faith and revelation that is centered to Christian ethics. However, Christian ethics poses the same basic questions and has the same form structure as philosophical ethics. The rest of this chapter will focus upon Iris Murdoch's philosophical standpoint on ethics.

In her essay 'The Idea of Perfection' Murdoch states that good is a function of the will. In an essay 'On God and Good' she states "What is a good man like? How can we make ourselves morally better?" Can

we make ourselves morally better? According to Murdoch, these are questions that a philosopher should try to answer. She herself states that we know little about good men, the information about them is scanty and vague... it is the simplicity and directness of their dictons which chiefly colours our conception of them as good. Murdoch further elucidates that goodness appears to be both rare and hard to picture. It is perhaps most convincingly met with in simple, inarticulate people, unsselfish mothers of large families—but these cases are also the least illuminating.\textsuperscript{12} Significantly enough, the idea of goodness has been largely superseded in Western moral philosophy by the idea of rightness. Murdoch believes that this is to a great extent a natural outcome of a disappearance of a permanent background to human activity whether provided by good, by reason, by history, or by the self. Murdoch questions as to whether there are any techniques for the purification and reorientation of an energy which is naturally selfish, in such a way that when moments of choice arrive we shall be sure of acting rightly?\textsuperscript{13} The pessimistic view that goodness is the almost impossible countering of a powerful egocentric mechanism already exists in traditional philosophy and theology. According to Murdoch, the closest and most familiar of all techniques are those of religion—the most widespread of this is prayer. In her essay,


\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., p.54.
Murdoch attempts to answer the question of what becomes of such a technique in a world without God and as to "whether it could be transformed to supply at least part of the answer to our central?"\textsuperscript{14}

In her novels, Iris Murdoch has gone on to disclose the view that prayer is not a petition but an attention to God which is a form of love. Her belief in philosophy, which is denoted in her novels have gone on to propound the idea that the idea of God as a powerful source of good energy is a psychological fact. Murdoch feels that "we can all receive moral help by focusing our attention upon things which are valuable. Virtuous people, great art, perhaps... the idea of goodness itself.\textsuperscript{15}

Speaking about the aspect of morality and goodness, Murdoch states that one could start from the assertion that morality, and goodness, is a form of realism. To her, the idea of a really good man living in a private dream world seemed unacceptable. She also felt that the chief enemy of excellence in morality was personal fantasy. Murdoch also tries to denote the differences between the beautiful and the good. She states that "it is as if we can see beauty itself in a way in which we cannot see goodness itself.\textsuperscript{16} She also refers to Plato who stated a similar opinion in \textit{Phaedrus 250E}. It matters that she distinguishes between the good and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Iris Murdoch, \textit{The Sovereignty of Good}(London: 1970), p.55.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p.56.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
the beautiful. Murdoch states that she can experience the transcendence of the beautiful but not the transcendence of the good. She opines that beautiful things contain beauty in a way in which good acts do not exactly contain good, because beauty is partly a matter of the senses. Murdoch goes on to further elucidate that good is complicated and cannot be experienced; "even when we see the unselfish man in the concentration camp." To her, what is truly good is incorruptible and indestructible. She probes into the significance of such statements and also of highly metaphysical statements such as 'goodness is not in this world' and seeks to give a clearer dimension to these statements. I will attempt to analyse Murdoch's idea of the ethical concept of good as illustrated by her in her essay 'On God and Good': Murdoch feels that the 'ideas' regarding goodness, are admittedly very difficult. She delves into questions like how is one to correct the realism which must involve a clear-eyed contemplation of the misery and evil of the world with a sense of an uncorrupted good without the latter idea becoming the merest consolatory dream"? and she also probes into the instances where if someone is not a religious believer or a mystic, how would such a person apprehend some separate forms of goodness behind the multifarious casts of good behaviour? Closely related to these questions and also to the question of

18. Ibid., p. 61.
good are the attributes: perfection (absolute good) and necessary existence. Murdoch wonders whether the idea of perfection is a really important one. In her works she had consciously continued to display this attitude. In cases of conduct for instance, the command 'Be ye therefore, perfect' could be replaced, she feels by a far more sensible, 'Be ye therefore slightly improved?' she introduces the idea of love here and states that the idea of perfection moves, and possibly changes us because it inspires love in the part of us that is most worthy.

Interestingly enough, Iris Murdoch states that 'God exists necessarily' while everything else which exists, exists contingently. In her novels too Murdoch illustrates that there is no 'plausible proof' of the existence of God, except some form of the ontological proof, which "when considered carefully is not exactly a proof but a rather clear assertion of faith which could only confidently be made the basis of a certain amount of experience." Iris Murdoch conveys her assessment of such ideas, especially those regarding God, that her conception of God contained the certainty of its own reality. For her, God is an object of love which uniquely excludes doubts and relativism. She does not delve too deeply about people and their notions about God but instead we concentrate upon good. The questions she asks are - "what status can we

give to the idea of certainty which does seem to attach itself to the idea of
good? Or to the notion that we must receive a return when good is
sincerely desired?"\(^{20}\) She suggests that the authority of the good, which
she spells with a capital 'G', seems to us "something necessary because
the realism.... required for goodness is a kind of intellectual ability to
perceive what is true."\(^{21}\) So for Murdoch, the "necessity of the good is
then an aspect of the kind of necessity involved in any technique for
exhibiting fact."\(^{22}\) She also elucidates the 'alleged relation of master to
slave', of the good self to the bad self, which often end in curious
compromises. She feels that the bad self is prepared to suffer but not
obey. In reality the good self is very small and most of what appears
good, is not. The truly good is not a friendly tyrant to the bad, but is
instead a deadly foe. Murdoch ponders over the issue of good in a new
light. Can "good itself be in any sense 'an object of attention' and how
does this problem relate to 'love of the real.'\(^{23}\) For Murdoch, it is central
that she retains that idea of good as a central point of reflection Good is in
class, indefinable and non-representable and Good not will, is
transcendent. Good is the focus of attention when an intent to be virtuous
co-exists with some unclarity of vision. Beauty then, appears as the


\(^{21}\) Ibid., p.66.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., p. 68.

\(^{23}\) Ibid.
visible and accessible aspect of the good. The good itself is not visible. Plato pictured the good man as eventually able to look at the sun. Murdoch herself states that she has never been sure what to make of this myth. For her, good can never be thought of as visible, because it cannot be experienced or represented or defined. She also alludes that perhaps it is only the good man who would know what the sun looked like. She concludes however, that the one thing that made perfect sense in the platonic myth is the "idea of the good as a source of light which reveals to us all things as they really are." What Murdoch aimed at was goodness and not freedom or right action, although freedom and right action in the true sense of humility, are the natural products of attention to the good. What Murdoch clearly conveys in the essay and illustrates in her novels is that "the Good itself has nothing to do with purpose, it excludes the idea of purpose." All is vanity then becomes the end and the beginning of ethics. The only genuine way to be good is to be 'good for nothing' in the midst a scene where every 'natural' thing 'including one's own mind, is subject to chance.' That 'for nothing' is indeed the experienced correlate of the invisibility or non representable blankness of the idea of Good itself.

24. As expounded by Murdoch in her essay 'On God and Good'.
26. Ibid., p. 71.
In continuation, Iris Murdoch, asserts that the world just is hopelessly evil. She compares the two aspects of 'God'. About God she alludes that "God could play a real consoling and encouraging role." It makes sense to speak of loving good, a concept, and a good which she continuously spells with a capital 'g'. She advocates that "good even as fiction is not likely to inspire, or even be comprehensible to, more than a small number of mystically minded people who, being reluctant to surrender 'God' fake up 'good' in his image, so as to preserve some kind of hope." Murdoch also feels that if one does not believe in the aspect of a personal God, then there would be no 'problem' of evil; however this is difficult because according to her "there is the almost insuperable difficulty of looking properly at evil and human suffering". To her, it is very difficult to concentrate attention upon suffering and sin, either in others or in oneself without falsifying the picture in some way while making it bearable. Morality has always been connected with religion and religion with mysticism. She also feels that 'traditional Christian superstition' have been comparable with every sort of conduct from bad to good, she feels that Christian thinking is all a host of superstitions. There will undoubtedly be, she feels, 'new superstitions and due to this

28. Ibid.
29. As expounded by Murdoch
some people will manage effectively to love their neighbours. The message of salvation for her is that the same machinery of salvation if at all such a concept exists, is the same for all and she advocates that there is no secret complicated doctrine. Good becomes "non-representable and indefinable. Men are all mortal and equally at the mercy of necessity and chance."

These for her are the true aspects in which all men are brothers.

Iris Murdoch also conveys to her readers the fact that she does not actually believe in the idea of the existence of God. To quote her concluding statements in the essay, she states that if someone says "Do you believe that the idea of the good exists? She replied 'no' not as people used to think that God existed." She also felt that ordinary human love is a striking evidence of a transcendent principle of good. She admitted that human love is normally too profoundly possessive and often too mechanical to be a place of mission. Therein lay the ultimate paradox about the nature of love itself. Love in its highest form is in some sense impersonal and something which is seen in art, but even this sight is not clear, and this can be seen in the relationships of human beings. The place of art then becomes unique once again. Murdoch then

---

31. Ibid.
feels that the image of the good as a transcendent magnetic centre was for her the 'least corruptible and most realistic picture for us to use in our reflections upon the moral life'. She has steadily assumed throughout the paper that 'there is no God' and that religious influence is waning rapidly. In an essay, 'The sovereignty of Good over other concepts' Murdoch continues to allude that good is a concept which is not easy to understand. This is "partly because it has so many false doubles, jumped up intermediaries, invented by human selfishness to make the difficult task of virtue look easier and more attractive". History, God, Lucifer, Ideas of power, freedom purpose reward...."\textsuperscript{32} She also feels, that true morality is a sort of "unhistoric mysticism having its source in an austere and unconsolated love of the good".\textsuperscript{33}

Murdoch attempts to explain the idea of good in various ways. She refers to the symbolism of Plato. Plato had used the image of the sun when he wanted to explain the concept of good. The sun is seen at the end of a long quest which 'involved a reorientation and an ascent'. The sun gives light and energy and enables us to know the truth. Murdoch further elucidates the aspect of good and states that good lives lay as it were on both sides of the barrier and we can "combine the aspiration to

\textsuperscript{32} Iris Murdoch. \textit{The Sovereignty of Good} (London: 1970), p.92

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
complete goodness with a realistic sense of achievement within our limitations."\textsuperscript{34} The concept 'good' resists collapse into the selfish empirical consciousness. It is not a mere value tag of the choosing will. She elaborates that "we see differences, we sense directions, and we know that the good is still somewhere beyond.\textsuperscript{35} Goodness is still connected with the attempt to see the unself, to see and to respond to the real world in the light of a virtuous consciousness. The sentence 'good is a transcendent reality' means that virtue is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is. Murdoch continues to expound the belief that human nature however is such that this attempt cannot be entirely successful. For her the truly decent man has been able to distinguish between the real good and its false double. Iris Murdoch also feels that "the mind which has ascended to the vision of the good can subsequently see the concepts through which it has ascended in their proper relationships to one another".\textsuperscript{36} For instance, the good man knows whether and when art or politics is more important than family. He sees the way in which the virtues are related to each other.

Murdoch goes on to expound that good has often been said to be indefinable for reasons connected with freedom. Good is an empty space

\textsuperscript{34} Iris Murdoch, \textit{The Sovereignty of Good} (London: 1970)p.93
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., p.94
into which human choice may move. However she wishes to suggest that good could be conceived of rather differently because we do know a certain amount about good and about the way in which it is connected with our condition. She feels and is convinced that, "the ordinary person does not, unless corrupted by philosophy, believe that he created values by his choices". This means that he thinks that some things are better than others and that he is capable of getting it wrong. As to the direction in which good lies she feels that, we are not usually in doubt about it and at the same time we recognise the 'real existence' of evil; cynicisms, cruelty, indifference to suffering. Despite this, good as a concept remains obscure and mysterious. We tend to see the world in the light of the good but what is that good itself? To this query Plato's statement in the Republic could be referred to. He had stated that "it is that which every soul pursues and for the sake of which it does all that it does with some intuition of its nature, and yet also baffled". He also says that good is that source of knowledge and truth and yet is something which surpasses them in splendour. Murdoch is not satisfied with this answer and she argues that good is the trial of itself and needs no other touch. There continues to be a genuine mysteriousness attached to the idea of goodness and the good. Good and its indefinability is connected with the

38. Ibid.
unsystematic and inexhaustible variety of the world and the pointlessness of virtue. Good is "mysterious because of human frailty, because of the immense distance which is involved."\textsuperscript{39} Murdoch feels that if there were angels they might be able to define good but we would not understand the definition. The explanation that she gives is that it would be because we are largely mechanical creatures, "the slaves of relentlessly strong selfish forces the nature of which we scarcely comprehend".\textsuperscript{40} As decent human beings, even while we put on our best behaviour, we are usually very 'specialized'. By this Iris Murdoch means that we behave well in areas where this can be done fairly easily and let other areas of possible virtue remain undeveloped. She believes that there are few places where virtue plainly shines: great art, humble people who serve others. Iris Murdoch asks, can we, without improving ourselves, really see things clearly? Our freedom should be pictured in the content of such limitations. It is impossible then to sum up human excellence. Because, she feels that the world is aimless, chancy and huge and we are blinded by the self and also because it is difficult to look at the sun. Murdoch however, analyses that even despite all this there is a sense of trying to look, even if there are a few 'false suns' which would be easier to gaze upon and far more comforting than the true one. She also rejected Plato's fire allegory, and

\textsuperscript{39} Iris Murdoch, \textit{The Sovereignty of Good} (London: 1970)p. 97
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p. 99
she concluded upon scrutiny that the "fire may be mistaken for the sun, and self scrutiny mistaken for goodness." Yet in spite of all this, she thinks that there is a place both inside and outside religion for a sort of contemplation of the good, not first by dedicated experts but by ordinary people. It would suggest an attempt to look right away from the self towards a distant, transcendent perfection, a source of uncontaminated energy, a source of new and quite undreamt of virtue.

Iris Murdoch continues to ponder upon the question as to whether good can be related to other concepts. She finds the association of good along with other concepts such as Freedom, Reason, Happiness, Courage, History to be inappropriate. What she does find to be the most obvious as well as the most ancient and traditional claimant is love. She feels that good is "still absolutely sovereign over love." However the conception of a refined love is considered by her to be practically identical with goodness. What Iris Murdoch does propagate very clearly is that good and love should not be identified. For one, human love is usually self assertive and also because even when the idea of love is purified, the concepts still play very different roles. She explains that "good is the magnetic centre towards which love naturally moves. False love moves to false good. False love embraces false death".41 When true good is

loved, the quality of the love is automatically refined and when the soul is
turned towards good the highest part of the soul is enlivened. Love is the "general name of the quality of attachment and it is capable of infinite
degradation and it is the source of our greatest errors; but when it is even
partially refined it is the energy and passion of the soul in its search for
good..."42 This she concurs is the force that joins us to good and joins
us to the world through good. She concludes that its existence is the
unmistakable sign that we are spiritual creatures, attracted by excellence
and made for the good.

To the concept of goodness is linked the acceptance of real death
and real chance and real transience and only against the background of
this acceptance, can we understand the full extent of what virtue is like.
When we accept "death we accept our own nothingness which is an
automatic spur to our concern with what is not ourselves".43 The good
man for Murdoch is one who is immensely humble. Humility is a rare
virtue and an unfashionable one and one which is often hard to discern.
The humble man, "because he sees himself as nothing, can see things as
they are".44 He sees the pointlessness of virtue and its unique value and
the endless extent of its demand. He also perceives the distance between

43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
suffering and death and though he is not by definition, the good man, Murdoch notes that perhaps "he is the kind of man who is in all probability the most likely of all to become good".45

Iris Murdoch's philosophical stand point becomes a very distinct one. Her ethical perspectives on the notion of good is based upon Greek, Hebrew and also Christian religious philosophy. In this thesis, I have denoted myriad instances of Murdoch's protagonists in their quest for the good and their subsequent failure to do so. For Murdoch neither religion nor philosophical ethics help in achieving the 'good'; which for her is sovereign. Murdoch's zealous pursuit of the sovereignty of Good has been predominantly embedded in her work. In this thesis I have dealt with the theological and the literary points of view, and I have also denoted how both these streams fail to merge or even coincide. This perspective is hardly surprising for Murdoch herself displays no belief in anything inherently spiritual. As denoted in this study Murdoch's so called 'Christian' protagonists are merely people who are on the fringes of the religion and are not essentially of the faith. She has chosen these characters to satiate her own means, in order to denote the failure of religion. She has failed to take into account the more positive aspects of religion, merely because she does not believe in it. Religion for her, is

rely another moot point for failure as is philosophy. In the meantime, what spurs many serious critics and readers is her unshakeable faith in her acclaim for the 'Good' even after her faith in individuals and all working institutions have long gone. Murdoch makes an attempt to find the truly 'good' with the help of these two aspects of thought, yet does not succeed. The quest continues and in the meanwhile her protagonists too continue to seek and in the process become 'failures' in the eyes of the world; and, she in her own way creates persons who are moulded into becoming 'good for nothing'.