Notes to Chapter One


3. Ibid., p.51.

4. Iris Murdoch has a book on Plato's thought: *The Fire and the Sun* (1977). In addition, she has also written a play *Acastos* (1986), in which Plato figures as a beardless youth, still a student of Socrates. Most critics like Elizabeth Dipple, Peter Conradi and Suguna Ramanathan take account of his influence on her philosophic and moral thought.


8. In *The Philosopher's Pupil*, Father Jacoby's aspiration towards God is a thinly disguised cover for his erotic feelings. In *The Book and the Brotherhood*, David Crimond's exercise of power over his friends, permeates even his erotic relationship with Jean. It is thus seen that the three moral problems overlap quite frequently.


Notes to Chapter Two


2. Any single novel of Iris Murdoch contains at least three or four erotic love relationships. For example, in a novel like The Book and the Brotherhood (1987) there are relations between Jean-Duncan, Jean-Crimond, Rose-Crimond, Rose-Gerard, Tamar-Gerard, Tamar-Duncan, Lily-Crimond, Lily-Gulliver. In addition to this, there are also homosexual relations that Gerard has had with his Oxford friends earlier on, which is suggested in passing in the novel. Though the main drama is contained in the erotic tangle between Jean and Crimond the other relationships do carry sufficient importance.

3. Adam Mars-Jones, 'I'm not interested in Promiscuity', The Times of India (by arrangement with The Sunday Times), 20th October 1985, 8.


5. Adam Mars-Jones, 'I'm not interested in Promiscuity'.


7. Julius King, the satanic figure of A Fairly Honourable Defeat (1972), is presented as a manipulator of other people's emotions and lives. This exercise of manipulation is recognised by Murdoch as a characteristic of the power figure and hence a more detailed discussion of Julius King is included in the chapter on power.

8. The Nice and the Good (1968), which appeared before The Black Prince (1973) presents the theme of the difference between being nice and being good. This novel has not been discussed in detail in the present study since the emphasis in it is not only on erotic love but on the world at large, as it were. Kate and Octavian, the fun-loving, hedonist, amorous couple and their coterie indicate 'niceness'. Though there is no single character who represents the good, various
characters, like Ducane (Kate and Octavian's friend). Theo (Octavian's elder brother) arrive, towards the close of the novel, at some kind of understanding of the good: they are aware of the distance between the nice and the good. The good is suggested by its not being there directly in any of the characters but apprehended by them as something to be desired.

9. The only character who is even remotely in such a position is Ann Peronett in *The Unofficial Rose* (1962). But that she opts for the status-quo instead of an outright rejection of her marriage is the ambiguous result of the secret working of many factors, not least amongst which are the machinations of her thirteen-year-old daughter.

10. The erotic relationships between Jean and Crimond in *The Book and the Brotherhood* (1987) and between Jack Sheerwater and Alison in *The Message to the Planet* (1989) are sardonically exposed by Murdoch. They are seen to be compounded of extreme selfishness and illusion, not allowing the participants to 'see' the plight of the other person who is so irrevocably harmed by their erotic escapade. Duncan, Jean's husband in the former novel, and Franca, Jack's wife, in the latter work, are permanently damaged by their spouses' erotic deeds.

11. Anne Cavidge and Gertrude are tied with close bonds of friendship. Gertrude, who is overjoyed at the news of Anne's coming out of her convent, is not prepared to let her go out into the world alone as 'a secret anchoress'. There is a strong current of possessiveness in her love for Anne. This is seen when she accuses Anne of a lack of generosity in leaving her, Gertrude, and going off to America. It may be added that Gertrude has now both Tim and the Count in the magic circle of her love. It is actually Anne who does not have any one of her own — she has even sacrificed the Count, whom she secretly loves, for Gertrude's happiness.


Michael Meade in *The Bell* (1958) leads a lay religious community and hopes to become good. But he is seen to aspire towards something which is beyond his moral level. His homosexual tendencies overtake him and he cannot resist the impulse to kiss Toby Gashe, a young student. This act not only brings about Michael's downfall in the community but also changes Toby from a fresh youth to a brooding adult. Cato in *Henry and Cato* (1977) also mistakes his image of Christ and God for the ultimate truth; when his interest shifts to Beautiful Joe, a young boy in his parish, the image of Christ in his mind changes to an image of Beautiful Joe. Hence Cato is bound by his emotions. A religious fervour based only on emotions cannot lead to the truth and that is where Cato mistakes his moral level. Both these characters are discussed in greater detail in Chapter three.

The issue of moral improvement is discussed at some length in the chapter on Selflessness.
Notes to Chapter Three


2. It may be noted that religious aspiration, though inherent in many people, is not strictly necessary. For example, John Forbes, Cato's father, in _Henry and Cato_ (1977) is totally devoid of a religious bent of mind and yet functions effectively.

3. Stuart Cuno, the good figure of _The Good Apprentice_ (1986) is hopelessly misunderstood by his friends and relatives. They are suspicious that his aspiration towards the good is a substitute for sex. His father tells him, '... your religious fantasy is just sexual fantasy in disguise. ... you're full of sex, it's running out of your ears, you're being insincere, you haven't really examined yourself'. (GA, 39).

4. In eastern religions, myth has always been recognised to be only myth; literal belief in myths has not been a requirement.

5. The pun on the name 'Carel Fisher' is deliberate. His first name 'Carel' means, according to Conradi, 'cloistered enclosure'. His second name 'Fisher' refers to the sterile Fisher King and also to Christ's promise that his apostles would be fishers of men. Together the name evokes suggestions of the enclosed and unprofitable nature of his life and his degraded false work as a 'servant' of Christ, for Carel Fisher is a clergyman.


7. This problem of abjuration of magic in religion overlaps with the power theme discussed in the next chapter.


9. Michael Meade does not fulfil his role as a teacher in his earlier secular life. He falls in love with his student, Nick Fawley, and is later exposed by him to the authorities. As a leader of
the lay religious community at Imber, his homosexual tendencies grievously overtake him a second time. He makes sexual overtures to Toby Gashe, a young student on school holidays at Imber, thereby putting an end to his work.

10. It must also be taken into account, however, that unlike Cato, Anne is never projected ironically by the author anywhere in the novel.


13. It should perhaps be mentioned that the Christ visitation presented in the novel bears close affinity to Julian of Norwich's account of her revelation of Christ. Suguna Ramanathan, *Figures of Good* (1990) has a close analysis of this aspect.


17. Ibid., p.89.

Notes to Chapter Four

3. Ibid., p.103.
5. Elizabeth Dipple in her book Work for The Spirit (1982), dwells upon this parallel at some length. But whereas her analysis concentrates upon the 'sinisterness' of Peter and Hilary in not concretely embodying their spiritual urges, I have posited a refusal to grow as a characteristic of the power figure.
6. The detailed instructions of the culinary messes that Charles concocts which so superbly convey his self-satisfaction and self-interest are real literary, if not culinary, triumphs.
10. Ibid., p.138.
11. Ibid., p.213.
Notes to Chapter Five


4. Ibid.


6. Thomas McCaskerville is a latent figure of power. Like the other power figures discussed in Chapter Four, he enjoys a certain magic: he can work with people's minds and thus has a ready instrument for manipulation. But because he is fully conscious of his enjoyment of power, he tries to abstain from misuse. He is seen as a magician who exercises his magic with discernment and wants to abjure it altogether.

7. There is a specific reference to the Holocaust in Nuns and Soldiers (1980), p.291, when Anne is visited by 'Christ'. In The Message to the Planet (1989) there is a continual cross-reference to this awful historical event. Marcus Vallar's life is etched out always keeping in background the details of the Holocaust. His mode of death too indicates an identification with the extermination of Jews in the gas chambers.


9. The Good Apprentice (1986) has two figures of power, who are not discussed in Chapter Four, mainly because they are not of central importance to the plot. Jesse Baltram, the artist, is the more recognisable power figure, who wields a manipulative power born out of his artistic energy, not unrelated to his sexuality. Thomas McCaskerville, on the other hand, has an insidious power over human minds that is not easily recognised to be such.
10. I admit that one may not conclude that Jesse Baltram is therefore necessarily a second-rate artist. But the pointers are to such a conclusion. While in the end, Jane Austen and Proust are seen as artists who have serious moral preoccupations along with artistic preoccupations, the few descriptions of Jesse's paintings are like Murdoch's descriptions of bad dreams. The effect of Jesse's art is not beneficent or morally provoking; it is not seen to relate back to ordinary reality. Jesse Baltram, in short, seems like a more energetic and magically powered Jack Sheerwater of The Message to the Planet (1989).

11. Iris Murdoch in The Sovereignty of Good (1970) attaches virtue to an interest in potted plants (p.85), and (as noted in Chapter Four in the course of discussion of Marcus Vallar) on language learning (p.89). Jenkin Riderhood is seen learning Spanish in the course of the novel.


13. Anne Cavidge, even if she is considered a good figure (as she is by some critics) is too troubled in her own soul to have a calming influence on others. She alone, of all the good figures separates herself: there is a wall between the innermost recesses of her mind and the outside world.

14. In Figures of Good (1990), Suguna Ramanathan makes the same point when discussing Tallis Browne in the introductory chapter.


18. In the first chapter of The Sovereignty of Good (1970), Iris Murdoch offers a convincing argument against contemporary British moral philosophy, which she describes as 'existentialist-behaviourist type of moral psychology' (p.10). Quoting from Prof. Hampshire's work Thought and Action, she shows how far from the real is an approach to morality that stakes exclusive claim to the abilities of the human will to perform what
is morally right. The other philosophers, according to Iris Murdoch, who follow Hampshire's line of theory with some variations are Richard Hare, A.J. Ayer, Gilbert Ryle and others. See The Sovereignty of Good, p.12.
Notes to Chapter Six


3. The gothic element is seen in Iris Murdoch's early novels such as The Flight from the Enchanter (1956), The Unicorn (1963) and The Time of the Angels (1966).
