Chapter - IV
A Disciplined Process of Unselfing and Suppression of the Egocentric Fantasy

Iris Murdoch’s novels reflect the multilayered plurality of today’s English novel through the portrayal of characters and their relationships. Her novels reflect the battles and development of both novel writing and social attitudes to moral issues of the decades since the Second World War. The critics classify Murdoch’s novels as philosophical, symbolist, moralist, didactic, novels of ideas, realistic, fantastic, gothic and allegorical. Murdoch’s main claim through her novels is that an adequate understanding of freedom depends on an adequate understanding of other people. She discounts the ego as the chief obstacle to see others clearly, and instead of emphasizing the rewards of virtue; she argues that it must express selfless love. A chief advantage of her account is that it explains how the aesthetic seeing of the other and the de-centering of the self that follows, is virtue-developing.

The present chapter is an attempt to study a disciplined process of unselfing and suppression of the egocentric fantasy in Murdoch’s four novels: i) The Flight from the Enchanter ii) The Sandcastle iii) Bruno’s Dream and iv) The Sea the Sea. These works quietly call to an “unselfing process” which comes with a right perspective to the world with a decreased sense of egoism and an increased sense of reality of the other. According to her the change of the being is not, the result of the will but a deep process of unselfing and the process of unselfing can be done by only knowing and respecting others. The
Flight from the Enchanter is Murdoch's theory of the demonic reverberations that result from imposing restricting patterns, fantasies and myths on objective reality. There are no artists, however, among the six perspective characters through whom Murdoch presents The Flight from the Enchanter: Annette Cockayne, Hunter Keepe, Peter Saward, Rosa Keepe, John Rainborough, and Nina the dressmaker. In The Sandcastle, the character Bledyward has an idea that individual’s happiness without bothering about the reality of others is fantasy. He gives Murdoch's philosophy of human relationships. Bruno's Dream deals with the subject of death and its relationship with love. Death directs attention away from egoistic material goals, towards the light of truth. Death, the great iconoclast, helps in breaking the false images and forms imposed by man on reality. The major characters in the novel gain positively from the experience of death and goes through a disciplined process of unselfing. In The Sea, the Sea Charles Arrowby’s narrow structured way of looking at the world and people around him reveals his colossal egotism, lack of moral discipline and a false sense of freedom. The present chapter reveals the role of egocentric fantasy in human life. Murdoch tries to strengthen the point that a disciplined process of unselfing and suppression of the egocentric fantasy requires for the recognition of freedom.

Simone Weil’s concept of “attention” provides Murdoch with a means of dealing with the “inner life” which suggests how the individual can attempt to become a better person. Central to this is the notion of self-effacement, of a continuous attempt to expel the self, which is of ‘necessity’ seen as a source of fantasy, distortion of truth and reality. Weil came to regard the self as an interpolation between
God and his creation, which had to be withdrawn in order to make possible God’s re-entry into the world:

“I can easily imagine that he loves that perspective of creation which can only be seen from the point where I am. But I act as a screen....I must withdraw so that God can make contact with the beings whom chance places in my path and whom he loves ....I am not the maiden who awaits her betrothed, but the unwelcome third ... If only I knew how to disappear there would be a perfect union of love between God and the earth I tread, the sea I hear....” (Weil 36).

Iris Murdoch sees the self as screening reality, denying accurate perception to oneself and by implication, to those whom we present with our view of the world. She suggests that the only way to avoid being “blinded by self” is to look right away from self with the attention. Here, love functions not as an emotion by which another individual is absorbed into the self, a source of union between self and other, but a way of acknowledging the other’s separateness. Murdoch attempts to remedy the account of the moral self she associates with traditional ethics, which mainly focuses on the will. Drawing from the world of art appreciation, Murdoch holds aesthetic perception to be the necessary component of moral regard for others. She claims that a moral person becomes suitably other-directed through the practice of aesthetic perception through ego “unselfing”. Murdoch posits the self-interested “ego” as the chief obstacle to correctly seeing others. Murdoch’s process of obtaining aesthetic seeing through development of a virtuous consciousness, a process of empathic experiencing, provides the only true path of practicing virtue towards others.
Murdoch suggests that unselfing and the suppression of the egocentric fantasy requires for freedom. Without it the process of characters through novels become the fantasy of freedom. Freedom for a human being is not something obvious. It is something very hard to perceive truly. Without the acquirement of freedom, human life remains very much unenlightened. Murdoch does not speak of the generic definition of freedom, but rather the phenomenon of seeing clearly in a moral sense. This theory of clear vision is paramount for Murdoch and features prominently both in her efforts to explain goodness and love as well as her arguments for free will.

Plato is a philosopher from whom Murdoch clearly gained a lot of influence. She herself admitted that Plato raised practically every problem and was quick to concur with the statement that the development of western philosophy is essentially a series of footnotes to Plato. And this infatuation with the great Greek philosopher’s thinking was clearly fundamental in Murdoch’s own thinking on freedom. It was Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave” that proposed this idea that humans are living in the world yet they only see illusions, and never realities. Plato explains in The Republic that the only people that would be fit to rule his version of a utopia would be rigorously trained philosophers, people who are able to see clearly; without prejudice, egoism or perversion.

Murdoch argues that liberalism, romanticism, existentialism and linguistic empiricism fail to articulate a criterion for morality that goes beyond choices and the will. Instead of a solitary agent who creates value by choices alone, the moral self, according to Murdoch, ought to efface its ego in seeking to perceive the others as they really are in order to respond to them in a morally adequate way. Virtue
consists in searching for, seeing and knowing the goodness in others, and not in discovering the permanent truth of abstract values and norms. According to Murdoch, the modern philosophers’ focus on human will fails to dismantle selfishness, the central dilemma of moral life, which distorts the moral agent’s perception of others.

“As Murdoch’s moral psychology locates egoism directly at the image – creating processes of human consciousness, this process must be disrupted: increasing awareness of the ‘goods’ and the attempt to attend to them purely, without self, brings with it an increasing unity and interdependence of the moral world. .... fantasies about ourselves and the world around us, in Murdoch’s judgement, inflate the ego to the point of becoming a world unto itself preventing us from ever achieving the real knowledge of other people” (Lita 149).

Throughout her career, Murdoch has proved to be subtler than her critics are, as a review of her critical reception will quickly show. Her situation vis-a-vis her readers and reviewers seem analogous to that of the inscrutable central figure Mischa Fox of her novel, The Flight from the Enchanter, whose ambiguous complexity is reduced to a falsifying simplicity in the perceptions or interpretations of the novel’s characters who persistently mythologize Mischa as some god or demon. With its many internal echoes and its general busyness, the plot of novel can seem too complex for the book’s length; at the same time, it states clearly a preoccupation with power relations. One may assume that the title’s ‘flight’ is Rosa Keepe’s, and that the ‘enchanter’ is Mischa Fox. Secret fantasy plays a much bigger part in the novel. This is particularly expressed through Murdoch’s interest
in the tendency of a group of people to bestow structure by allocating roles. Around the power figure other characters serve as demonic attendants. In the novel many of the special roles are taken by ‘foreigners’ and almost by virtue of their foreignness. These aspects of human behaviour are related to fundamental questions of form. This opens her work towards a certain kind of fantasy. This allows her as a novelist to conceive of her characters as individuals within a patterned whole. And this problem gives particular cogency to her later quest for a peripheral novel, one that is not overwhelmed by a ‘magical pattern’ and which is attentive to characters who cannot be regarded as at the centre of the plot or pattern. There are inherent paradoxes. These paradoxes involves the relation between pattern and contingency, fantasy and the right to freedom of the free, full, rounded character, which have lasted as issues throughout her work.

Mischa Fox is a sort of magical pattern maker. The group’s bestowal of importance on him is indicated effectively by his different coloured eyes and his remarks on the ease of achieving fame for no very specific reason. In the novel mystery tends to be substituted for real action, easy assertions of power for its complexity. Therefore, Nina, the dressmaker, suffers unrequitedly from having elected Mischa to play the role of lover in her life, although this provides her with sufficient motivation to play a very small part in the interstices of his. Later she contemplates escape to Australia but- unlike Rosa Keepe- lacks the power to carry out her plans. Her suicide is the first Murdochian death. Several alternative visions of power are more briefly indicated- John Rainborough imagines a state of affairs with his secretary Miss Casement very different from the reality offered to the reader; Annette Cockayne
fleetingly entertains the notion of making Nina a retainer in her own life. Such moments contrast with Mischa Fox’s exercise of the power which so many of the novel’s characters so readily grant him. *The Flight from the Enchanter* leaves more impression of the universality of power rather than of its complexity.

Rosa Keepe’s story is more complex which is not always fully realized. She exercises power over the demonic Lusiewicz brothers before the roles are reversed. She becomes enslaved by them, so to be captured on photographic film by Calvin Blick, Mischa’s confident. Calvin Blick in a technical excursion sadistically allows Rosa’s brother Hunter to develop the exposure. Apart from a past affair with Mischa, Rosa’s other major relationship in the novel is with Peter Saward – the only character to refrain from electing Mischa to a position of power. He feels an attraction for Rosa, which she declines to reciprocate. For much of the novels course Rosa is struggling to free herself from Mischa. She is the character who is confronted with the consequence of her muddled actions, when Calvin Blick shows her the photographs, which force her to see herself in the Lusiewicz brother’s arms and causes her to recognize culpability for her neglect of Nina.

The novel *The Flight from the Enchanter* has its distinctive balancing of the strange and the realistic. The gods and demons who make their appearance here need not be inconsistent with realism, for they are there in the novel in so far as they are seen to be created by the characters, not by the perverse imagination of the author. So that the author simply observes them in action. This tactical relationship between author and characters is not unlike that found in other fictional contemporaries, like Muriel Spark and John Fowles, who
have also balanced romantic forms against realism. But in Spark there is little of that compassion – a moral dimension with which Murdoch invests the situation, and in Fowles the authorial ego is both imaginatively and technically far more pervasive. The romantic, fantastic and gothicized forms of fiction have played their part in a phase of the novel which has often seen as pre-eminently realistic. With the flight from the enchanter their is a growing sense of the corporately magical nature of grouped human relationships, a sense of elusive but almost symbolic patterning. This arouses our own allegorizing instincts and invests them in her characters. In Murdoch’s definition of art the coexistence of ‘free’ individuals is with a sense of pattern as deep myth which comes, quite involuntarily out of the unconscious mind. In Murdoch’s early work the relation of money to power is frequently inspected. So that, for instance, the only way Rosa and her brother can save the ‘Artemis’ magazine from a takeover by Mischa is to club with their elderly shareholders to buy it. Its opposite is, Saward, lacking in materialism, is also free of Mischa Fox. Murdoch’s novel opens out into the fantasy life of the human being, presenting it without authorial judgement. She draws the book towards the obsessive, inward world of the characters’ minds.

If the dominant image in Under the Net is one of nets, traps, people locked in or out, that of The Flight from the Enchanter is one of pursuit and flight, hunt and capture, enchantment and enslavement. In both the novels, the political and personal themes are presented like the war between the sexes, the contrast between youth and age, the problem of the refugee and the state. The Flight from the Enchanter centres on the relationships of a group of characters with a
dominant ‘enchanter’ figure- Mischa Fox. He who is a newspaper magnate holds power mysteriously in various political and social spheres. He exerts a curious sexual attraction over women. The fortunes of three main characters are seen in the novel. These three are Rosa Keepe, whom Mischa has loved and who has rejected him, John Rainborough, an ex-civil servant, who works in an organization for the administration of the entry of refugees into the country, and the Annette Cockeyne, who lives with Rosa. In the novel the writer blends magic and morality to prepare her special brew.

“Essentially a didactic work, the novel examines the evil that can develop when fantasy is imposed upon human relationships. The rigid distortions that result often evolve into a type of demonic power. Since the sources of these powerful distortions are often complex, Murdoch creates an intentional ambiguity that confused some of the novels earlier readers such as Olga Meidner and William Van O’Connor, who found the ‘book’s diverse meanings hard to perceive” (Kane 19).

Murdoch’s novels ordinarily describe a psychological process that begins in fantasy and matures into an imaginative and objective response to experience. For Murdoch, fantasy, the enemy of art, is the enemy of true imagination and love is an exercise of the imagination. Fantasy is inimical to love and truth because it is an indulgence in false images of others rather than a delight in their independence and truth. If feeds on such devices as bad faith and elusion which the individual designs to protect himself from direct confrontation with confusing reality. Fantasy therefore is itself the enchanter. Those who are enchanted need to see others as embodiments of myths and
emotional patterns that elude their own lives. Iris Murdoch’s major characters undergo a severe disenchantment, often painful, to awaken them out of their self-deluding spell.

Murdoch finds in the modern age the lack of a clear perception of external reality as independent, unique, and worthy of loving exploration. She contends that if the sickness of the age is solipsism, lovelessness, neurosis, a fear of history, she would hold that its manifestation in philosophy and art. It could be cured by a therapy of perception, a rebirth of imagination. If we fail to see, it is because we are completely enclosed in a fantasy world of our own into which we try to draw things from the outside, not grasping their reality and independence, making them into dream objects of our own. This need to perceive the unique particularity of the other is for Murdoch a measure not only of virtue and love but also of the creative imagination. The contrary tendency to evade involvement and confrontation with others by fleeing toward abstract forms is the basis in Murdoch’s view, not only of the inadequacies of contemporary philosophy but also of a theory of the demonic. Murdoch’s demonic figures begin as rebels desiring to be free from contingency like the heroes of existentialism. Usually encouraged by the romantic fantasies of his own victims the demonic hero becomes obsessed with personal power as his most effective mode of communication with the inferior world of others, and creates his own ideal necessarily out of the abstracts, the inhuman.

In Murdoch’s casual early interest in enchantment progressively deepens into an obsession with the demonic. Her novel *Under the Net* is about intellectual enchantment with forms, concepts, theories, as they occur in philosophy, politics and art. The novel finds
its resolution only when its hero, Jake finds wonder and delight in penetrating through the illusion or net that fantasy casts over reality. Here there are no demons, but Hugo Bellfounder becomes the prototype for later demonic figures such as Mischa Fox. The function of enchanters and demons in her novels should be explored on the levels of psychology, social commentary and myth, not merely on one level. With this concern, ‘The Flight from the Enchanter’ is commented:

“The danger of reading ‘The Flight from the Enchanter’ in purely psychological terms (as a few critics do) is that the clues seemingly add up to seeing Mischa as a nice but misunderstood boy whose evil is merely an illusion .... On a psychological level, the characters of ‘The Flight from the Enchanter’ reveal such devices of fantasy as elusion, bad faith, and the schizoid tendency to split the individual into disembodied mind and deanimate body” (Sullivan, The Demonic 73).

The Flight from the Enchanter is Murdoch’s theory of the demonic reverberations that result from imposing restricting patterns, fantasies and myths on objective reality. Evidence of man’s capacity to impose such restrictions is seen in his gods and leaders, in the ineffective organizations and human establishments he creates and in the machines upon which he relies. Murdoch sets her characters against a vast sociological spectrum of backgrounds. The perception of reality is defined and limited not only by inadequacies of human imagination, but by instruments and machines of communication such as the camera, the photograph, trains, cars, even the body when it is seen as an exquisite machine or language when it is used as an
instrument of seduction. The each character of novel contains within himself an enchanter, the fantasy-making power of his mind. An enchanter is paralleled by the connection of each character with a machine. Because the machine operates as an extension of the self, as a substitute for man’s inadequate powers, it assumes the function of an enchanter in its own right.

Therefore, in the novel Annette contains within her mind the strange potential for self-enchantment; not only can she hypnotise herself into a self-induced coma of stupidity; she can also make a scene look as different as if she had walked through the looking glass. Because she can amputate herself from the world through induced spells or numbness, she can mechanise any form of human response to herself and others. She sees her body as a sort of exquisite machine and sees Nina as an instrument in her attainment of utter freedom. Murdoch has used a vast sociological background in her novel which presents the barbaric social life of an East European village, the highly sophisticated life of the international jet set, the artificial life within a girl’s finishing school, the exacting and demanding life within the scholars retreat, organizations as different as a factory, and the Special European Labor Immigration Board- a parody perhaps of UNRRA for which Murdoch worked after the war.

The character Rosa Keepe uses the machines in the factory as instruments to immobilize her feelings; unable to break the black spell the Poles hold over her, she needs to resort to the powers of Mischa who in turn uses the Special European Labor Immigration Board as his instrument of destruction to deport Stefan. John Rainborough goes so far as to find himself engaged and Nina the dressmaker is tied to her sewing machine as to a crucifix; in her last
nightmare before suicide, she sees herself floating through a forest, not from Mischa but from her sewing machines. She finds herself finally trapped by the cloth in the shape of maps of the world spilling forth from its jaws, that proceed to eat, first the cloth, then Nina. The use of machines as enchanters and as extensions of the self perhaps reaches its climax in Calvin Blick’s use of the camera and the photograph as his peculiar instruments of vicarious delight, torment, and blackmail.

The characters in the novel not only revealed their psychological frameworks through their thought patterns and actions, but also their private myths. Each character in the novel contributes to the pattern of the demonic human world where individual, social, and sexual fulfilment is denied. The characters tend to fantasize about their personal situations and relations to others. They combine to create a novel remarkable for its variety of mythological allusions, symbolic patterns and imagery. Although the stylistic surfaces of Under the Net and The Flight from the Enchanter differ, there is a deeper consistency in Murdoch’s use of figurative language in these two works. Their relative scarcity or abundance of imagery directly reflects the characters’ varying compulsions to order their perceptions. As Murdoch has remarked about the “matter of symbolism” in her fiction:

“I certainly don’t aim at any kind of, as it was, allegorical method of telling the story. That is, I think the symbols must be very carefully controlled and, very often, the symbolism in a novel is invented by the characters themselves, as happens in real life. We’re all constantly inventing images to express our situations” (Biles 125).
The Flight from the Enchanter emphasizes on individual character, its uncompromising presentation of the spirit’s turbulent power, and its use of ancient myths. The novel is a fine introduction to Murdoch’s involvement in the mythic mode. There can be seen the characters’ destructive tendencies to submit to a blinding spell rather than encounter the pain and pleasure of freedom. Rather than fleeing from the mythic power, the characters in the novel must learn to meet, to use, and to move with life’s energy. But no any character is able to do this. The spirit’s powers find an outlet only in violence; the release of energy prompts no growth of life and the novel ends as it began. The form of the novel is not the modern mythic creative present; it clearly recognizes life’s complexity and the dangers, which lie in attempts to reduce that complexity to a simple pattern. It focuses on the individual life.

The world of the novel is Iris Murdoch’s most comprehensive vision of human being and society. Its action touches on politics (the financial relationship between England and America; Mischa Fox’s power in Parliament); bureaucracy (SELIB and the Civil Service); social equality (the refugees, the Artemis, Rosa’s factory, the rich versus the poor); academics (Peter Saward, the scholar–historian); economics (Mischa’s journalism monopoly); personal relationships (lovers, parent-child, siblings, servant-master); time (the past haunting the present, e.g. the memory of Rosa’s mother). The actions of individual characters become important in the novel. There are numerous characters but six- Rosa, Annette, Hunter, Rainborough, Peter, and Nina- are primary; we see the workings of their minds. This novel specially avoids the one-character focus and first person narration of Under the Net. The novel starts out very literally to
prevent a single character from getting a grip on this story and making it the form of his own mind.

The novel presents its social panorama through the unique personalities which constitute it. Mischa Fox is obviously a hub around which the others revolve, neatly unites in his personality the social-economic and spiritual world. He has the natural grace and viciousness of an animal, he has a miraculous physiognomy (one blue eye and one brown), he lives and works in mysterious secrecy, and he awes and subdues others as a primitive priest might do. Mischa activates in the other characters those energies of the spirit of which he seem the centre. While he has an aura of moving in a separate world, the characters continually find that their beings are touched by the same formidable forces within which Mischa so effortlessly dwells. The mythic strain in Mischa Fox is inseparable from the workings of the modern world and from the individual lives.

Annette is a girl of some independence and intelligence who is bursting with life. She has decided, amid April’s spring stirrings, to leave an institution and enter the School of Life. Sedately packing up her books and walking out, Annette exists from the classroom forever:

“As Annette pondered, almost with awe, upon the ease with which she had done it, she felt that Ringenhall had taught her it’s most important lesson” (Murdoch, The Flight from the Enchanter 9).

The lesson, not named, is apparently the ease of freeing oneself from another’s rule. Annette has already pondered, in the case of the Minotaur, a related problem of personal freedom versus accidental injustice. She has a rather petulant dislike for cruelties of fate which
she feels, are unjustly delivered on people. Her solipsistic fix distorts her situation. To her, even the rooms of the school appear changed after her decision to leave. The library begins to look as if it is in a “sacked city” (9), and she feels that no one will ever again enter it. Annette soon discovers that there are a few obstacles to perfect freedom. She prefers to picture her personal initiative in terms of an enchantment; she feels under a delicious spell.

The novel makes a conflict between the unrestrained energies of life and the controlling rules of an institution, and between the individual’s powers of self-creation and the world’s contingencies. The issue is not whether the world’s institutions will stifle Annette, whether energy will be killed. Instead it is how Annette will negotiate her new adventure in education, how she will shape her power. Explosive energy is given in this novel’s life; that energy resists almost all attempts by individual’s or institutions to deaden it. But that energy lacks the imaginative means to channel itself and become a creative rather than a destructive force. Annette’s father puts the dilemma very well: Will Annette grow through the School of Life or ‘one day...just explode into little pieces?’ (13).

In order to ward off any explosion, most of the characters in the novel have fitted themselves into the order of enchantment; they allow themselves to be mesmerized in the face of the world’s difficulties. This pattern attempts to falsify life’s complex demands. The characters themselves create the enchantment. A character abstractly views his situation as an enchantment in order to feel powerless in the face of a certain course of action. The mysterious power of Mischa Fox and the sinister machinations of Calvin Blick are shown to be easily foiled by a hilarious group of old women.
“It is this preoccupation with individual illusion in the novel that provides the essential justification for the wealth of material drawn from fairy tale and myth... universally recognised expressions of man’s yearning for a dream world” (Howard 368).

Almost all the characters in the novel attempt to confine in false patterns their vital participation in the mysterious, creative and mythic center of life. They attempt to order their experience so that all is accounted for and growth is stilled. The forms of their lives cease to be organic and become static. In the same way, they are ruled by a scrupulous attempt not to touch or to be touched, yet they are always impulsively doing the opposite. Rainborough perhaps tries harder than anyone does for a settled, regulated life. He recalls with longing his position in the civil service not only because of its orderliness, but because their ancient values and hollowed modes of procedure reduced to a minimum the naked conflict of personalities. Rainborough wants neither contact nor action. He has convinced himself that fearless self-analysis is equivalent to virtue; he has not the ambition to change. As his actions are self-initiated, he structures his life as if he were someone else looking in and judging. He finds that he cannot combine the joys of contemplation and possession. Even when Rainborough comes to the sudden realization of the unfathomable diversity of the world, then he felt that how little he know and how little it is possible to know. With this thought, he experienced a moment of joy.

The other character of the novel ‘Rosa’ also lived in the false patterns. She too has tried to not to let other human beings to come too near. She maintains her potentially explosive relationship with the
Lusiewicz brothers by picturing herself in a fairy tale. This tale falsifies life. Rosa sees herself as a princess freeing a prince imprisoned in the form of a beast. As the brothers change, they move themselves out of the fairy tale and into a flesh and blood world in which they seduce Rosa. Here Rosa feels no power. She is most content with stories. Her involvement with the brothers is not the only instance of her search for order. She works in a factory in an attempt to put herself outside other work which had become “something nauseating and contaminated, stained by surreptitious ambitions, frustrated wishes, and the competition and opinions of other people” (Murdoch, The Flight from the Enchanter 44). While in the factory Rosa tries to make sense of her bring task by personifying her machine as kitty. She tries to find an embracing sound-pattern for the whole factory:

“An alternative way of distracting herself from kitty’s well-known diction was to try to listen instead to the din which the whole factory was making and try to understand its rhythm. But out of this deafening chaos of sounds Rosa was never able to draw any harmonious or repetitive pattern, although she felt sure that it was there, and that if only she could remember long enough and listen in the right way she would find out what it was” (41).

Peter Saward seems to be in process, for with his project of deciphering a script he is moving away from his historical studies. He has embarked on an enterprise which suggested itself to him by two accidents, he precedes based on intuition, and he persists even with the evidence of other’s folly. However, his task is the attempt to make a whole out of fragments, and the quality of the life in which he
pursues his puzzles is strangely regulated and remote from the outside world. His day is artificially divided into four sections, and from this routine he does not deviate.

Thus, such types of instances are more in the novel. These instances reveal Murdochian understanding of the human personality that it is opaque and it cannot be understood easily. The passion and chaos of life cannot be neatly tied up. Not one of the characters can escape the very adventure which Annette sets forth upon with such an excess of enthusiasm. Life’s surprises keep scattering the regulations. Rainborough’s comfortable garden is usurped by the state. His bureaucratic security ends. Rosa’s dull work in the factory precipitates an episode of terror. And the personal walls are crumbled as surely as Rainborough’s garden wall. None of the characters in the novel is able to eliminate life’s unpredictable encounters. When this aspect of life is avoided, as it is by Rosa and by Rainborough, its appearance is correspondingly violent. The novel shows that contact with the world cannot be prevented, and if a person continually shrinks from that life, it will burst into his world with a power which is often destructive. The novel is about not only the process of freeing oneself from false servility, but about the process of coming to terms with the mysterious life forces erupting unforeseeably in each individual. What the form reveals is that flight is not the answer of the problems. Flight is the dilemma of human being, which needs to be overcome. Rosa and the rest characters cannot flee.

Murdoch clarifies that people not only play the roles of demons for others but are the demons. The forces capable of enchanting or liberating are only real. Such force is not solely malevolent; it is a matter of energy. In an interview with W.K. Rose, Murdoch clarifies:
“I think ...that there is a great deal of spare energy racing around which very often suddenly focuses a situation and makes a person play a commanding role”

(Rose 68).

Murdoch views that people themselves possess this energy and generate the situations. They prefer to live in various patterns and fantasies. In *The Flight from the Enchanter*, this spare energy races around in almost everyone, not only in Mischa Fox and the more obvious enchanters. Some of the characters are almost eager to submit to the power of others rather than make choices in their lives. The poles do have a special magnetism, which draw others to them.

In the novel, Mischa Fox becomes the hollow centre of the novel. The contradictions in the aesthetic conception of this character and hence in his personality are confusing and so seem to cancel each other. Mischa’s power is felt both as invigorating and dangerous. On the side of life, she is a compelling personality. He solves muddled predicaments swiftly and efficiently. On the other hand, all believe in his sinister nature. People fear him because he is capable of anything. He is characterized by a desire to achieve indiscriminate control. Mischa’s power has a split value; his mythical aura is both full and empty. His mythical associations all provide information about him. Finally, there is a blank in the apprehension of his character which is unlike the irreducible blankness at the centre of a mystical experience. Mischa’s mythic stature never becomes believably felt because both his thoughts and his actions are kept hidden. He is a wooden presence rather than a thinking human being. Since in the novel myth’s mystery is basic to life, Mischa must exist as a solid person. Only as a real man, with feeling and fallibilities, can a
creative mythic figure have life. Mischa does not. His passion for 
Rosa, for example, is never believable. With Peter Mischa recalls the 
baby chickens which he won at the village fair, and this remembrance 
illustrates his difficulty to accept the process of life. This results in a 
pathological pity which would rather kill animals and people than 
watch them die from the worlds accidents. Peter feels that his mixture 
of pity and cruelty is strange. Rosa and Nina feel their individuality is 
being cancelled as they become cogs in Mischa’s machine. Finally, 
Mischa’s power is indisputably real. He does propel his fearful 
acquaintances into surprising actions and emotions. He does destroy 
their insulations. But he does so out of an impulse to control, to 
exercise power over others, not to draw out their own powers.

The Lusiewicz brothers are Mischa’s primitive counter-parts. They too provoke ambivalent feelings. They are full of exuberance. They make Rosa laugh in a way which breaks down all the barriers of untouchability which she has created between herself and others:

“Sometimes they would make Rosa laugh so much that the tears would stream down her face; and then suddenly she would find that these tears were not to be checked, and they would flow and flow until she was sobbing to receive a pain that lay too deep for any ordinary solace. The brothers had opened in her some profound seam of vulnerability and grief. In their presence she was always breathless, as one in a new and beautiful country, full of an inexplicable rapture and never very far from tears” (Murdoch, The Flight from the Enchanter 51).

They are the savage sons living in intimate contact with the sensual life. They feel the springs of their being in the raw cycle of
decaying and regenerating organic life. They stand in awe of their earth origins (the old mother) and yet feel no compassion for her decline; that is nature’s way and they feel positively infused with power as her cycle drops:

“Their mother seemed to fill them with a mixture of tenderness, irritation and savagery... ‘She is our own earth... one day we burn her up... We kill you! We kill you!’... Then quite suddenly the excitement would be over, and the two brothers would sit down one on each side of the bed frame and mop their brows” (47-9).

The pattern bursts for all of them- Rosa’s secret is revealed, Stefan breaks an unspoken rule and visits Rosa at home, the old mother dies, and the brothers turn on each other. The skilfully wielded power of Mischa and the passionately expressed feelings of the Lusiewicz’s are but more intense versions of the life beating furtively in Rosa, Rainborough, Annette, Nina, and Hunter. In the same way that these characters’ maintenance of artificial defences resulted in proportionately violent actions, the novel’s total form reflects restraint succeeded by chaos.

The main action of the novel The Flight from the Enchanter involves the struggle of characters to free themselves from the spell cast by the powerful newspaper magnate, Mischa Fox. Mischa is an allegorical representation of power is attested to by Rosa, Nina, Calvin and Rainborough; that he is also the supreme enchanter of the novel is implied by the constant equation of power with magic, not supernatural magic but that psychological magic which Murdoch claims is part of ordinary life. In all of Iris Murdoch’s novels a recurring theme is the struggle of goodness and love against the many

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guises of evil; the issues of contingency, illusion, reality and power are among her most persistent concerns. With this, the fantasy of freedom becomes a continuing theme in Murdoch’s novels. In *The Flight from the Enchanter*, the demonic distortions seem to cast shadows over most of the characters. Most of the characters live in various forms, spells and fantasies and neglect the real meaning of freedom. *The Flight from the Enchanter* introduces for the first time a psychological investigation of enchantment and of demonic power. It is re-examined and intensified to Gothic proportion in *The Unicorn and The Time of the Angels*. In these novels Murdoch articulates a progressively greater concern with the demonic dangers of preoccupation with form and theory. Mischa’s control over his creatures in *The Flight from the Enchanter*, Gerald’s pattern of authority over Gaze in *The Unicorn*, and Carel’s insistence that his family weave themselves into Elizabeth’s web in *The Time of the Angels*, all result from the tyrannical need to impose form on others in order that one might treat them as abstractions, symbols or objects, rather than relate to them as unique individuals worthy of loving attention.

*The Flight from the Enchanter* has suffered its share of reductive readings. It almost seems that Murdoch invited misreading by loading this book with symbolic and mythological motifs that beg for a patterned interpretation. Zohreh T. Sullivan in her essay “Enchantment and the Demonic in Iris Murdoch” imposes a strict integrating pattern in her reading, tracing Murdoch’s allegorical representation of demonic power. She considers that the subject of the book is precisely the danger of such assimilations of reality into the dream life of the consciousness:

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“If an abstract proposition is being tested in ‘The Flight from the Enchanter’, it is probably Murdoch’s theory of the demonic reverberations that result from imposing restricting patterns, fantasies and myths an objective reality” (Sullivan, “Enchantment” no. 3).

Murdoch’s Under the Net and The Flight from the Enchanter are both explorations of the nature of art, though they differ in their narrative technique. Under the Net is concerned with the unavoidable falsification of reality by art, as its central character; the professional writer Jake Donaghue, comes to realize – “all stories are lies”. The Flight from the Enchanter examines the varieties of response to the work of art in the complex and often contradictory multiple perspectives of an audience: art, like reality, is a cipher with many solutions. because these two novels concentrate in turn on the individual artist and the community of the audience, Murdoch chooses the most appropriate narrative technique for each: the solitary first-person narrator for Under the Net and multiple limited – omniscience, shifting, irregularly among the perspectives of six characters who variously read their worlds, for The Flight from the Enchanter. As readers themselves, then, the characters of the novel exemplify the varieties of just and unjust interactions with the text of their world, providing models for the reader’s responses to the text that contains them. The Flight from the Enchanter is an amorphous narrative of the experiences of a group of characters, covering an unspecified period of time, and suggesting more chaos than organization in its conflicting perspectives.

The perspective characters in The Flight from the Enchanter tend to fantasize about their personal situations and relations to
others. They combine to create a novel remarkable for its variety of mythological allusions, symbolic patterns and imagery. There are no artists, however, among the six perspective characters through whom Murdoch presents *The Flight from the Enchanter*: Annette Cockayne, Hunter Keepe, Peter Sward, and Rosa Keepe, John Rainborough and Nina the dressmaker. Rather all these characters picture themselves as artistic creations, existing within an obscure system. Their attempts to flee from the enchanter’s system and create their own worlds lead to the appalling discovery that even their search for freedom is part of a larger, determined design. To achieve freedom requires more understanding about others. It also requires a disciplined process of unselfing and suppression of the egocentric fantasy. Otherwise, it becomes the fantasy of freedom. The paradox Murdoch explores in *The Flight from the Enchanter* is that both solipsism and submission to another’s designs are acts of egoism. To see oneself as an actor in an ordered and meaningful drama is as much a gratification of the individual’s sense of self-importance as is Jake’s solipsistic art. The disillusionment of the role-playing egoist who sees himself as an integral part of a patterned world may be prompted by the discovery, similar to the conventional solipsists, that other very real beings exist independently, outside the perceived pattern, as happens when Rosa and Hunter are confronted by the inscrutable political, aliens, the Lusiewicz brothers. Otherwise, the characters’ egocentricity is punctured by their recognition that their roles are far different and much less significant than they assumed them to be. Such discoveries drive Nina to suicide, Annette to a suicide attempt, and Rainborough to fight. This happens through illusions and the wrong conception of the freedom.
As earlier novels, we see Murdochian belief in her novel *The Sandcastle* that people lives in a world of fantasy. Murdoch recommends a good relationship with others to realise oneself and others. Her *The Sandcastle* deals with the most ordinary and everyday environment in the Murdoch canon to date, being set among the stuff of a Home countries boarding school. It seems as a love story ending in renunciation. It has been criticized for its decided thematic similarity to the conventional literature of women’s magazines. Yet it is more like its predecessor in its basic moral and narrative assumptions than is sometimes realized. A superficial account of its theme would concentrate on Bill Mor’s attempt to escape an unfulfilling marriage by becoming involved with a young painter, Rain Carter, who has been commissioned to produce a portrait of the school’s ex-headmaster, Demoyte. By the end of the book Mor having been manipulated by his wife Nan, renounces not only Rain but the school as well, and embarks on a career in politics.

The novel fails to take into account the extent to which Rain Carter operates here much as Mischa Fox does in *The Flight from the Enchanter*. She, as like him, is a central figure around whom others – not just Mor, but Demoyte as well, and possibly even Mor’s jeweller friend Tim Burke- weave fantasies. The level at which these operate is less mysterious than in the earlier novel. In this novel Murdoch’s skill lies in conveying the extent to which Mor declines to show awareness of what is happening to him. His opening moves presents his reluctance to admit to the explicit consequences of his involvement with the girl, who represents many kinds of escape: to youth, wealth and a life away from the constriction of his marriage.
“Murdoch might well argue that we see Mor’s career at the school as an example of the unexamined, yet by that token potentially virtuous, life; in this case the relationship with Rain would form another expression of the artist – saint contrast. However, one would be faced here with its expression in terms of the unconsoling truth that shortage of money can poison relationships and that conversely; they can be imaginatively invigorated by money” (Todd 37).

Like Hugo, Bledyard in The Sandcastle is an embodiment of goodness. He is an old stammering art master at St. Bride’s. Iris Murdoch presents him as a ‘anti-art –artist’. According to Demoyte, Bledyard, is a fool. But Bledyard doesn’t take the saying of others seriously. He is a kind of a primitive Christian with his lank and longish hair falling well forward on either side of his cheeks like blinkers. He is such character who possesses the strength to face the other characters successfully. He does not bother about the convention and goes on with his meals which makes Mor feel jealous of him. Bledyard thinks that every man must find his own way.

Bledyard’s mockery reveals the truth. He becomes able to challenge amorous relationship of Mor and Miss Rain Carter. Demoyte is encouraging Mor to go ahead with Rain Carter and Tim Burke keeps secret of seeing Mor and Miss Carter going in the car, but Bledyard points out to Mor that it is well to you to know she is a child. As Bledyard’s remarks present the truthfulness, he cannot bear a wrong deed. Therefore, he sends away Miss Carter from the squash Courts where she is waiting for Mor. He does not consider about the other people’s thoughts about him. He remarks towards Mor:

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“I want to talk to you about the things you are doing now
to your wife and Miss Carter... I think that you should
reflect carefully before you proceed any further.... I have
to bear witness and say that I think you are acting
wrongly. (He stood straight, his hands hanging down, his
eyes wide open and bulging, looking at Mor.) ”
(Murdoch, *The Sandcastle* 211).

Bledyard’s above statement shows his strong position to reveal
the reality, which is required for Murdoch. Through her writings,
Murdoch always tries to depict the reality of the world. Here,
Bledyard acts as unsolicited voice of conscience. He condemns
happiness as a poor and a selfish guide and pleads in effect for Mor to
crucify his desires and open himself to any hurt for others. Bledyard’s
concept of freedom completely depends upon the absence of self-
importance. This concept goes near to Murdochian concept of
freedom or it may not be wrong to say that it is the Murdochian
voice, which is spoken through Bledyard.

Murdoch finely depicts her theme of freedom in *The
Sandcastle*. She has evaluated the human tendencies and behaviours
through her novels. She thinks that those people, who cannot face the
criticism by other people, are weak. Such people always fear to face
the judgements of people. Because of lack of courage, they prefer to
leave away from the situation instead of facing it courageously. On
the other hand, the good people do not consider it as a fearful
situation. The good people face the situation and try to find solutions.
In this concern Bledyard comments;
“Sometimes...it is unavoidably our duty to attempt to
some sort of judgement- and then the suspension of
judgement is not charity but the fear of being judged in
return” (211-12).

Therefore, we find if Demoyte and Tim Burke do not object to
Mor-Rain relationship, it is due to the weakness in their own
character and not for any sympathy for Mor. Bledyard due to his
some principles of life gains his own place in the novel. He tells to
Mor that his conduct cannot be defended on any ground. He tells him
to do right things. Bledyard speaks bitterly but really:

“You are deeply bound to your wife and to your children,
and deeply rooted in your own life. Perhaps that life will
hold you in spite of yourself. But if you break these bonds
you destroy a part of the world...that is not true, Mr.
Mor. There is such a thing as respect for reality. You are
living on dreams now, dreams of happiness, and dreams
of freedom. But in all this you consider only yourself. But
look rather upon the others- and make yourself nothing
in your awareness of them” (212-13).

Bledyard’s statements strongly and very closely attached with
Murdochian concept of freedom. Because here Bledyard advises Mor
to come out of your deeply bounded life with yourself and with your
wife and children. He also advises him to come out of own self and
look upon others. He recommends Mor to respect the reality and do
not create the own illusions of happiness and freedom. Because real
happiness and freedom cannot be gained through illusions and
fantasies, it requires more awareness towards others. In The
Sandcastle Bledyard seems to unfold the illusions and fantasies of
other characters. Mor thinks that happiness is his guide in his affair with Miss Carter, but for Bledyard any idea of individual happiness without bothering about the reality of others is a fantasy. Bledyard strongly criticizes Mor-Rain relationship; he knows that neither Mor nor Rain wants freedom. Mor is an egoist. He is concerned only about his own world of imagined things. Therefore, Bledyard advises him to sacrifice his so-called happiness for the sake of his family. But freedom requires exit from self-centredness:

“We see, generally, people live in a world of fantasy. But for a good human relationship, it is better if one were to concern oneself truly with others and not mind the suffering involved in it. By doing so, one enriches oneself in a way of which one cannot even conceive. But the gift of the spirit does not appeal to the imagination” (Punja 75).

In The Sandcastle, Bledyard gets an important role. Generally, other people feel bored about his idealism and theories of painting but his personal relationship with Demoyte, The Reverend Giles Everard, and Mor, shows that he is always concerned with the individuality of others. As we see in this world that there are few people, those understand others properly. It is seen that many people prefer to live in the materialistic and self-seeking world. In the novel Bledyard is right in criticizing Rain’s portrait for sacrificing the truth and spirit of her subject to form and decoration. Bledyard’s criticism of Rain enables her to become a good painter. It is only due to him that Miss Carter feels chastened after the defeat of her romantic affair: repainting the portrait, her creative, erotic energy is channelled properly away from the meretricious delights of storybook fantasy.
The Sandcastle is the story of a love affair between Mor, a middle-aged married schoolmaster having two children, and Miss Rain Carter, a small statured painter. Mor is a frustrated husband unhappily married to a nagging wife, Nan. Nan has had her own way in everything. Nan’s strength springs from her obstinate and merciless unreason. There has been some happiness in the early years of their marriage:

“At that time he and Nan had talked about nothing but themselves. When this subject failed, however, they had been unable to find another- and one day Mor made the discovery that he was tied for life to a being who could change, who could withdraw herself from him and become independent. On that day Mor had renewed his marriage vows” (Murdoch, The Sandcastle 10-11).

Some differences between the behaviours of Mor and Nan can be seen clearly. Mor likes company whereas she hates it. Mor tries to attach himself to Miss Carter. This Mor’s effort shows his eagerness to get free from his wife. We have seen such types of efforts of the characters in other novels of Murdoch in which the one character tries to separate from another. Because the characters create their own meanings and they try to impose these meanings upon another. We may say that they define the world according to their own understandings and assumptions, which create the misconception of freedom. Actually, freedom does not consider for illusions and fantasies. In the novel Mor tries to make relations with Miss Carter where Rain tries to make relations with Mor because she finds in him a father figure.
The incident in which Mor stumbles and accidentally catches hold of Rain’s hand in the dark starts Mor-Rain affair. This incident was happened while collecting roses after dinner at Demoyte’s place. The touch of Rain’s hand creates a great sensation in Mor:

“She (Rain) kept her voice soft, compelled to by the garden. Then she came back down the steps and he realized that she was reaching out her hand. Mor took her hand in his and let her guide him up the steps. Her grip was firm. They passed between the black holly bushes, and released each other. Mor felt a strong shock within him, as if very distantly something had subsided or given way. He had a confused feeling of surprise. The moon came out of the clouds for a moment and suddenly the sky was seen in motion” (34-35).

Mor and Rain start keeping certain things secret from the rest of the characters in the novel. They come close to each other. Rain asks Mor to tell her everything about Mr. Demoyte. It is agreed that Mor will give her the published book of Mr. Demoyte without revealing this fact to Demoyte. At once Mor thought that it is not fair because he was going to deceive the old man. But he wanted to please Miss Carter. He thought her wishes were reasonable. The secret keeping process grows later. When Mor takes Rain to see Bledyard’s studio, she enters the flat of Bledyard and lies on his bed. Here Bledyard does not notice Mor standing in his flat of Bledyard and lies on his bed. Here Bledyard does not notice Mor standing in his flat and Rain lying on his bed. This incident is also kept secret. Rain gives a lift to Mor in her car after their lunch at Everard’s place. Instead of going home, they go to a river. They took the accident
secret, which was happened at the river. Tim Burkey has seen Mor and Rain going in the car but he keeps it a secret. Demoyte also keeps a secret of Mor’s letter to Rain. The growing number of secrets increases Mor-Rain intimacy in the novel.

The incident happened between Mor-Rain proceeds into making their love affair. It has been Murdochian effort through her novels to take love as a support to present the role of freedom. Murdoch always believes in the role of love as it destroys the illusions and enables human beings to think about others. Love takes human being away from his/her own selfish thoughts and enables him/her to think about others. In this concern Murdoch thinks love as a supportive device helpful in achieving freedom. In the novel Rain wants to see Mor as a young man and so she draws a sketch of Mor as a young man. This drawing of Mor creates a feeling of love in Rain. Mor also realises his love for Rain on the Railway station when Nan and Felicity leave by train for Dorset. He immediately rushes to see Rain, and finds that Bledy ard’s class is drawing her, while she is sitting on a ladder. After the class when everybody else is gone, Mor kisses her on her lips. It is this kiss, which makes him fall madly in love with her.

Mor usually faces the confused state of mind. He does one thing and thinks about the two sides of its result. On the one hand, he goes on advancing towards Rain, and on the other hand, he feels guilty for his own moral scruples. On the Cricket Match day, he tries to avoid Rain. He considers himself “as contemptible: a middle-aged man deceiving his wife, inefficient, blundering, and graceless” (172-3). Mor and Rain go to see Demoytes picture where Rain avoids Mor. We see that they both are fall in love with each other. When Nan and
Felicity are at Dorset, Mor asks Rain to drop at his place for a drink after the dinner. Rain comes to his residence driving in the rain. She stops the car in the school building and comes to deliver that she is not coming. But we see that on the conscious level they both are strongly involved in each other. The narration supports this:

“\textit{He (Mor) sped out of the room and through the hall. He did not stop to pick up the letter. He swung the door open and left it wide behind him. He covered the garden path in three bounds. He saw the small figure some way down the road, running now. Mor shot after her. The pain in his heart turned into a fierce delight. He came with her just at the corner of the road and caught her by the wrist. It was like catching a thief. He said nothing, but turned her about and began to pull her back towards his house}” (173).

The relationship between Mor and Rain if creates some suspicion yet, one may think that had she actually tried to avoid Mor, she would not have come to deliver the letter and would not have come told a lie to Demoyte that she is going to London. The reality is this that both Mor and Rain thought to use of Nan’s absence from the house. It is due to their moral scruples their love remains unconsummated in spite of their being alone at home. Nan gets shocked on seeing Mor and Rain in her drawing room doing romance. This unexpected incident creates confusion in the mind of Nan and so she goes to Tim Burkey for help. But Tim Burkey instead of supporting her, tries to explain his own feelings towards her. Actually, Tim Burkey thinks to use the Mor-Nan separation for his own benefit. He cannot understand the importance of family in human life and through this sense he acts. Nan understands that Tim
Burkey cannot help her and so she decides to do work independently with the help of belief in herself. This belief in herself and independent act delivers the Murdochian voice. Because Murdoch always strengthens belief in himself/herself. She stresses and respects the separateness and individuality of other person. The same subject re-enters in *The Sandcastle* like other Murdochian novels.

Nan is such a character who deserves family commitment and through this, she reminds Mor about his duty towards his family. She warns Mor to quit from his love-affair. But Mor is reluctant to give up his affair with Rain. Then she goes back to Dorset leaving Mor to himself on his own responsibility. This was happening on one side whereas on the other side, Rain asks him to go abroad with her and get marry with her. This advice takes Mor as an opportunity to free from his nagging wife. He also saw this as an opportunity to solve his financial problems. Rain gives him a beautiful dream that she would be painting and he would be writing books. Mor listens the advice of Rain and decides to leave his family. Mor is a such a person who can’t act independently. Though listening advice of Rain, he fails to implement his decision due to disappearance of Donald after his dangerous attempts to climb the tower. Mor is a confused personality through which he cannot take decisions easily. In the party given in honour of Demoyte, Nan over- manoeuvres Mor by declaring that she and Mor have agreed that Mor should fight the election on the ticket of Labour Party. As he has never talked to Rain about his political ambition, so she becomes unhappy and decides to leave him. Mor feels that he should follow Rain when she leaves the party and his condition becomes:
“She (Rain) threw her page of notes down on the table. She began to say, ‘But you will have heard enough now of my personal hopes and fears- it remains for me to conclude my remarks by-‘ Her voice became inaudible to Mor. He half rose from his seat, and then slumped back again, helpless. He became aware that everyone in the room was looking at him” (295).

Mor always faced confused situation of his mind. When after Nan’s speech he goes to find Rain and meets her improving Demoyte’s portrait, he pleads that she should listen to him. No doubt, she loves him but she realises that she has no place in his life:

“It’s useless, Mor,’ said Rain. ‘What am I doing in your life? I have often wondered this, you know, only I never told my doubts. You are growing tree. I am only a bird. You cannot break our roots and fly away with me. Where could we go, where you wouldn’t always be wanting the deep things that belong to you, your children, and this work which you know is your work?” (300).

It is seen in the novel that Mor-Rain affair does not remain limited only with them but also affects Mor’s children. Because at the school Donald is usually teased by his friends. Carde passes remarks about Mor-Rain relationship by calling her “Papa’s Poppet” and because of this Donald becomes nervous. In the cricket match, Donald’s attention is diverted owing to the arrival of Rain. Felicity performs some magic ceremony to free her father from the charm of Rain Carter as she feels the great power of Mor-Rain relationship.

In this way, we may say after discussing Mor-Rain relationships that Mor is a confused man who fails to gain anything in
his love affair with Rain Carter. He is a timid man and not confirm on
his own opinions. He always depends upon the two sides of situation.
At one time, he is willed by Rain, and at the other time, he is willed
by Nan. He has been unable to recognize the separate identity of
either Nan or Rain. Nan, to some extent understands her husband Mor
and his beloved Rain. Therefore, she fights strongly the battle
between the wife and the beloved. Iris Murdoch in the novel skilfully
uses the characters Mor and Rain to reveal the importance of
individuality. Here, Mor doesn’t understand others properly and lives
in a confused state of mind. Murdoch strengthens the same point
through her novels continuously that a person should not live in his
fantasy world. He should not evaluate others according to his own
assumptions but he should face the reality of the existence. In the
present novel The Sandcastle through Rain-Mor relationship Iris
Murdoch seems to suggest that affairs of a timid man like Mor are
like sand castles. As sand castles on Mediterranean Sea fall soon, so
does the extramarital relationships of timid persons fail. The
extramarital relationship becomes the subject of discussion in
Murdochian novels. This subject takes us near to her subject of
writing. Murdoch finds the reason of extramarital relationship in
human beings behaviour of not knowing and understanding their life
partner properly. A husband thinks that his wife cannot fulfil his
expectations whereas wife thinks that her husband is not suitable for
her. Through the unreal and dreamy expectations, they both find
another way by neglecting the reality of existence. They prefer to live
with other beings instead of knowing their life partner properly. They
create their own dreamy world and they prefer to live in that world.
For some time, they feel it suitable but later they have to face the
reality of situation in which their illusions are destroyed. This

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happens in the life of human being. This same happening is presented through pen of Iris Murdoch in her novels. In ‘The Sandcastle’ Rain-Mor relationships are based on such illusions and day-dreaming in which a middle-aged man who is bored with his wife. Iris Murdoch through these relationships skilfully presents the reality of existence and shows that a person cannot be free by making extra-marital relationships. By making relations with others to free from the life partner, is the flight from the reality. It is not the freedom but it is the fantasy of freedom, according to Murdoch.

The first definition of ‘freedom’ in The Sandcastle is Mor’s own, during his W.E.A class, when one of his pupils insists that freedom is a virtue. In the following words the tone of pupil and teacher is exactly caught. Murdoch’s arguments and sermons are almost always convincing. Let’s see:

“If by freedom we mean absence of external restraint, then we may call a man lucky for being free but why should we call him good? If, on the other hand, by freedom we mean self-discipline, which dominates selfish desires, then indeed we may call a free man virtuous. ... It may be used to justify the tyranny of people who think themselves to be the enlightened ones. Whereas the notion of freedom, which I’m sure, Mr. Staveley has in mind, the freedom which inspired the great liberal leaders of the last century, is political freedom, the absence of tyranny” (54-5).

This speech shows both a right view of freedom, and a particular direction in which Mor’s own striving for freedom should profitably lie. He is engaged in the strife for political freedom, the
absence of tyranny. In the part of the story during his enchantment, his real freedom becomes temporarily unimportant to him.

_The Sandcastle_ presents the destruction of romantic illusions. Murdoch delivers her philosophical ideas through this book like her other novels. The plot of the novel creates the normal but difficult moral vision. The plot centres on a man who desires to escape from his marriage into all the possibilities of a love affair. William Mor attempts to break out of a practically dead marriage when he falls in love with Rain Carter. The love affair between Mor and Rain is brought up against its sober reality. So it seems insubstantial and flimsy. As the relationships between Mor and Rain ultimately proves illusory, Murdoch wants to show the same. Murdoch always stressed the point that illusions, fantasies hinder the real freedom. The characters Mor and Rain face the same:

“It is a product of their fantasies. They are not fully aware of each other as distinct individuals. They overestimate the extent to which they are free agents, unhampered by responsibility. They do not, at first, take real account of the damage they are going to inflict on their lives, the harm they will do to Mor’s children, Donald and Felicity, and to his wife, Nan” (Sagare 111).

The novel strongly presents the role of illusions and fantasies in human life and enables to understand the reality based freedom. The characters become the voice of Murdoch and Murdoch becomes the voice of reality. And it is a voice to which ultimately, Mor and Rain are forced to attend. Murdochian characters do not understand the reality of situation at the primary stage. After facing many hindrances, shocks they proceed towards reality. It is Jake Donaghue
in *Under the Net*, Rosa Keepe in *The Flight from the Enchanter* or William Mor in *The Sandcastle* - they all proceed towards reality after going through illusions and fantasies. Mor’s responsibility towards his son is brought ahead by the activities of his son, Donald. In attempting to climb the neo-Gothic tower, Don gets into difficulties. This incident contributes to the final break-up of Mor’s love affair because Mor is reminded during the rescue in a terrifying way of his commitment to his family. Later Mor, recognises the fact that Rain is, and needs to be, free and untrammelled. Finally, Nan’s acceptance and revelation of Mor’s political ambitions destroy the whole affair. Rain goes back to her vocation as an artist, and Mor returns to his marriage that is reality.

Through the happenings of the novel not only Mor and his beloved Rain recognizes about their illusions but Mor’s wife, Nan, also learns and improves herself considerably. She gets new awareness, which strengthens her attitude towards others. She understands that her husband is an independent personality and so his desires and expectations are different from her expectations. She understands that as a separate identity from herself Mor should be understood and he should be respected. Nan improves her approach through experiences. She changes her attitude into generous towards Tim Burke. This change in her attitude helps her to see others separately. When Nan turns to Tim in her distress to discuss about Mor’s relationships with Rain, Tim tells her once again that he loves her. This incident creates a close, mysterious feeling in Nan that enables her to see other than herself. In private Nan had derided her husband’s wish to enter politics; but now in public she declares it and supports him. Her final acceptance of Mor’s political ambitions is a
clear sign of her recognition of the aspirations of a individual. The recognition which Nan gets through the experiences, is the sign of getting freedom, the freedom which depends upon knowing and respecting others.

“The view that the drift into private world holds no future is connected with the idea of freedom. Mor’s tendency to drift is worked into complex patterns of isolation. It graded in the novel’s other characters: from Felicity and Donald to Nan and old Demoyte, who almost allows himself to make love to Rain....Felicity, with her make believe, still innocently supposes that her magic can impose her will upon the real world. Donald has grown out of this childishness, but is still too vulnerable to impacts from the world of others...for him (Mor) freedom is the faculty to make one’s own life” (113).

Mor in his lecture of freedom calls it ‘a sort of grace’. His real quandary results from his incapacity to be free in the real sense of the term. Bledyard’s approach to freedom depends upon a total absence of concern about oneself. Murdoch focuses on the point that man is free when he is delivered from his passion and leaves aside personal concerns. Mor fails to understand this meaning of real freedom and living in various illusions goes to achieve the fantasy of freedom.

The novel presents a sense of freedom and power. Mor submits too easily to his wife’s domination, and Nan, underestimates his capabilities. Such relationship gives birth to the master-slave relationship in the novel. Mor thinks that his wife Nan does not understand him properly. She dominates Mor. She forces him to crawl back to her after they quarrel. She begins to respect him less
and less. This disturbs the process of freedom. Mor is occasionally stirred by a sense of freedom and power but he can’t make final decision that will free and give him power. When he is surrounded by the world of Rain, Mor is enchanted and enthralled and most of all impressed by Rain’s belief in the future of this world. But he is surprised at the tremendous strength of his wife and resentful of her power over him when the crucial moment of action comes, he is paralysed by a life-time conformity. It does stress the complexity of human motives, the muddle of emotions, prejudices, ambiguous notions which in moments of crisis determine the course of human life. Only people like Nan are not afraid of acting and does it wilfully, can influence their own life. Mor also enjoys wielding power. He is not a complete looser. The experience has at least enlightened him on the real nature of reality and of his marriage. Thus, he is conducted to self-knowledge. This leads to his achievement of new direction, which makes his easier and more intimate relations with his children.

Murdoch delivers the importance of accurate and objective observation in work of art as well as in relationship. Rain has been commissioned to do a portrait of Demoyte, the retired headmaster of the school. She feels that the truthful quality of a portrait can only emerge after long and patient observation. By accuracy and truth of the portrait, Mor is enabled to see Demoyte with a new compassion. Rain, while she sketches Mor, says to him: ‘Exactly as you are is how I want you’ (Murdoch, The Sandcastle 116) and

“She picked up her sketch book, produced a pencil from her handbag, and began to draw, sipping brandy now and then as she did so. Mor sat perfectly still, conscious

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on the one side of the gentle intent glances of Miss Carter, and on the other of the sardonic covertly amused attention of Demoyte. He felt like a man with one cheek exposed to the fragment breezes of the spring, while upon the other is let loose an autumnal shower of chilling rain” (116).

Bledyward argues that the true artist is humble enough in the presence of the object to attempt merely to show what the object is like. Iris Murdoch repeatedly presents this approach to art through her writings.

The Sandcastle combines the two aspects –love and art. Bledyward combines the novelist’s view of the impersonality of the artist with her sense that the individual human being is a mystery, a compelling moral object incredibly difficult to comprehend. The constitution of personality- the otherness of other persons and the hardness of relationships between persons is the central focus of both art and love, which is presented in The Sandcastle. The novel also presents the careful use of images and symbols. The instability and ultimate impossibility of Mor and Rain’s love affair, for example, is suggested by the title image of itself (the sandcastle). The sandcastle reveals the illusion of permanence. Rain says about her childhood:

“I can recall, as a child, seeing pictures in English children’s books of boys and girls playing on the sand and making sandcastles- and I tried to play on my sand. But a Mediterranean beach is not a place for playing on. It is dirty and very dry. The tides never wash the sand or make it firm. When I tried to make a sandcastle, the sand would just a run away between my fingers. It was too dry

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to hold together. And even if I poured sea water over it, the sun would dry it up at once” (72).

The novel makes its concern with some major aspects, which are presented through some of the background detail. A concern with romantic love is also evoked through some allusions in the novel. It is presented through the allusions to the works of medieval writers and the nineteenth century romantic poets, who have helped to establish the concept of romance. For example, Mor’s brief vigil, outside Rain’s window recalls Keat’s “Nightingale”. When Mor and rain go into the garden to get roses, Rain moves like a bird. Rain is so overcome by the beauty of the night that she begins to clasp the trees. Finally, there is the gipsy who stands for a perpetual reminder of the world of others though Mor does not take the hint. It may mean that he fails to understand the importance of knowing and understanding others.

As The Sandcastle depicts the concern of art and love in human life, it also argues that both art and love must avoid the temptation to ignore the reality of another individual. While Bledyard’s own practice as a painter fails by sacrificing individuality in favour of abstraction, he fully recognizes the danger of being too subjective in painting portraits. Thus, Murdoch’s philosophic concern has been embodied in a commonplace story about ordinary people faced with familiar moral issues.

“she (Murdoch) develops much more fully the idea that seems to have prompted her novel (The Sandcastle), that a marriage over the years spreads its roots, and even if the initial affection disappears cannot be uprooted
without causing an appalling and unwarranted amount of damage” (“Out of School” 285).

The present novel The Sandcastle reveals the philosophical-cum-ethical, social and aesthetic constituents of human life. It presents an absurd world-view, illustrated in the main action and the chief characters of the novel. The scene along the river where the car turns over into the water, while Mor and Rain watch helplessly, is the typical example of the absurd world-view. Demoyte is stripped of his power by retirement and age. He is a man whose sandcastle can no longer hold together and whose loneliness has not even the consolations of a rooted family pattern. The episode of Tim Burke and Nan also presents the absurdity of human life. It seems that Iris Murdoch seems to underline this absurdity- the absurdity of human behaviour, which doesn’t allow knowing the otherness. This absurdity shows the completely involved situation of human beings in themselves that never respects others. Here, Murdoch suggests, as usually that the people prefer to live in absurdity, illusions, fantasies which always hinders the process of freedom. In The Sandcastle major characters live in absurdity and so forget to acquire the real essence of freedom.

In The Sandcastle Murdoch has spoken of the secrecy of people and the power of the novelist to disclose fantasies such as would not be admitted even in psychoanalysis. The art in which she excels is precisely for this reason not the art of restraint with which we are confronted in The Sancastle, but one of display which is quite alien to the mode of portrayal chosen for Mor. While in many ways, the quiet and everyday world offered in this novel is one, which she believes true novelist should not consider unworthy of attention, it is

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a world to which her own fictional talents are simply not best suited. Murdoch has remarked that she feels her chief failure in The Sandcastle was that of not having attended sufficiently to the specificity of Nan, Mor. She considers that Nan was in an almost Lawrentian way ‘coerced’:

“It would have been a far better novel if I had spent more imaginative time detaching Nan from the story and not letting her just play the part of this rather tiresome wife but making her somebody with quite extraordinary ideas of her own, playing some quite different game, perhaps, having some dream life of her own which is quite different from that of the other characters” (Ziehler 227).

Murdoch’s conception of symbolism is more scrupulous than is often maintained, precisely because she does not seem to see the symbol as something which only artists create. Rather, we as readers are all artists; ordinary people are symbol makers, and one consequence of realizing this is an understanding that symbolism usually comes in a Murdoch novel to operate in a subordinate and undominating way. It may illuminate character and this is perhaps to be thought of as its central role; an enchanting object or person may be given symbolic status by the other characters, but the way in which each character does this will be different. The difference is a function of the character’s distinct existence as human beings. The process is more centrally and complexly evident in The Bell, where the functions of ‘symbol’ and ‘power centre’ are strikingly linked.

Murdoch’s style of writing and her approach has been criticized in the following words by David Tylden-Wright in Times Literary Supplement:
“If in her style of writing and her approach to her subject Miss Murdoch has discarded much of the fantasy of her previous books some of it seems nevertheless to have crept into her characters, and also into the course of her story” (www.complete-review.com/murdoch).

Whereas, Charles Poore criticizes the Murdochian use of devices and the characterization:

“Miss Murdoch makes use of such devices as chance meetings, a two-timing politician, a mysterious gypsy who is a harbinger of trouble, and the reading of letters by persons who were decidedly not meant to read them, with as much assurance as if she had invented those devices herself. No other novelist now writing in England except Elizabeth Bowen can match her in her ability to draw characters completely and then show what happens when their sandcastles are swept by the tides in the affairs of women and men” (www.complete-review.com/murdoch).

Murdoch through her novels continuously tried to present the place of egocentric fantasy and the truth. Another novel Bruno’s Dream is a closed novel and the most naked meditation in the Platonic Eros she has attempted in this novel. In this novel, Murdoch deals the subject of death and its relationships with love. The novel rings with an optimistic note in spite of its sombre ambience. Socrates enjoins the study of death for directing attention away from egoistic material goals towards the truth. In Bruno’s Dream, death becomes the great iconoclast, which helps in breaking the false images and forms imposed by man on reality. The major characters in
the novel learn from the experience of death and proceeds to achieve freedom by dispelling their illusions, fantasies.

The present novel is paralleled with Tolstoy’s *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. It attempts to draw a picture of an old man dying in conformity with the exacting criteria laid down by Murdoch herself. She writes:

“It is not easy to portray death, real death, not fake, or prettified death. Even Tolstoy did not really manage it in ‘Ivan Ilyich’, although he did it elsewhere. The great deaths of literature are few, but they show us with an exemplary clarity the way in which art invigorates us by a juxtaposition, almost an identification, of pointlessness and value. The death of Patroclus, the death of Cordelia, the death of Petya Rostov; All is vanity. The only thing which is of real importance is the ability to see it all clearly and respond to it” (Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* 87).

Death has presented as a catalytic agent in Murdochian novels. It takes human being to face reality by destroying his forms and patterns created by himself. Death also inspires human being for a selfless love and true experience of freedom. By knowing the reality of death, human being starts a process of recognition of reality. He questions himself that after doing all the worldly deeds what is the end of human being? He gets an answer that every person has to face death. So, this idea of death creates the process in his mind through which he forgets his self-centredness, egoism and tries to look outside of his self. Iris Murdoch takes this idea to reveal the egocentric fantasy of human being. She makes criteria to achieve the freedom in which impels to destroy the fantasy.
According to Murdoch in order to exercise free will, a human being must strive and take great care and discipline with the direct intention to pay attention to the realities of others. Because the achievement of free will is not something that is easy to come by, one must pass many psychological obstacles and struggle to escape to grasp of determinism. It seems by Murdoch’s thinking that human will should have entirely different objective and perhaps gains a sense of innocence. The objective should be to keep a focussed attention on the realities of the world. Like Plato, Murdoch recognizes the tendency of the artist to become engulfed in his fantasy world, and she distrusts the one who presents his fantasies in the form of illusion. Many of her novels focus on artists trapped in such a world. But she differs with Plato in her belief that the artist can, through the imagination, transcend fantasy which is the enemy of art and the imagination. She explains her opposition to Plato’s view:

“Good art, thought of as symbolic force rather than statement, provides a stirring image of a pure transcendent value, a steady visible enduring higher good, and perhaps provides for many people in an unreligious age without prayer or sacraments, their clearest experience of something grasped as separate and precious and beneficial and held quietly and unpossessively in the attention. Art which we love can seem holy and attending to it can be like praying. Our relation to such art though ‘probably never’ entirely true is markedly unselfish” (Murdoch, The Fire and the Sun 76-7).
Attributing a moral significance to the artist’s role, Murdoch claims that the essence of art and morals is the same:

“The essence of both is love. Love is the perception of individuals. Love is the extremely difficult realization that something other than oneself is real. Love, and so art and morals, is the discovery of reality” (Murdoch, The Sovereignty 51).

Murdoch uses the term fantasy to describe the imaginative exclusion of others from one’s reality. Others become dream objects whose freedom is restricted by the power of the fantasist. The artist immersed in fantasy ignores reality, creating a world, which conforms to his self-ordained illusions. Instead, the artist should give the world of art “an independence and uniqueness which is essentially the same as that conferred upon, or rather discovered in, another human being whom we love” (54-5).

Murdoch’s Bruno's Dream cannot remain away from her relevance of fantasy and freedom. Through characters, she attempts to present her idea of freedom which emphasizes the importance of viewing others as real. She even believes that the novelist should create contingent characters who reflect the real impenetrable human person. She uses myth in Bruno's Dream to symbolize a transcendent reality, unattainable but worthy of attention. Her concept of myth derives from early critics of modernism, particularly that of the essential hero whose monomaniacal preoccupation with his own subjective experience leads him to appropriate others as a part of his ongoing delusion. Richard Wasson describes this type:

“To this man the only thing that a matter is his own consciousness; the world, its objects and people have no
reality as separate, contingent beings, but exist only as symbols in his internal drama” (“Notes on a New Sensibility” 463).

This type of characters frequently appears in Murdocian fiction as a selfish power-monger whose personal drama inevitably brings harm to others. Her characters appropriate the otherness of the world and the mythical framework of her novel recapitulates this appropriation, emphasizing the self-centred subjectivity, which denies the reality of anything other than the self. In Bruno's Dream the characters, like other Murdocian characters, attempt to define, control or unify their worlds, fending off the contingent possibilities that could potentially disturb their ordered existence.

Murdoch’s effort through her novels has been remained to depict the real process of freedom, which emphasizes on knowing and understanding others. In Bruno's Dream, she uses death as a tool, as earlier noted, to break the false images and misconceptions of human beings. Myth provides the basic scaffolding in the novel. Edgar Wind thinks the Platonic theory of love as the key to the philosophy of dying. Dying to imperfect desires leads to the perfection of love. Murdoch deals the subject of death and its relationship with love in this novel where love and death are forces of equal strength. They are ‘embracing, enlacing, tumbling through circular space, both oned and oneing in magnetic joy...pursuing and pursued” (Murdoch, Bruno’s Dream 28). Here, death is presented as an extinction of ownership and self and a loss is rarely accepted. If death is genuinely accepted, it can transform the human being. The idea of death creates awareness in the human being that love is the permanent thing in this world with which we can win the world. In
this universe, real love needs self-extinction like the idea of death. Iris Murdoch doesn’t seem death as ‘terribly special’. She seems it as a tool for a disciplined process of unselfing. Diana’s act of rotating the cup against the direction of the spider is symbolic, at the end of the novel, is symbolic of what Schopenhauer would describe as the turning of the will. This is the true sense in which love is death. Love requires selflessness, compassion, sacrifice for others and no place for egoism. In Bruno’s Dream, love is based on personal gratification for those like Will, Adelaide and Danby. For others like Nigel, Bruno, Diana and Lisa, love can become reconciliation. They possess a higher spiritual strength and discipline.

In Bruno’s Dream Murdoch has emphasized on self-extinction. She considers it as a tool for freedom. To support her say, she strongly uses Indian religious philosophies from Buddhism, Vedas and Upanishads through mythic structure. The contrast between the Eastern and Western consciousness is revealed in the novel. Nigel, Bruno’s male nurse is the practitioner of Indian mysticism. He represents the self-denying, resigned and spiritualistic Eastern consciousness. He uses the Vedantic words ‘Om’. ‘Om’ has symbolically importance in Hindu philosophy. Nigel is also a kind of ‘Bodhisattva’ who strives for egolessness and works for love and compassion. (Bodhisattva is one whose essence is bodhi, i.e. enlightenment or wisdom.) He makes progress from the knowledge of evil to the understanding of the meaning of death. He comes out of the trance with ‘the tender, forgiving, infinitely sad smile’ (79). He uses his wisdom for welfare of others. Bruno is afraid of death to whom he tells that it is something beautiful, ‘something one could be in love with’ (90). He advises an attitude of forgiveness to Diana:
'Let them (those who had wronged her) trample over you...see and pardon’” (208).

In Bruno's Dream Bruno represents the western materialistic ego-consciousness. His scientific interest in spiders, his passion for material possessions and his racial prejudice against Indians reveals his western materialistic ego-consciousness. The novel reveals the continuing Murdochian theme ‘The Fantasy of Freedom’ through its characters, as they remain busy in devising dreams and imposing forms and patterns on reality. Nirmal Datta writes about the same:

“Bruno’s ‘dream’ is descriptive of the ordinary illusion-ridden and hazy state of mind of most people. They are busy devising dreams and foisting patterns on the reality to which they pay scant attention. .... Various characters in this novel can be seen living among the phantasms of their own creation. ... The evolution of the novel is concerned with the liberation of Bruno, Miles and Danby from these obsessions, which are but forms or patterns imposed on reality. They come to terms with reality by facing the contingency of death and by transcending the selfish concerns of their egos” (Datta 137-8).

Bruno Greensleave is the central figure of the novel. The story of the novel is a pleasingly fantastic affair. Bruno is old, sick with an illness that makes him resemble one of the spiders he loves to study and feels a persistent feeble urge to put things right before his rapidly approaching death. He wishes to be reconciled to his estranged son Miles, whom he hurt and alienated on the occasion of Miles’ marriage to an Indian girl Parvati, by one rash remark. Parvati was soon after killed in an air crash. He also obscurely wishes to be
reconciled to his long-dead wife Janie. His wife sickened and died soon after discovering that he had a mistress and, fearing her dying curse, he abandoned her at the moment of her death, despite her cries and entreaties. Miles and Bruno’s attempted reconciliation fails disastrously and upsets them both, and Miles’ second wife Diana, who married him out of a need to minister to a sad man, and her austere sister Lisa, patch things up. Bruno’s consciousness is dominated by an obsessive guilt and remorse over these past incidents. He meditates on some sort of redemption of the past.

“If only he could believe in death-bed repentance and instant salvation. Even the idea of purgatory was infinitely consoling: to survive and suffer in the eternal embrace of a totally just love. Even the idea of a judgement, a judgement on his cruelty to his wife, his cruelty to his son. Even if Janie’s dying curses were to drag him to hell” (Murdoch, Bruno’s Dream 13).

After forty years of Janie’s death, the thought of Bruno’s bad behaviour towards her and the unknowability of her last feelings still nag him. The inability to accept the terrible contingency of what happened recalls Mary Clothier’s guilt over the accidental death of her husband in the novel The Nice and the Good or Montague Small’s obsession with his wife Sophie’s death in The Sacred and Profane Love Machine.

Bruno’s desire for a reconciliation turns into a consolatory fantasy. Danby is Bruno’s complaisant son-in-law who arranges a meeting between Bruno and his son Miles. But he fears about the result of it due to Mile’s inconsiderate nature. According to the assumption of Danby Miles does not allow his father to reveal
himself. This behaviour of Danby creates painful situation for Bruno. Murdoch thinks this as a positive signal to destroy fantastic views to acquire freedom. Bruno’s desire for reconciliation is compensated by the visits of Lisa and Diana. Danby flirts with Diana and then falls violently in love with Lisa; who reminds him of his morally intense and good first wife, Gwen. Witnessing this love, Miles falls for Lisa himself and finds that she has loved him since his marriage to Diana but has crucified this love. She encourages him to do the same. Lisa works as a soothing agent for Bruno who presents a new definition about the past. She presents human life as a dream. She impels Bruno to give importance to present and not to past. She watched her father’s death through which she learnt something about the meaning of life, about to come out of one’s self. She tells Bruno to be away from guilty self as she considers it as a futile thing.

“In the world things happen as they do happen. Think how much of it was accidental...There were the things that happened. But thinking about wickedness usually just comforts...Human beings are not demons. They are much too muddy. There are things one can do nothing with. Try to draw a sort of quiet line round it” (154).

Here, Lisa’s role is important as she delivers the necessary things to Bruno to end his obsessive feelings and to come out of his egocentric fantasy. Lisa’s words become important as they represent Murdochian words. Murdoch appeals through her writing to humanity to come out of their self-centredness and see the real existence. Here Lisa is used to deliver the message. Lisa tells Bruno:

“You live too much in yourself. Leave yourself. It is just an agitating puppet. Think about other things, think
about anything that’s good...Brooding about the past is so often fantasy of how one might have won and resentment that one didn’t. It is that resentment which one so often mistakes for repentance” (155).

With such type of warnings, Bruno starts a process to look outside of his own self. He was buried in obsessions, egocentricity that became an obstacle in his process of freedom. He lived in the fantasy of freedom. But progressively he learns to accept the contingent muddy present. The loss of his stamp collection in the rising waters of the Thames functions as a symbolic baptism. He goes away from his past.

“It was as if the flooding Thames which inundated Bruno’s house had left behind a world as different as that left after the Biblical food of forty days and forty nights” (Gerstenberger 49).

As Murdoch deals the subject of death and its relationship with love in this novel, Bruno and Diana in the last pages of novel starts to know about the meaning and relationship of love and death. Diana transfers herself spiritually and remains attached with Bruno till his death. This love of Diana creates a process of realization in the mind of Bruno. Through this love of Diana Bruno realizes his selfishness in love in that he had loved only a few people and loved them so badly, so selfishly. He realizes the power of love which transfers the life of human being. His pre-conception of love was selfish and given importance for own self. There was not any place to know really others which is the true concept of love. Here, Murdoch uses love as a powerful force of freedom. She believes in that love has such a power which awakes human being of true freedom. Kant’s concept of
freedom is not the tragic freedom, upheld by Murdoch. The tragic quality of Murdochian freedom is linked with love. She writes:

“The tragic freedom implied by love is this: that we all have an indefinitely extended capacity to imagine the being of others. Tragic, because there is no prefabricated harmony, and others are, to an extent we never cease discovering, different from ourselves. Nor is there any social totality within which we can come to comprehend differences as placed and reconciled. We have only a segment of the circle. Freedom is exercised in the confrontation by each other” (Murdoch, The Sublime and the Good 52).

Bruno then recognizes about the essence of love that it includes forgiveness of those who may have wronged with him. He clarifies his vision through which he realizes that Janie must have arrived at the same intuition on her deathbed and had wanted to forgive than curse him. His attempts at self-justification had earlier obscured the true realization of his wife’s feelings. He suffers and this suffering makes him realize that the imposed forms and patterns through which he tries to unself and suppress the egocentric fantasy to achieve freedom. Through this progression whatever he achieves, he learns to love Janie and recognize the contingency of her death.

Bruno’s son Miles Greensleave, who years before upset Bruno by marrying an Indian girl called Parvati. Miles is a poet, happily married to a second, more contingent wife. He is obsessed by the death of his wife, Parvati. This results into his inattentive behaviour with others. His obsession creates the false images of the world for him. He lives in fantasy and thinks wrongly about freedom. Miles
loses but comes to terms with the death of Parvati and so can write
good poems. He suffers like Bruno. This suffering forces him to face
the past. In the rediscovery of death, he finds love as well as the
inspiration to be a poet. Soon after their marriage Miles had lost his
wife and unborn child in an air-crash. The death of wife becomes
unbearable for Miles. To escape from the situation, he sought escape
in poetry. He wasn’t able to face the reality. He composed a long
poem named “Parvati and Siva”, in which he revealed his feelings.
The unbearable situation of wife’s death, he changes into an art
object, a ‘survival poem’. He composed this poem to survive in a
better way.

“He transformed the plane crash into a dazzling tornado
of erotic imagery. But the poem was a ‘libestod’ and
although art cannot but console for what it weeps over,
the completion of the poem left him sour and sick and
utterly convinced of the hence forward impossibility of
love” (Murdoch, Bruno’s Dream 54).

The death of wife affects Miles. Then he avoids people. His
marriage with Diana did little to improve his solitary egoism. Diana
tried to preserve Miles memory of the past. She pampered him with
her loving care, using all the ‘whole huge force of her woman’s
nature to comfort him to lure him out of the dark box in which he had
been living” (59). She fantasized Parvati as a ‘damsel heroine in the
castle’. Diana honestly accepted before Miles that she cannot take
place of Parvati in his heart. Diana’s such handling of the situation
helps Miles to recover from the situation. Miles as a poet tries to see
the particularity of reality and added regularly new items to his
‘notebook of particulars’. He concentrates more on the sheer
purification of his art but forgets to relate it with the real experience of life. He cannot see other people as separate identity because he lives in fantasy and remains away from freedom, like other Murdochian fantastic characters. This leads to the fantasy of freedom.

Nigel comments:

“*Human being hardly ever thinks about other people. He contemplates fantasists which resemble them and which he has decked out for his own purposes*” (208).

Miles creates an unreal image of his father’s emotional nature. He doesn’t show his concern for his old, dying father. His father Bruno tries to show his feelings of confession and reconciliation but Miles refuses to listen it. This behaviour of Miles shows his moral blindness and selfishness which doesn’t permit him to participate in the sufferings of other people.

Miles not only neglects his father but also avoids paying attention to the suffering of his wife, Diana. He cannot look out of his self. Iris Murdoch recommends the process of unselfing for such characters. Miles even does not try to understand Lisa, Diana’s ailing sister, as a separate identity. He looks towards her through pity as a bird with a broken wing. Without knowing any knowledge of her past life, he defines her through his narrow and egocentric mind.

Danby’s hopeless infatuation for her comes to Miles as a shock that he himself had a destructive passion for her. He discovers that Lisa had for long nursed a hopeless obsession for him. This discovery creates some realization in the heart of Miles through which he experiences the destruction of his second marriage and the revival of the first. He realizes that he had made the wrong criteria of his life by

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not facing the death of Parvati. He couldn’t bear the death of Parvati and always avoided it on the basis of reality. He tells Lisa:

“I sometimes feel, Lisa, as if I never really experienced her death at all. I poetised it; I made it into something unreal, something beautiful. I had to ... But it remains like a kind of barrier, falseness. I think it prevents me from writing. It’s like a curse” (152).

Later Lisa rejects her brother-in-law’s suit and agrees to marry Danby to experience the pleasures of the world. The mental shock felt by Miles after this incident makes him fully conscious of the real face of Parvati’s death. Through this, he understands the essence of love that it is so powerful and it is a support for human life. After coma period, he starts to remember the past.

“And now she was dead, broken and scattered upon a mountain-side, utterly gone out of the world, existing no more anywhere, Parvati and his child...She was utterly gone out of the world forever. She did not exist anymore at all” (234).

Now Miles learns to live free of obsession. This approach of Miles renews his creativity as a poet. His failure in life was related with his failure as a poet. Because a person who can’t live a creative life, how can he create a art? He starts a process to come out of his self and to proceed towards the real freedom. By liberating himself from the past happenings, he learns to accept the contingency of reality. But this cannot, yet, fulfil the Murdochian criteria of freedom. In the last chapter of the novel, he is seen insulted in his summer house, wearing a strange angelic smile and oblivious of his suffering wife and father. Murdoch believes that a person involved in image
making and egotism, cannot experience the real freedom. Because to experience the real freedom, one requires seeing the outside world as real without any prejudices. A man living a fulfilled life as well as a creative artist both requires seeing the reality of existence. By avoiding the realities of existence, no one can go towards freedom, according to Murdoch.

In Bruno’s Dream as we have seen, Bruno as well as his son Miles are obsessed by the memories of past. This obsession hinders them to realize the real freedom. Murdoch has skilfully used these characters to present her subject that human beings are trapped by so many illusions, fantasies and due to that they can’t see the other people properly. Here, Murdoch points out the fantasy of freedom of the characters. The same concern of fantasy of freedom leads the character of the novel, Danby Odell. Danby is another lost widower whose life centres upon a fatal mistake, committed long ago by his wife. His wife Gwen faced death due to her futile effort to save a child from drowning in the Thames. The situation becomes critical for Danby because of death of his wife. The irony of the situation is this that the child swam safely to the shore while Gwen drowned. The loss of wife affects the life of Danby through which he makes his casual love affairs with the two maid-servants, Linda and Adelaide. His character is narrated:

“Although he (Danby) never recovered from Gwen’s death yet being an amiable and modest person, whose ‘life energy was cheerful stuff’, he does not entirely retreat into a self-protective egoistic armour. He is morally more realistic and mature than the arrogant and self-centered Miles. His limited but genuine goodness is
far superior in moral value to the pretentious seriousness of his brother-in-law. His humanity and lack of an exaggerated self-image is a sign of a person possessing sufficient moral freedom to enable him to act well towards others” (Datta 145).

Danby has ability, to some extent, to know others as well as himself. He is a businessman and successfully handles his printing press. Danby was fully known that his wife Gwen was unlike him. So, he himself had been amazed by their marriage. She had a kind of authority over him. He suffered from the terrifying degree of love of his wife. He felt guilty that he loved Gwen but too ordinary. Later Lisa enters in his life. Her resemblance with Gwen takes him out of his emotional disturbance. Knowing himself he admits that he was an ‘older, fatter, more drunken man than the one whom Gwen had so unaccountably loved’ (Murdoch, Bruno’s Dream 213). Danby then faces the reality of Gwen’s death and rediscovers her in Lisa. Danby imagines himself lying dead on the bank of Thames during his duel with Will Boase (rival for Adelaide’s). The place of his imagined lying is below the same bridge from where Gwen had leapt to her futile death. The same situation is presented as:

“He thought, I am dying for a girl I didn’t love, I am dying because I failed to love, I am dying just upon the brink of love” (219).

Danby’s jumping into the river symbolically presents a kind of baptism for him. He felt himself liberated and a ‘strange beatific lightness as if all his sins, including the ones which he had long ago forgotten had been suddenly forgiven’ (221). Danby suffers for Lisa. Through the situation and suffering he rediscovers death and love. He
feels for Lisa the renewed power of love. He later shakes the dead hand of Gwen and re-enters the real world of the present. He gets Lisa as a reward for his moral progress.

The Murdochian characters in *Bruno’s Dream* impose various forms and patterns on reality. In the early sections of the book Diana presents such theme, if we take her example. She is the beautiful, attractive wife of Miles. She was involved in her emotional greed. She had created a dream picture of herself and her love for Miles. She lived in the role of a ‘mysterious lady of the fountain who heals the wound of the wandering knight, the wound which had defied all other touches’ (82). She thought about herself that she is the healer and she can recover the life of Miles. She constructs the patterns for herself and for Miles and forgets to unself Miles. She creates formalities for their life. She evaluates her sister Lisa in such a way that shows her egocentric fantasy. She seems her sister as a ‘doomed girl’ or a ‘bird with a broken wing’. And she feels that her sister needs to be protected. Her concern with reality is presented as:

“Her (Diana’s) assessment of her sister Lisa is also shaped to suit her ego-gratifying fantasy. She insists on placing her as a ‘doomed girl’ or a ‘bird with a broken wing’ who has to be comforted. Little does she realize that Lisa possessed a tougher moral fibre than she could imagine. Her greater contact with reality is evident in the position she held in a school, one visit to which had made Diana sick. Another apparent instance of how fantasy runs at odds with reality in Diana’s character is the shock she experiences when she sees Bruno for the first time” (Datta 147).
Diana has created structured world, world of forms and patterns which hinders her to see other people separately. But later she loses her husband and then her lover, Danby to Lisa. This incident shocks her created patterns and fantasies. Through this, she starts a process to know about the reality. She realizes the importance of selfless love and freedom through her knowledge of the emptiness of her marriage and through the laborious process of watching Bruno’s death. She sees the role of the false images and forms constructed by her egoistic fantasy. This was not her real experience of freedom but through various imposed forms, she goes to achieve the fantasy of freedom. She makes journey, like other Murdochian characters, from self-centred fantasy to other-centred reality. Slowly, she witnesses the paradoxical similarity of love and death. She understands that love entails, like death, a renunciation of personal interests and advantages. This helps him to overcome the obsessions of the past and to lead towards the bright light of future. Nigel advises Diana to preserve forgiveness and apply it for Miles and Lisa:

‘Let them trample over you in their own way...Let them walk on you. Send anger and hate away. Love them and let them walk on you’” (Murdoch, Bruno’s Dream 208).

Murdochian effort has been to present a man trapped by various forms and patterns. She even thought about the artist that he also creates his literature through imposed forms. From her earlier novels to the latest novels, a reader witnesses her continuing touch to present her concept of freedom. The present novel Bruno's Dream tries to depict this successfully. Diana later realizes the space of meaning of reality and the place of ego. At last, she becomes free. She stands where her sister Lisa had stood in the beginning. Lisa
chooses happiness to self-abnegation; Diana takes on herself the rigours of self-discipline.

Lisa, is such a creation of Murdoch which seems like saint-like figure but she cannot, yet, live away from the process of re-education. She goes near to Murdochian concept of freedom as she lives her life for knowing and understanding others. She sees outside of her self respecting the individuality of other people. She completed her role as a nun, a school teacher and as a worker with Indian children. She plays an important role to recover Bruno from his past obsessions. She handles him gently and helps him to reunite with past and live happily in present. Miles and Diana unfold her character:

“Lisa wants death... she certainly wants to suffer... she’s a mystic... she wants to be nothinged” (83).

She plays her role successfully to reveal the place of structured forms and images. At the end of Bruno’s Dream Lisa gives up Miles and decides to marry Danby. The change takes place in her life. A critic comments this change as follows:

“She (Lisa) is transformed by the subsequent happiness, looks years younger and reinvigorated whilst her elder sister moves in the opposite direction. The hard, self-abnegating lines on her harrowed nun-like face are transferred to Diana’s face. The change in Lisa who has advanced from self-suppression to self-love, which in the Murdochian moral scheme would appear to be deplorable but is not looked down upon here” (Datta 149).

According to Murdoch the false images and fantasies hinders human being to see reality. Without facing reality, one cannot run away from it for long time. Because reality is the base of the life of
moral person. Reality symbolizes naturalness. False images symbolizes artificial pattern of life. A person cannot gain the naturalness of life by living in artificial networks. A fulfilled life always requires reality based work. Murdoch’s purpose by depicting such characters with same subject shows her attachment to create reality-based work. Murdoch seems self-centred life as valueless. She seems life involved in patterns and forms as dark and painful. She believes that such life cannot give you touch of love, mercy, pity and peace. It seems that she delivers the same through her character Lisa. Lisa tells Danby:

“I’ve been living in a dark cage. Now I’m out of it. It has been painful, this coming out, and it will go on being painful for sometime, but that’s a simple clean pain such as one might live with... I have never been more sane, coldly sane, self-interestedly sane. I am a woman. I want warmth and love, affection, laughter, happiness, all the things I’d done without. I don’t want to live upon the rack” (Murdoch, Bruno’s Dream 257).

Thus, the characters of novel live in various forms and patterns and through that they try to seek freedom. But in reality they go to achieve the fantasy of freedom. By facing death, they recognise the value of love. This love and the realization of death help them later to know themselves and others. It seems in the novel that Murdoch expresses herself through characters. A human being never thinks seriously about himself and about others. The love of being awakes when he faces the situation of death. This seems strange that at the point of death is the point of love. This love supports human being to realize the reality.
In Bruno's Dream Bruno and Miles are both at different moments revealed feeling of an excited, proud, touched sense of ownership at the complexity of their emotions. There is a delightful and playful peepshow into the future of Adelaide and twins. There are several descriptions of rain, of Bruno’s room. It is not easy to portray death, real death, and not fake prettified death. Even Tolstoi did not really manage it in Ivan Ilyich, which is recalled in Bruno's Dream in Nigel, who, like Ilyich’s groom, can soothe Bruno’s suffering. The great deaths of literature are few, but they show us with an exemplary clarity the way in which art invigorates us by juxtaposition, almost an identification of pointlessness and value.

Like other Murdochian novels, Bruno's Dream has a mythological core. It is presented by the Eros theme and the allusions to the Indian philosophical, religious and legendary myths. Murdoch’s characters often define their reality through the repetition of myths inherent in the mechanics of language. Her novels describe human thought and behaviour as mechanical while language entraps her characters, compelling them to repeat patterns of behaviour, which are harmful to themselves as well as others. The pattern might be the construction of an ill-conceived fantasy, which the character uses for his egoistic purposes, or he may simply be reciting and living the culturally given language of morality and myth. In any case, his actions arise from language's inerrability: the machine fosters a variety of behavioural codes, traps which keep the character unaware to reality. Murdoch’s notion of reality centers on her concept of love as it is seen in Bruno's Dream.

When the fantasist in Murdoch’s novels tries to establish and perpetuate a false image of the loved one or to control another, he
fails to recognise the otherness of that person or her reality. In 
“Against Dryness” Murdoch proposes that characters should be real, 
claiming that “real people are destructive of myth, contingency is 
destructive of fantasy and opens the way for imagination” (20). 
Murdoch’s notion of what constitutes real people depends on giving 
characters a certain death. Her novels suggest that the human 
personality is subject to certain contingencies which complicate our 
efforts to give meaning to human behaviour and events. These 
contingencies vary in nature, but have in common the unknowable, 
unpredictable quality of human consciousness.

“Murdoch’s novels depict character’s who are deluded by the myth of the other. Further, her plots unravel these myths as characters show themselves to be less predictable than the fantasist would imagine. This unpredictability constitutes a hidden contingency, which the fantasist ignores in the fabrication of his fictional other. ... Murdoch suggests that since language is the creation of human beings, it comprises not only their myths but their contingent nature as well” (Faulks 12).

Murdoch’s Bruno's Dream uses the naturally projected symbols like the stamps, spiders and the dressing gown. Of the three, the dressing gown is the most complex. Bruno’s dying consciousness looks upon it as a symbol of death. The Power Station and the Brompton cemetery representing life and death are other symbols. The use of myth in the novel is subordinated to her major concern with characterization. The characters, though encircled by myths and ideas, have not petrified into mere formulae, acting puppet-like at the behest of their creator. Bruno, Danby, Miles, Diana and Lisa are all

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loving creations, although they do not manage to acquire a full otherness, freedom. Acquiring the knowledge of others, respecting others is the real Murdochian concept of freedom. But the characters fail the same and goes to achieve the fantasy of freedom. Like the characters in *The Flight from the Enchanter*, and *The Sandcastle*, the characters from *Bruno's Dream* emphasize on the self-centred subjectivity, which denies them to see the reality of anything other than the self. The characters attempt to define, control or unify their worlds, fending off the contingent possibilities that could potentially disturb their ordered existence. The novel emphasizes on the need of unselfing and suppression of the egocentric fantasy to acquire Murdochian freedom.

Those who are familiar with the work of Murdoch quickly recognise her 1978 novel *The Sea, The Sea* as one of her so-called gothic works, similar in atmosphere and theme to *The Unicorn, The Flight from the Enchanter, The Time of the Angels, and Bruno's Dream*. Murdoch received Britain’s prestigious Booker Mc Connell prize for this novel in 1978. The maturity of the style first exhibited in *The Nice and the Good* in 1968 reached a culmination in this work. The novel contains certain characters and motifs we have come to expect: an isolated, rather sinister setting, an enchanter figure, a figure or figures under his/her spell, and a plot comprising elements of the bizarre, the grotesque, the mysterious, and the demonic. Specially, we find Charles Arrowby, the protagonist of *The Sea, The Sea*, represented in other works by such figures as Effingham Cooper in *The Unicorn*, Martin Lynch-Gibbon in *A Severed Head*, John Rainborough in *The Flight from the Enchanter*, and Bradley Pearson in *The Black Prince* - male figures who follow a pattern as moving
from a world of form, pattern, and convention into one of contingency. There is also another familiar and important Murdoch figure in this work, namely, the saint. This character normally resides in the background, which is wise and selfless, remains for the most part uninvolved. An abundance of Shakespearean allusion is another feature of Murdoch’s works. This feature can be seen in The Sea, The Sea, in which The Tempest is used in a number of ways, some less obvious than others to reinforce meaning and structure.

*The Sea, The Sea* is a long novel full of ruminative details, allusions and undertones of hidden meaning displays a confident and relaxed style. In reply to Jack I. Biles’ query as to why her earlier novels are shorter; she associates this tendency with her increasing self-assurance:

“I have become more relaxed and, in a sense, more confident. There is more reflection in the later novels than in the early ones... The young person is anxious and afraid to ramble round. Then, later on, you don’t care if you ramble round. You know what you can do and what you can’t do, and you’re not frightened of destroying your form by blurring it” (122).

The novel *The Sea, The Sea* followed by *Nuns and Soldiers, The Philosophers Pupil, The Good Apprentice, The Book and the Brotherhood, and Message to the Planet* marks a fresh turning in Murdoch’s career with the emergence of a partially new mode that concentrates on slowing down and ‘rambling round’. An important feature of Murdochian novel was the hurricane speed in which actions took place. It is now slackened to accommodate a protracted and almost animistic brooding over the natural world. Extensive
elegant descriptions of the sea and landscape, reminiscent of the early nineteenth century novels, enrich the book.

Beside, other features of the novel, *The Sea, The Sea*, also represents something of a departure for Murdoch because it manifests a more complex and focussed treatment of two of Murdoch’s more compelling concerns. The first of these involves the usually neutral saintly figure. This figure in this work is elevated to a role of more importance. This figure, Charles’s Cousin James, is involved in the action, not for reasons of ego but because of his need to act in accordance with the teachings of his adopted religion, Buddhism. This religious element is of paramount importance to the novel. It brings us to the second of Murdoch’s concerns, namely, an increased emphasis on Buddhism as a source of behavioural attitudes, spiritual enlightenment, and ultimate liberation in a world that has lost its religious consciousness. Murdoch has integrated Buddhist philosophy into previous works, especially *The Nice and the Good, An Accidental Man, and Bruno's Dream*. But in this novel the ultimate meaning seems to rely heavily on our understanding of Buddhism.

The use of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and the religious element both works mutually as a supportive to the novel.

“*The Tempest*’ is about the nature of dreams and reality, but it is also about the surrendering of magic. Buddhism likewise concerns itself with the nature of dreams and reality, but it deals extensively with the surrender of magic and with preparation for death. ... What Murdoch gives us then in ‘The Sea, The Sea’ is no simple reworking of ‘The Tempest’, but, through the prism of Buddhist teachings and Shakespeare’s perhaps wisest play, a powerful statement about the surrender of magic, the practice of dying, and the making of art” (Tucker 162).
Charles Arrowby, the central figure and narrator of *The Sea*, *The Sea*, recounts his story in the form of a journal. His memoirs relate the incidents which occur after his retirement to Shruff End, a fin-de-siecle home on the seaside. He is born in Stratford-On-Avon and devoted his life to Shakespeare. Unlike Shakespeare, however, he is not truly creative. As a playwright he is mediocre, his plays nothing more than magical delusions, fireworks. A former theatre director, Charles has given up the life of the stage to seek a calm, tranquil existence bereft of vanity. Charles resembles other Murdochian solipsists who perceive themselves in a better light than they appear. In this novel, Murdoch examines the seductive power of the past, which compels people to want to repeat it. Memory, an act of replication, reinterprets events for the consoling benefit of the one who harbours regrets and wishes to return to the past or to relive it. Over the age of sixty, Charles never recovered from the loss of his first love, Mary Hartley, who ended the relationship without explanations. Through the years, he has idealised her, remaining unmarried because of this unexercised ghost from the past. He has continued to hope that he would find her again and so he has waited, deferring other romantic involvements for this elusive one.

The surface story of the novel concentrates on Charles Arrowby’s life and his obsession. His narrow structured way of looking at the world and people around him reveals his colossal egotism, lack of moral discipline and a false sense of freedom. In common with *Under the Net*, *A Severed Head*, *The Black Prince* and *A Word Child*, the author has used the first-person male narrator as a device for presenting his distorted vision. This narrative method has been used whenever she deals with self-deception, illusion and partial
understanding. As his initial faulty and patterned vision of reality is gradually eroded by various contingent happenings, he learns how to see people instead of imposing his own forms on them. This leads to his moral evolution and freedom. The entire story filters through his changing consciousness, forcing the reader constantly to distinguish between the falsity and truth of his impressions.

Charles is also unsuccessful as an actor, the role of Prospero being (The Tempest), and the only substantial one he has ever played. What he is successful at is directing.

“\textit{I always took ... an almost childish, almost excessive delight in the technical trickery of the theatre}”
(Murdoch, \textit{The Sea, The Sea} 32).

But we discover also that his abilities lie in one particular type of directing. For example, he says that for him the theatre is \textit{“an attack on mankind carried on by magic: to victimize an audience every night”} (36). It seems a strange attitude, but it soon becomes clear to us that Charles loves directing because he loves power. He goes on to say that theater is a place of obsession. He prides himself on his ability to manipulate his actors, whom he works like demons and thinks that he fostered his reputation for ruthlessness which was extremely useful. As the actual novel begins, this tyrannical director has retired to a seaside house and is resolved upon learning to be good. Here he begins a diary to recount his days. His jottings are a rather tedious outlining of his favourite meals, his swimming activities, and his house improvements. As usual we have the ‘form’ or ‘myth’ maker at the ostensible centre of the book. It is Charles’s myth about reality that is being explored. He is the first artist figure, a
specialist in forming and expressing. His introduction of himself speaks volumes for his arrogance and self-centredness.

“How long does mortal fame endure? My kind of fame, not very long enough. Yes, yes, I am Charles Arrowby and as I write this I am, shall we say, over sixty years of age. I am wifless, childless, brotherless, sisterless, I am my well-known self, mode glittering and brittle of fame” (3-4).

Charles views the world and people with whom he comes in contact according to his subjective and limited vision, freely imposing a self-designed form on his relationships with them. He is morally incapable of seeing the separate individuality of other people. As a successful theatrical producer and director, controlling others has become a matter of habit with him. He enjoyed being called a ‘tartar’, ‘tyrant’ or even a ‘power-crazed monster’.

“If absolute power corrupts absolutely then I must be the most corrupt of men. A theatre director is a director. (If he is not, he is not doing his job.) I fostered my reputation for ruthlessness, it was extremely useful. Actors expected tears and nervous prostration when I was around” (40).

As a power figure, Charles is comparable with Prospero in The Tempest, and extends his tyranny and power from actors on the stage to their personal lives as well. Without ceding any real interiority or freedom to others and with sheer indifference to their feelings, he believes he can revolutionaryize the lives and destinies of others. His attitude to others is a ruthless exercise of power. One after the other, he had chosen the heroines of his plays to be his lovers. Rosina,
Lizzie, Jeannie and Doris are some of the names of those whom he exploited. In his love affairs, he used the same pattern of exploitation. His relationship with Clement Makin and Hartley was, to some extent, sincere. With the rest of them, he tried to use his power to break up their marriages and relationships with others.

Besides obvious Prospero figure, a number of Charles’s colleagues and friends, Lizzie, Gilbert, Rosina, and Perry, have affinities with the characters of The Tempest. Lizzie, for example, is an Ariel figure, and is described as a ‘waspish enchanting rather infantile sprite’. Charles not only takes credit for having made her but has also played Prospero to her Ariel, and has a strong proprietary sense about her. Since their love affair has ended with pain for her, Lizzie, like Ariel, is under a kind of bondage to Charles. Charles loves her because he has created her and because, unlike other women, Lizzie has imposed no moral bonds on him and she flatters his ego. However, by toying with Lizzie again, Charles demolishes her living situation with Gilbert Opian, sending both out to his seacoast retreat, Lizzie into more bondage and Gilbert into servitude as Charles’s ‘house-serf’. Gilbert cleans and cooks for Charles, joys in cutting and carrying wood. Gilbert has some idea about the nature of bondage to people.

“Being in love, that’s another slavery...you make another person into God. That can’t be right” (245).

The different kind of relationship exists between Charles and another actress and former lover of Charles- Rosina. She resembles the witchlike Sycorax, Caliban’s mother. Rosinas’s marriage has been destroyed by Charles. Charles seems compelled to break up marriages but has never married any of the wives. Rosina functions
as a witch/demon figure during Charles’s retirement, having also come to understand a good deal about the sources of Charles’s power as a director. She tells him.

“You have been a sourcerer. Women loved you for your power, your magic” (108).

Rosina recognises his sourcery as ‘facile’. Her bondage to Charles depends not on love but on hate, which has its own magic.

In this novel, Murdoch uses The Tempest to explore states of enchantment. She takes the more unusual tack of creating a character who is both the enchanter and the enchanted. The reason for this dual role becomes clearer when we ponder the phenomenon of Charles’s sea serpent. This serpent marks not only the beginning of his enchantment, but also the true beginning of the novel. Despite Prospero’s so-called powers, the characters themselves are responsible for their own fantasies, and their distractions have their origins in the consciousness of the characters and represent individual projections and wish-fulfilments. The character Charles does not respect other people. This behaviour of Charles reveals the Murdochian conception of freedom, which depends upon knowing and understanding others. Charles is ever eager to exercise power and to break bonds. Lizzie Scherer, the credible, lovable and engaging woman in the story who really loved Charles and continues doing so even after being abandoned. In an effort to face her loss of him and to live an innocent life, she had set up a menage with a homosexual, Gilbert Opian. But Charles using his power succeeds in separating the two by making elusive promises to the gullible Lizzie. Lizzie points at his selfishness:
“...you don’t want to stay with anyone; in the end you drop everyone. You once said, getting married was like buying a doll, which shows what you think of marriage...you made me act, you made everyone act, and you’re like a very good dancer. To make other people dance but it’s got to be with you. You don’t respect people as people, you don’t see them, you’re not really a teacher, you’re a sort of rapacious magician” (48).

Charles is also a victim of his own mind’s creations. The mind is the central place of order, which compels human being to behave according to him, is proved in concern with Charles. In his old London world of form, where everything was under his control, ego consciousness dominated, all went well for him. But when, early in his retirement, he undergoes his strange vision of the serpent rising from the sea, he is given a signal that the unconscious is emergent. Because of Charles’s egocentricity and his arrogant assumptions about himself and the world he thinks he controls, we do not pay particular attention to James. James Arrowby, Charles’ cousin, the superior of the two in intelligence and moral strength, points at the wrongness of his action. He tries to open his eyes to fictionalise the entire case:

“You’ve made it into a story, and stories are false...you are assuming on as far as I can see very insubstantial evidence, your memory of some idyllic times at school and so on, that if you were to carry her off you would be able to love her and make her happy and she would be able to love you and make you happy. Such situations are, in fact, fairly rare and hard of achievement” (335).
A letter from James early in the story and a promise of a visit set Charles off to recount his relationship with James, a relationship that is most noteworthy for its lack of importance. “It is not that James has ever been much of an actor in my life,” says Charles, “nor do I anticipate that he will ever now become one” (61). Yet every reference to their childhood denies this assertion. James, the son of the more interesting parents, Abel and Estelle, was early marked as different, possessing. James has also shown extraordinary promise as a student of languages and philosophy. His Tibetan adventures through professional soldier and his conversion to Buddhism tend to mollify Charles’s ruthless ambition, an ambition Charles sees as a direct result of his fear of James.

James functions as a second Prospero figure and while it is clear that Charles is really the enchanted figure. James is an altogether different sort of magician. Like Prospero, he has devoted his life to “secret studies”. He has also experienced bad turns of fortune. He too has been exiled, has been forced to leave his beloved Tibet after its usurpation by the Chinese. And he has retired under a cloud of some sort, a bit of news that Charles takes delight in. James is always associated with the mysterious. His arrival affects the others in strange ways. He has a particularly calming effect on Ben, Hartley’s husband. Their attraction can be explained on the basis of similar military careers, but beyond that fact, James seems to have extensive knowledge of Ben’s past. He is also Lizzie’s comforter and confident.

Early in the novel, Charles tells us that he is not a churchgoer. Indeed, while not antagonistic to Christianity, he seems to regard it as an adolescent pursuit that people outgrow with the coming adulthood.
It is James’s Buddhism determines the means by which we are to interpret the action, and it is Buddhism that illuminates some of the mystery inherent in those actions. To return to Charles for a moment, while dispensing with conventional religious constraints, Charles does not free himself from the numinous energy expressed in a god figure. Instead, he thrusts that numinosity onto objects or people. For example, he speaks of Shakespeare as his god; he talks of his uncle Abel and his aunt Estelle as gods in his early life. More important is his apotheosis of Hartley, who becomes for him a religion. She is also compared in a number of places to an angel, a paradise. Hartley is of course, Charles’s ultimate concern. Unfortunately, Charles’s worship of Hartley is all projection, a worship based on his own enormous egotism, as the understanding and practice of Buddhist teachings soon make clear.

Jame’s Buddhism not only illuminates Charles’s problem, but also suggests ways out of it. All the characters are needed to learn these ways in order to win their respective freedom. Here’s the Prospero’s famous speech about the baseless fabric of the play, reveals the concern of the subject:

“The cloud-capped tow’rs, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And , like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep” (Frye 152-3).
The views expressed in the above passage are similar to the Buddhist belief about the nature of the phenomenal universe, the ‘sangsara’, in which individual consciousness exists in a state of ignorance about realities, where ‘Maya’ deludes the unenlightened. As the Buddha is supposed to have said that the phenomena of life may be likened unto a dream, a phantasm, a bubble, a shadow, the glistening dew, or lightening flash.

Murdoch’s attempt through her novels has been remained to reveal the role of dreams and fantasies in human life. She tries to present that fantasy hinders the freedom. In The Sea, The Sea everyone is trapped in a world of dreams. As the rapacious magician of the London stage, Charles had long confused illusion with reality. His so-called retirement has turned his fantasy-governed inner world outward, and Hartley, a figure of his dream world, becomes his reality. The illusion he once thought he controlled on stage now control him. All the characters are able to see the nature of Charles’s dream world. James has a lot to say on the subject of dreams. Attempting to get his cousin to use common he observes about Charles’s obsession over Hartley: “You’ve made it into a story, and stories are false.” And he explains:

“Let us call it a dream. Of course we live in dreams and by dreams, and even in a disciplined spiritual life, in some ways especially there, it is hard to distinguish dream from reality” (Murdoch, The Sea, The Sea 335).

Associated with dreams is the problem of magic, for tricks are the concern and accomplishment of both cousins, their magic is quite different. Charles loves the theater because of its trickery. James has an altogether different brand of tricks, but the difference is that he
understands their meaning and their consequences. There are a few instances when he discusses tricks in relation to his mysterious rescue of Charles. He says:

“All sorts of people can do them. They can be jolly tiring but you know they have nothing to do with— with— …nothing to do with anything important, like goodness” (446-7).

James reveals the fateful effect of such tricks as well as his own bondage to ‘samsara’. He has taken his beloved Sherpa friend over a frigid mountain pass, assuming that because of his own highly developed mental powers, his ability to concentrate heat and thereby raise body temperature, he will be able to sustain them both on their perilous journey.

Murdoch often primarily elaborates upon in all her fiction is the payments for faults. It is also addressed in major ways by the teaching of Buddhism, for the belief in ‘Karma’ (the consequences of actions incurred both in this life and in past lives) emphasizes the individual’s responsibility to be aware of his actions. Charles’ ignorance of his real connection to people binds him more closely to the wheel, to life wandering on the ‘sangsa’. Therefore, his ‘karma’ seems more problematical than Jame’s. Another belief of Buddhism concerns the existence of what are known as the six ‘lokas’ or poisons of the ‘sangsa’. These are pride, jealousy, sloth, anger, greed and lust, all of which Charles expresses or suffers from in one way or another. The most important way in which the novel The Sea, The Sea, relies on the teachings of Buddhism involves the problem of dying. Buddhist teaching says that man is born and born again into a world of wandering (sangsa) through successive existences, until he is enlightened enough to attain his liberation. But only the yogi (the
saint) is able to break free from the creations of the ‘Maya’- governed mind and see the light that characterizes the Supreme State of the Void or ‘Nirvana’, and unite with it. Here, Murdochian concept of freedom seems under the impact of Buddhist philosophy. In Buddhism a man requires his free mind without any burdens to see the light, reality. Murdochian concept of freedom also compels the character to free his mind from the preoccupations, various forms and fantasies to see the other people as they are. To see the reality of the existence, a human being is required to suppress the egocentric fantasy because it always hinders the freedom. Such type of suppression of the illusioned minds, of the egocentric fantasy is necessary for characters in *The Sea, The Sea*. Because such suppression creates the process of realization in the mind of character.

The Buddhist concept ‘bardo’ is used in the novel to structure Charles’s illumination:

“*Especially significant, then, given the Buddhist concept of life-after-death, is that after-death state known as ‘bardo’. ... ‘bardo’ is referred to in a number of places in *The Sea, The Sea* and Murdoch appears to be using the ‘bardo’ stages metaphorically to structure Charles’s new, but transitory, illumination following the illness he undergoes after Hartley has returned to Ben and James has returned to London. The use of such stages in this portion of the book helps to explain some of its more puzzling features*” (Tucker 168-9).

Both *The Tempest* and Buddhism deal largely with retirement and liberation. Retirement involves in Buddhist terms, the surrender
of attachments. For Murdoch, the kind of attachments that Charles has indulged in is obviously obsessive. But to surrender attachments is not appealing to Charles who in discussing the subject with James offers the usual western response to the nature of oriental withdrawal:

“All this giving up of attachments doesn’t sound to me like salvation and freedom, it sounds like death.”

But James counters his argument with the view of a Western philosopher: “Socrates said we must practise dying” (Murdoch, The Sea, The Sea 445).

Murdoch’s novel The Sea, The Sea discusses the illusion of the phenomenal world, the abjuration of magic, and the limits of personal power. It also takes the theme of the forgiveness of sin, the freedom from bondage to the world of illusion, and the problem of the creation of art. The character James desires to be loosed from bonds. Anguished by the loss of his Sherpa friend, he can help himself acquire good ‘karma’ by helping others. This has become his occupation as well as a necessary step in learning the art of dying. He has already freed himself from desire and from the kind of attachments by which Charles and his friends have been enslaved. But the surrender of attachments does not mean for James that he is aloof from others. Because he just conquered to some extent the three manifestations of samsaric existence-ignorance, desire and action.

Lizzie reunites with Gilbert. It is cognizant of some of James’s ideas about the nature of love. Her freedom from her obsession over Charles is evident in her urging Charles to give up desire and action. Reunited with Perry, Rosina tells Charles that she cannot imagine why she got so attached with him. She thinks that it was his own illusions of power that fascinated people. Perry, seeing Charles as an
‘exploded myth’ gets free. James urged Charles to end his life as a celibate uncle priest, an idea Charles derides, but one that nonetheless sticks in his mind. James occupation has been to free Charles from a literal as well as metaphorical experience of death. It is the turning point in the lives of both men. Nevertheless, the mysterious rescue has its tragic aftermath, illustrating again the pervasiveness of casualty. James undergoes an expenditure of energy that needs days of physical and mental replenishment. He becomes able to convince his cousin of the need to leave the sea behind and return to London. Then, having finished his work, James too returns to London to prepare for his journey.

As earlier pointed out that Murdochian writing is influenced by the philosophy of Buddhism, it reappears in The Sea, The Sea. Murdochian concept of freedom is based on reality; whereas, Buddhism’s main concern is to give value for reason and reality, clear light. Buddhist teaching explains that to experience the Clear Light of the Void, the ‘Yogi’ must be aware of the supreme moment of quitting the body. He must be conscious, able to recognize the light and thus to become one with it. At this moment, all samsaric bonds of fantasy and illusion can be broken. James says:

“At the moment of death you are given a total vision of all reality which comes to you in a flash...if you can comprehend and grasp it then you are free...out of the wheel” (385).

The above statement of James is so supportive to strengthen Murdochian theme of freedom based on reality. In earlier chapters of the same research work, it is studied that death is an important factor which destroys the illusions of human being. The vision of reality
makes man free. Murdoch through her novels tries to reveal the same fact. Many characters of her novels live in fantasy and because of the burden of fantasy; they can’t see the world as it is. They try to define it through their misconceptions and misunderstandings, which take them towards the fantasy of freedom.

A letter from the Indian doctor helps us to understand exactly what has transpired at Jame’s death. The doctor has described to Charles about the Jame’s death as he has discovered the body. The doctor writes:

“Mr. Arrowby died in happiness achieving all. I have written for cause of death on the certificate ‘heart failure’, but it was not so. There are some who can freely choose their moment of death and without violence to the body can by simple will power die. It was so with him. I looked upon him with reverence and bowed before him. He has gone quietly and by the force of his own thought was consciousness extinguished. Thus, it is good to go. Believe me, Sir, he was an enlightened one” (508).

Through the above mentioned letter we come to know that James finds release from bonds. But the question remains unanswered about Charles. After the departure of James, he suffers a rather severe illness that is like an experience of death. This experience seems to signal a new beginning for him because when he recovers from it, his view of life is altered. This alteration seems to follow the patterns of awakening described in The Tibetan Book of the Dead as the ‘bardo’ experience. Like the ‘bardo’ stages, Charles’s consciousness seems closest to genuine understanding immediately following his illness. At this time he begins to take some
responsibility for his actions toward other people. Especially 
remorseful over the death of Titus, he reflects, “Causality kills. The 
wheel is just” (486). This is his hardly characteristic way of speaking, 
much less thinking. In another unusual comment about Titus he says:

“I experienced his eternal absence as something almost 
impossible to comprehend. He had been with me such a 
short time; and he had come to me as to his death, as to 
his executioner. By what strange path of accidents, alive 
with so many other possibilities, had he made his way to 
the base of that sheer rock where he had tried again and 
again to pull himself out of the moving teasing killing 
sea? ... He died because he trusted me. My vanity 
destroyed him” (493-4).

Now Charles is also able to surrender his hold on Hartley. But 
his greatest discovery at this time concerns his own role as a drowned 
man, for he is finally able to confront his experience of descent into 
Minn’s cauldron, his thrashing about with the serpent. More 
important the deeper mysteries involved with the actions of James 
has scaled an impossibly high cliff, walked across the water to him, 
seized him under his arms, and deposited him on dry land. Pondering 
James’s strange power, he is suddenly filled with the most piercing 
pure and tender joy. Furthermore, he feels himself at the threshold of 
a new and better relationship with James. Yet while all of James’s 
knowledge and strange abilities come back to him, James’s power no 
longer threatens him. Charles is also able to glimpse at this moment 
the problematic nature of magic. Perhaps, he thinks, James has also 
recognised the tragic results of a less than perfect meddling in the 
spiritual world and has decided to abjure magic.
In his awakening love for James, Charles realizes how strong his attachment to his cousin has been. Thinking of James’s death, his journey, his last trick, Charles wonders. In his last encounter with the sea, Charles at last sees the seals mentioned by James early in the story. The seals, sea creatures like the serpent are symbols of Charles’ new consciousness. Charles had always looked at James through a thick net formed of prejudice spite and jealousy. Actually, James is one of the Murdoch’s characters of the good but Charles does not consider his goodness. Charles has created forms and he used to see toward others through it. He always made negative judgements about others. There is a long history of their childhood which makes Charles unable to view James passionately. In those days Charles’ uncle Abel and Aunt Estelle (James’ parents) had been living a rich and glorious life whereas his own parents were comparatively down-to-earth. Charles admits the same:

“I could not help regarding uncle Abel and Aunt Estelle as glamorous almost godlike beings in comparison with whom my own parents seemed insignificant and dull. I could not help seeing them, in that comparison, as failures” (63).

James performance in education was well. His knowledge of history, mathematics, art and various languages is comparatively far superior to that of Charles. So, there is a fear in the mind of Charles that James will succeed in life and he himself will fail. Charles has little knowledge that James become adept in Buddhist mysticism and his achievement in the spiritual and moral fields was far beyond the reach of ordinary human being. James had a clear moral vision of his life situations. He had a practical stand on the occasions whereas
Charles had obsessive behaviour controlled by various forms and illusions. James is away from egoistic self and his actions are morally free. He is in contact with the world he lives in. The personality of Charles is completely contrasted to that of James because he ignores of the commonest creatures around him. He is involved in his self. Here, the character James reaches near the Murdochian concept of freedom whereas Charles shows the fantasy of freedom.

By learning various tricks of adept in mysticism, James used religion to provide power for himself. The magic of power enchants him like Charles. He was aware that these tricks and the power they bestow constitute the negative aspects of religion. He dies by leaving all his property to Charles. His death becomes extra-ordinary that proves his self-discipline. After Jame’s death, Charles goes to live in his flat in London. Now there he understands the spiritual character of his cousin and the bond between them. He now takes up his life again, his special understanding fades away and he enters, at least metaphorically, the second and third stages of ‘bardo’. He decides that James is not dead at all but has returned to Tibet on a secret mission. He sees strange “orientals” on the street below and believes them to be agents. He later discovers they are waiters from an Indian restaurant. Now Charles observes James to be a sphinx without a secret and his own great illumination becomes a kind of nonsense. He makes analysis:

“Religion is power, it has to be, the power for instance to change oneself, even to destroy oneself. But that is also its bane. The exercise of power is a dangerous delight. The short path is the only path but it is very steep... Goodness is giving up power and acting upon the world negatively. The good are unimaginable” (478).

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The end of the novel shows some change in the behaviour of Charles that can be considered as a sign of moral evolution and mental liberation. But it is not a complete change required to achieve real freedom. Real freedom involves the capacity to see other people as they are. Living contemplatively in James’ flat, he tries to evaluate the strange events of his past with a dispassionate attitude. His decision to return to London is, as a homecoming to the place where magic does not shrink reality. Now here he constantly slips back into egotism yet he keeps trying to abjure magic and to see the truth. His behaviour to use power over others seems to subside and he tries to interpret people. We watch him going forward with real insight, paying attention to others. He appears to be in the process of becoming a wise Prospero, relinquishing the demonic dependence on magic. The novel ends on a note of black comedy and a cynical suggestion that the familiar cycle may be re-enacted. The novel reveals the dream-ridden pilgrimage of human life which indicates the impossibility of a complete moral change or total freedom from the myths and forms generated by the self-protective fantasy.

In his postscript Charles recognises that he has battered destructively and in vain upon the mystery of someone else’s life. He recognises Hartley as a real person rather than a fictional one whose freedom he has violated by trying to force his will upon her. In his postscript we find him recollecting in order to understand his previous behaviour, and enjoying solitude in the aftermath of his dramatic story. He also interprets the language of love differently than in the past. At the end of the novel, Charles experiences the changes which he has claimed to experience as he began his journal. His use of language to control others proves to be the instrument of change which frees him from the power of fantasy.
Murdoch’s abundant use of letters to support her fictional structures contributes to the overall mythical framework of her novels, suggesting that language creates and controls our fantasies and deceptions about reality. The language of love reveals the various ways in which we distort our perceptions of others in the name of love, denying their reality as separate beings. Although Murdoch seems to agree with notion that the whole language is a machine for making falsehoods, she also proposes that language can provide glimpses of the real, offering us a vehicle for perceiving others more clearly- as contingent and separate from us. She offers good characters, whose acceptance of the contingent reality of others prevents them from egregiously abusing language; these characters do not occupy a transcendental place outside the net. Goodness, for Murdoch, describes acts of reflection which helps us, through self-discipline, to deny the compulsion to create solipsistic fictions. This denial requires that we face the contingency of others, affirming their freedom and giving ourselves an opportunity to express real love.

The Sea, The Sea is closer to Under the Net and The Black Prince. It is a novel written by an artist self-consciously engaged in a quest into the past to find truth, both circumstantial and metaphysical. Charles Arrowby, the hero of the novel displays an epistemophobia which is at times more pronounced than that of his predecessors as he tries desperately to make sense of events going on around him and to unravel the terrible mystery of why his first love left him. In different ways both Charles and James attempt to renounce, although they are ultimately forced back into the world they desire to leave. The insistence is on immersion into life rather than withdrawal. The dangers of magic in its various forms and the Tibetan theory of the
demons and ‘baro’ provide an occult dimension to the story. This profound psychic landscape is unveiled gradually in a quiet and unobtrusive manner by James Arrowby.

The title of the book *The Sea, The Sea* is allusive and symbolic. It alludes to a memorable passage in one of Xenophon’s most personal writing *Anabasis Kyron: The Expedition of Cyrus*. (Xenophon was a Greek historian and a follower of Socrates. His chief works are *Anabasis, Hellenica* and *Cyropoedia.*) Xenophon was the commander of the Greek mercenaries of Prince Cyrus. After wandering in the unknown dry territories of Kurdistan and Armenia, his forces catch a glimpse of the Black Sea from the top of a pass. These lovers of the sea pay it a pagan homage in their ecstatic cry ‘Thalassa, Thalassa’ which means *The Sea, The Sea*. In *The Sea, The Sea* Titus utters a similar cry. For the Greek mercenaries, the sea stood for joy, safety, serenity and light after darkness. The relief they feel describes the initial mood in which Charles looks at the solitude of the place by the sea where he had retired after a frenzied life in the theatre. He reckons the sea to be a purifying power that would provide him a spiritual baptism. But we later come to know, it belies his expectations. The title of the novel also has a resonance in Paul Valery’s poem “Le Cimitiere Marin (The Graveyard by the Sea)”. This poem is first figured in *The Unicorn*. Charles’ autobiographical diary full of egotistical reflections is like Valery’s poem. The marine graveyard symbolizes the eternal aspects of the sea and mortality. The title of the present novel, the frequent references to ‘cimitiere Marin’ (a restaurant) in the local village and the church graveyard with its puzzling grave of a sailor named Dummy, are all echoes of Valery’s poem. Both these works present the indifference of the sea
in general towards minds engaged in interpreting it. Both recommend the breaking of the bondage of the mind from the objects of its contemplation.

Bran Nicol evaluates *The Sea, The Sea* in following words:

“The Sea, The Sea’, then both a retrospective fiction and about a retrospective fiction, highlight the inevitable ambivalence in our relationship to the past. More than this, though, it encapsulates the profound ambivalence of Iris Murdoch. ... She concentrates on the failings of psychoanalysis while a similar logic- evidenced by the relationship between real and symbolic, the effects of compulsion, the law that what is not said is more revealing than what is – operates in her own work” (149).

Like the other Murdochian novels, *The Sea, The Sea* shows the progress of main characters from a stage of moral ignorance holding a false concept of freedom to a condition where they are able to perceive the reality of others. The characters try to overcome the various forms and patterns they had imposed. Murdoch emphasizes the importance of viewing others as real, proposing that the novelist should create contingent characters who reflect the complexities of the human personality. In the present novel Murdoch reveals the self-centred subjectivity of characters like Charles which denies the reality of anything other than self. The characters attempt to define, control or unify their worlds, fending off the contingent possibilities that could potentially disturb their ordered existence. Lona Faulks writes about the imposed forms:
“He (Charles) exemplifies the kind of fantasist whom Murdoch describes as one who wants to impose his will on others” (50).

In The Sea, The Sea obsession enslaves the mind. It limits the vision and spiritual development of characters. The landscape of the place creates a perfect atmosphere for breeding demons and one of the demons in the novel is the obsession of Charles. The characters in the novel as the other Murdochian characters are trapped in the world of fantasy. Murdoch believed that the fantasy is the enemy of art and the imagination. These Murdochian characters represent the human tendencies which are completely entrapped by illusions and fantasies. In The Sea, The Sea such characters lives in fantasy world and go to achieve the fantasy of freedom, which is in contrast with the real concept of freedom. Murdoch attempts to aware the characters of their situation and conveys the message that unselfing and suppression of the egocentric fantasy requires realizing the real freedom.

Thus, Murdoch’s above discussed four novels, The Flight from the Enchanter, The Sandcastle, Bruno's Dream, and The Sea, The Sea, strengthens the need to know and respect others. The Flight from the Enchanter presents the characters destructive tendencies to submit to a blinding self rather than encounter the pain and pleasure of freedom. In the novel no any character is able to learn to meet, to use, and to move with life’s energy. The spirit’s power finds an outlet only in violence. Though in The Sandcastle Bledyard seems to unfold the illusions and fantasies of other characters, Mor seems deeply bounded with himself and with his wife and children. Mor has been unable to recognise the separate identity of either Nan or Rain. The
third novel in this research chapter *Bruno's Dream* also reveals the process of unselfing with the concern of death. The major characters in the novel learn from the experience of death and proceed to achieve freedom through the suppression of the egocentric fantasy. In this novel she uses death as a tool to break the false images and misconceptions of the characters. Here, Bruno represents the western materialistic ego-consciousness. His scientific interest in spiders, his passion for material possessions and his racial prejudice against Indians reveals his western materialistic ego-consciousness. The fourth novel *The Sea, The Sea*, brings us to the Murdoch’s concern of an increased emphasis on Buddhism as a source of behavioural attitudes, spiritual enlightenment, and ultimate liberation in a world that has lost its religious consciousness. *The Sea, The Sea* is a novel written by an artist self-consciously engaged in a quest into the past to find truth, both circumstantial and metaphysical. The novel shows the progress of main characters from a stage of moral ignorance holding a false concept of freedom to a condition where they are able to perceive the reality of others. So, all the four novels in this research chapter focuses on the self-involved and egocentric characters.

The above discussed four novels make a journey towards truth. As Murdoch believed in the key to her fiction lies in some kind of discovery about the reality. Her novels represent a kind of journey from appearance to reality. With this concern, Murdoch replied:

“A novel is a drama about people who are in some kind of confusion or illusion but are seeking enlightenment, freedom, seeking happiness of course, which we all seek and the novel describes a drama which ends in
catastrophe, falling back into illusion, or acquiring greater illusion or becoming more sensible, more enlightened or more free or something of this kind. I think that there’s struggle between good and evil which exists in the traditional novel and that is fundamentally what it is about; but then this is just to say that the novel is a general picture of human life” (366).

Through her novels, Murdoch emphasizes on reality and appeals to know others. She conceives of the perfection of virtue through aesthetic perception as essential for the moral self in the process of learning how to see others as they really are. There is a connection between the good and seeing in that we always act on the good we see or perceive to be so. The moral perception leaves room for moral progress and moral change. Thus, the fundamental background of virtue is not the will: it is the good, and seeing the good corresponds to the right description of moral situations. In order to be realistic, the perception should not be related to personal desires or interests; its relations with desires and interests are only contingent.

Murdoch’s *The Flight from the Enchanter* investigates the reality. Philosophical-cum-ethical ideas are more successfully worked out in this novel. Murdoch depicts the breaking of illusion in the novel. It is not that illusion is completely the property of the young; in this novel, in fact, life seems most illusion ridden not at twenty but at forty. And romantic illusion is the centre of the sickness of man. Annette lacks what Calvin Blick has, Calvin, in turn, lacks compassion. And so man is blocked at all turns, for where illusion exists, one inflicts pain on oneself for its own sake; and where
illusion, does not exist, one inflicts pain on others. *The Flight from the Enchanter* presents this view of human life. The will to power is produced in part by the need for form rather than contingency. It turns Mischa into a demonic enchanter who structures both human organizations and human emotions according to his own mysterious theories of society and psyche. Man’s capacity to impose restricting patterns, fantasies and myths on external reality is seen not only in his gods and in leaders but in the ineffectual organizations he creates that also serve as unwitting accomplices of power and as instruments of evil.

The concept of power is very skilfully handled in *The Flight from the Enchanter*. Many characters in this novel become slaves willingly or voluntarily; seeking love or affection, they readily submit to domination. Murdoch’s idea of ‘enchantment’ is directly reflected in the process by which potential slaves fool themselves thinking they seek love and not domination. The essential self-centredness and solipsism of Mischa and the Poles lead them to arrogance, intolerance, and the will to power that automatically destroys the relationships they most seek. Their worship and extension of power has been connected with the sort of sexual energy with the way in which they make other people play slave roles in their lives.

In *The Flight from the Enchanter* Murdoch presents evil. Her interest in the depiction of evil in this novel can be related to her theory of fiction. Her interest in the depiction of evil in the novel is dependent on and contributory to the theory of personality. Evil is the catalyst which defines personality most acutely because it brings personality into its sharpest clashes with other discrete, opaque, contingent persons. It forces the essential moral dilemma by which
one encounters the hardness of reality. The characteristic achievement of the novel is the power of its narration. It forms an essential part of Murdoch’s greatest power as narrator that invites the attention of critics.

“The book (‘The Flight from the Enchanter’) has the inventive ease and radiance, and the zest for labyrinthine ways, of the Arabian nights. Like the Arabian Nights, it runs a course of organised complication which- with gusto for the charming and random- it deliberately disorganises almost as if with animals against pattern, structure, view of life, purposive control, and the large manner” (Ghent 153).

Thus, the main action of the novel involves the characters’ struggles to free themselves from the spellcast by Mischa, whose power emanates from the psychological magic that he claims is part of ordinary life.

Like The Flight from the Enchanter, Murdoch’s novel The Sandcastle deals with the destruction of romantic illusions. The novel explores the problems of the individual, of freedom, of power and of solipsism. It forces us towards the understanding of Iris Murdoch’s treatment of evil, the dangers of fantasy, and the problems of the discovery of the other which is the only means to achieve human existence. The novel seeks to present the ambiguities of human intercourse and human self-knowledge. The novel shows that the pursuit of freedom involves awareness of others. Freedom, it is suggested, is finally only attainable in terms of this awareness. There is no easy or even ambiguous resolution of the struggle to realize one’s individuality, but at the end, it is defined somehow in terms of love. The novel is criticized by Time in following words:
“The incomprehensible love affair that grows between the two is made plausible by Iris Murdoch’s great tact with words. It is only when this serious novelist (she is a tutor in philosophy at Oxford’s St. Anne’s college) intrudes witchcraft into the plot that she seems to forget the difference between the reality of magic and the magic of reality” (Time, www.complete-review.com/reviews/murdoch).

The Sandcastle is, in comparison to most of Murdoch’s work, a surprisingly conventional story. Her sharp characters and dialogue, and a bit of philosophizing, clearly mark it as her work, but the story itself is rather simple excused in part by it being fourteen-year-old Felicity who dabbles in the dark art. There are several extended set pieces of characters literally dangling on a precipice, an innocent, almost comic version involving Rain and Mor and her fancy automobile, prefiguring a much darker later episode. Meanwhile, Mor rather helplessly hems and haws between the familiar comfort of his marriage and family. In this novel Murdoch’s skill lies in conveying the extent to which Mor declines to show awareness of what is happening to him. Mor has been unable to recognise the separate identity of others and lives in a confused state of mind. Here, Murdoch reveals the role of fantasy. She suggests that a man involved in himself cannot pay attention to other beings. She seems that to be free requires to pay attention to others, and to pursue what is real. She admits in her interview:

“I mean one may be free ‘in one’s soul’, as it were, but may be imprisoned by circumstances, or literally imprisoned, unable to leave one’s country or whatever,
but that’s another sense of freedom. Spiritual freedom is connected with the idea of love. To love is to respect and to attend and be unselfish, to withdraw yourself and let other things exist, and this is also a state of freedom. The opposite of freedom in this sense would be being relentlessly driven by selfish urges or by cravings or being a drug addict or alcoholic” (Sagare 371).

Murdoch’s Bruno’s Dream clearly presents the relation between love and death. Love is now united with death. The sudden passionate love is analogous to the apprehension of death. The novel points out love as a test of reality. Murdoch’s view that the love, which comes from the deeper level of the mind, leads to suffering the pangs of life, emerges in the novel. The title Bruno’s Dream points to selfless, spiritual love as a test of reality. As Bruno is ninety and slowly dying, he watches all that he treasured in his life turn to dust and ashes. All reality becomes an insubstantial dream in the face of death. Only his insatiable thirst for love under the guise of forgiveness and reconciliation is real. Diana and Bruno learn as Nigel always knew that love can only surely be gained by a benevolent renunciation of self and of personal advantage. Bruno’s Dream stands for unsubstantiality of all human passion and effort when seen from the perspective of the Last Thing.

Almost all the characters in Bruno’s Dream oscillate perpetually between living in the contingent muddle of incomprehensible and apparently pointless day-to-day life. They keep falling in love with each other with the sudden compulsively violent love which inflicts itself like a vision of necessity and meaningful reality. The novel shows the nature of love which comes from the
deeper level of mind, and the people who are simply dominated by their own slavish impulses and obsessions. Murdoch says that this obsession side of one’s life to which the demons are connected, has got to be overcome. But to conquer the obsessions requires suppression and extinction of the self. Then the process of overcoming the demonic will leads man to a world where one really can see other people and know, understand and recognise the otherness of another person. A critic criticizes *Bruno’s Dream* in the following words:

“*Bruno's Dream reflects the philosophical-cum-ethical, social, aesthetic and religious constituent of the worldview. It does not reflect its political and historical aspects. It also presents an absurd world-view, which is reflected in the behaviour of the major characters and in the chief action of the novel... Most of the relationships in this novel, which represent imperfect, selfish kinds of love, is absurd, because they lead to hopelessness, sorrow and suffering*” (203-4).

Murdoch continually tried to present the war between illusion and reality through her novels. Her *The Sea, The Sea* once again presents the same. The novel tries to reveal the fact that man is not the monarch of all that he surveys. He is a helpless creature in this world. A little success makes him egoistic through which he wishes to grab the whole world. It becomes his obsession. He tries to change the world by the magic of the obsessions which dominate him. He is directed and controlled by the unseen forces. These forces take him away from all the human relations, away from reality and make him blind. Because of this he cannot perceive the existence of the
otherness of another person. Selfishness, self-centredness, self-obsessions make him a powerful demon who destroys the happiness of others and makes them his slaves. At last it leads to despair, sorrow and suffering, which have their origin in his egotism.

Through *The Sea, The Sea*, Iris Murdoch seems to show the excesses of the obsessions which refuse to deal with the whole of the reality. Charles’s absurdly obsessive desire to discard over forty lived years from both his and Hartley’s lives presents this. The view that self-obsessions lead man to use power over others and make them slaves, is significantly expressed in this novel. The selfish refusal to consider responsibility for another human being shows Charles’ urge to power. He has loved his reputation as a tyrant and tarter and in directing people on the stage he has merely played out as a representation of his control over them in their lives. Charles wrongly identifies people and he understands neither magic nor the reality of the human beings who surround him. He has always seen manipulations of his friends under his personal power as a natural extension of his manipulations of them on the stage, and he believes that he can change and even revolutionize the lives and destinies of others. Murdoch’s profound idea of the powerful human desire to create a mythology of another person instead of letting him/her live in his/her own free being is also reflected in this novel. According to a critic, title of the novel reflects the world-view:

“The world-view is reflected in the title of the novel significantly. The sea is the sea of life. The sea is detached, neutral and empty, a force which cannot be subdued by Charles’, ropes which indifferently kills Titus. Charles is unable to control or command this vast
force which resists all imprints. The sea is not a place of rest, peace and knowledge for Charles; nor does it provide spirit after his parched life. ... James also repeats the quotation ('The Sea, The Sea') and shortly undergoes a final dreadful failure under its enormous neutral power” (272-3).

Thus, Iris Murdoch’s for novels- *The Flight from the Enchanter, The Sandcastle, Bruno’s Dream, and The Sea, The Sea* strongly present the self-involved characters. These characters as involved in themselves cannot see the others separately. They always create their own forms and patterns and impose it on others. They see towards others through these imposed forms which cannot allow them to see other people as real. The above discussed four novels through their major characters strongly present this subject. The six perspective characters through whom Murdoch presents *The Flight from the Enchanter*: Annette Cockeyne, Hunter Keepe, Peter Saward, Rosa Keepe, John Rainborough and Nina the dressmaker. It is a novel of pursuit and flight, enchantment and enslavement. The main action of the novel involves the struggle of characters to free themselves from the spell cast by the powerful newspaper magnate, Mischa Fox. The character ‘Bledyward’ in *The Sandcastle* presents the idea that individual’s happiness without bothering about the reality of others is fantasy. The novels present an absurd view of life, illustrated in the main action and through the chief characters of the novel. This absurdity of human behaviour doesn’t allow to know the other people. *Bruno’s Dream* becomes specific, as it deals with the subject of death and its relationship with love. Man always seems self-involved. Here, Murdoch uses death as a suitable device to direct
human attention away from egoistic things. Charles Arrowby’s narrow structured way of looking at the world is revealed in The Sea, The Sea. In this novel obsession enslaves the mind. It limits vision and spiritual development of characters.

In short, Murdoch’s above discussed four novels in this research chapter may be varied in its atmosphere and places but they catch a common thread of Murdochian subject and go ahead. Because the major characters of all these novels make progress from a stage of moral ignorance holding a false concept of freedom to a condition where they are able to perceive the reality of others. The characters try to overcome the various forms and patterns they had imposed. They attempt to define, control or unify their worlds, fending off the contingent possibilities that could potentially disturb their ordered existence. Overall, they live in fantasy world and go to achieve the fantasy of freedom. It seems that through these novels Murdoch tries to reveal a message that a true freedom requires a disciplined process of unselving and suppression of the egocentric fantasy.
References


