CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION
Dame Jean Iris Murdoch (1919-99) has been acknowledged as one of the best and foremost novelists of twentieth century. She wrote twenty six novels within forty years. Among all 20\textsuperscript{th} century novelists, Iris Murdoch has established herself in a very strong position through her dynamic and different approach towards society. She had started her career as a writer by her first philosophical work, \textit{Sartre: Romantic Rationalist} (1953) because she was highly influenced by the philosophers like Sartre, Plato, Freud, Simone wail Raymond Queneau, Samuel Beckett and Wittgenstein. Her philosophy includes \textit{The Sovereignty of Good} (1970), \textit{The Fire and The Sun} (1977), \textit{Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals} (1992) and \textit{Existentialists and Mystics} (1997). Not only with the philosophers but she was also influenced by the 19\textsuperscript{th} century English and Russian novelists, especially Fyodor Dostoevsky, as well as Marcel Proust and Shakespeare. Her first published novel, \textit{Under The Net} , was selected in 2001 by the editorial board of the American Modern Library as one of the 100 best English language novels of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century; followed with \textit{The Flight from the Enchanter} (1956) and \textit{The Sandcastle} (1957). Her novels revealed qualities, which soon established her as one of the most important writers of her time. She
deal in her works everyday ethical or moral issues, sometimes in the light of myths. As a writer Murdoch was a perfectionist, and she did not let editors change her text.


She has also been admitted to the Irish Academy, The American Academy of Art and Letters and The American Academy of Sciences. She is a fellow of St. Anne’s college, Oxford, and has been given an honorary D.Litt. From the University of Oxford. Furthermore in 1987, following a CBE awarded in 1976, she was honored with a DBE. That same year she was distinguished with a rare honour for a living novelist by having her portrait painted by Tom Phillips Hung in The National Portrait Gallery. Murdoch was at her peak in the novels of the 1970s and the 1980s, notably with *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* (1970), *An Accidental Man* (1971), *The Black Prince* (1973) which was won the James Tait Black Memorial Price, *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* (1974) which won the Whitbread Literacy Award, *A Word Child* (1975), *Henry and Cato* (1976), *The Sea The Sea* (1978) which
won the Booker Prize, *Nuns and Soldiers* (1980), *The Philosopher's Pupil* (1983), *The Good Apprentice* (1985), *The Book and The Brotherhood* (1987) and *The Message to the Planet* (1989). After her last novels *The Green Knight* (1993) and *Jackson's Dilemma* (1995), she had established herself as a great writer. As a working moral philosopher and novelist, the intellectual agenda that Murdoch pursues is at once philosophical, practical and useful. She explores concepts of freedom and social justice, the problematic nature of sexual desire, what action constitute goodness, strategies for dealing with intense suffering and she calibrates the redemptive power of love while illustrating its fragility. All such issues are framed in an imaginative exploration of the ways human consciousness can be expressed in art and conducted by means of fascinating experimentation with the novel form.


In the last decade of her career her novels noticeably weakened, the prosiness, the didacticism, and the reliance on whimsy, allegory
and magic gradually and tediously overwhelming the hilarity, the perfection of tone, the witty throwaway symmetries of accident and insight. The art fully balanced rhythms and geometries of passion and form of which she had, at her earlier best, been a master, her old admirers might have read the last novels groaning, but it was Murdoch, after all and therefore, impossible not to read. But the time *Jackson's Dilemma* (1995) came out, even those of us who know nothing of her life other than the version on the jackets of her books recognized that something was very badly wrong.

The last novel written by author Iris Murdoch before she died reveals signs of the first stages of Alzheimer’s disease, according to a study published in the latest online issue of *brain*, as part of their ongoing research into the effect of Alzheimer’s disease on language. Scientists at University College London and medical Research Council’s Cognition and Brain Sciences Unit decided to compare three of Dame Iris Murdoch’s works, including her final novel written just before she was diagnosed with the disease. The team found that, while the structure and grammar of Murdoch’s writing remained roughly consistent throughout her career, her vocabulary had dwindled and her language simplified in her very fast normal. This unique opportunity to study someone’s writing style over their life time could help researchers improve current diagnostic tests for Alzheimer’s.
Although Iris belongs to twentieth century yet the revolutionary changes had started from the Victorian age in the literary field. The novel gradually became the dominant in literature during the Victorian Age. A fairly constant accompaniment of this development was the yielding of romanticism to literary realism, the accurate observation of individual problems and social relationship. The close observation of a restricted social milieu in the novels of Jane Austen early in the century (Pride and Prejudice, 1813; Emma, 1816) had been a harbinger of what was to come. The romantic historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, about the same time (Ivanhoe, 1819), typified, however, the spirit against which the realists later were to react. It was only in the victorian novelists Charles Dickens and William Makepeace Thackeray that the new spirit of realism came to the fore. Dickens’s novels of contemporary life (Oliver Twist, 1838; David Copperfield, 1849-1850; Great expectations, 1861; Our Mutual Friend, 1865) exhibit an astonishing ability to create living characters; his graphic exposures of social evils and his powers of caricature and humor have won him a vast readership. Thackeray, on the other hand, indulged less in the sentimentality sometimes found in Dickens’s works. He was also capable of greater subtlety of characterization, as his Vanity Fair (1847-1848) shows. Nevertheless the restriction of concern in Thackeray’s novel’s to middle and upper class life, and his
lesser creative power, render him second to Dickens in many reader's minds.

Other important figures in the mainstream of the Victorian novel were notable for a variety of reasons. Anthony Trollope was distinguished for his gently ironic surveys of English ecclesiastical and political circles; Emily Bronte, for her penetrating study of passionate character; George Eliot, for her responsible idealism; George Meredith, for a sophisticated detached, and ironical view of human nature; and Thomas Hardy, for a profoundly pessimistic sense of human subjection to fate and circumstance.

A second and younger group of novelist, many of whom continued their important work into the twentieth century, displayed two new tendencies. Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling, and Joseph Conrad tried in various ways to restore the spirit of romance to the novel, in part by a choice of exotic locale, in part by articulating their themes through plots of adventure and action, Kipling attained fame also for his verse and for his mastery of the single, concentrated effect in the short story. Another tendency, in a sense and intensification of realism, was common to Arnold Bennett, John Galsworthy, and H.G. Wells. These novelists attempted to represent the life of their time with great accuracy and in a critical, partly propagandistic spirit. Well's novels, for example, often seem to be
sociological investigations of the ills of modern civilization rather than self-contained stories.

The same spirit of social criticism inspired the plays of the Irish-born George Bernard Shaw who did more than anyone else to awaken the drama from its 19th-century somnolence. In a series of powerful plays that made use of the latest economic and sociological theories, he exposed with enormous satirical skill the sickness and fatuities of individuals and societies in England and the rest of the modern world. *Man and Superman* (1903), *Androcles and the Lion* (1913), *Heartbreak House* (1919) and *Back to Methuselah* (1921) are notable among his works. His final prescription for a cure, a philosophy of creative evolution by which human beings should in time surpass the biological limit of species, showed him going beyond the limits of sociological realism into visionary writing.

Among novelist and short-story writers, Aldus Huxley best expressed the sense of disillusionment and hopelessness in the period after World War I (1914-1918) in his *Point Counter Point* (1928). This novel is composed in such a way that the event of the plots from a contrapuntal patterns that is a departure from the straightforward storytelling technique of the realistic novel. Before Huxley, and indeed before the war, the sensitively written novels of E.M. Forster (*A Room with a View*: 1908; *Howards End*, 1910) had exposed the hollowness
and deadness of both abstract intellectuality and upper-class social life. Forster had called for a return to a simple, intuitive reliance on the senses and for a satisfaction of the needs of one's physical being. His most famous novel, *A Passage to India* (1924), combines these themes with an examination of the social distance separating the English ruling classes from the native inhabitants of India and shows the impossibility of continued British rule there. D.H. Lawrence similarly related his sense of the need for a return from the complexities, over intellectualism, and cold materialism of modern life to the primitive, unconscious springs of vitality of the race. His numerous novels and short stories, among which some of the best known are *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *Women in Love* (1921), *The Plumed Serpent* (1926) and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928), are for the most part more clearly experimental than Forster's. The obvious symbolism of Lawrence's plots and the forceful, straightforward preaching of his message broke the bonds of realism and replaced them with the direct projection of the author's own dynamically creative spirit. His distinguished but uneven poetry similarly deserted the fixed forms of the past to achieve a freer, more natural, and more direct expression of the perceptions of the writer.

Even more experimental and unorthodox than Lawrence's novels were those of the Irish writer James Jayce. In his novel *Ulysses*...
(1922) he focused on the event of a single day and related them to one another in thematic patterns based on Greek mythology. In *Finnegans Wake* (1939) Joyce went beyond this to create a whole new vocabulary of puns and parlment eau (merged) words from the elements of many languages and to derive a simple domestic narrative from the interwoven parts of many myths and traditions. In some of these experiments his novels were paralleled by those of Virginia Woolf, whose *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To The Lighthouse* (1927) skillfully imitated, by the so-called stream-of-consciousness technique, the complexity of immediate, evanescent life experienced from moment to moment. Dame Ivy Compton-Burnett appeals to a small but discerning readerships with her idiosyncratic dissection of family relationship, told almost entirely in sparse dialogue; her novels include *Brothers and Sisters* (1929), *Men and Wives* (1931), and *Two Worlds and Their Ways* (1949).

Among young novelist, Evelyn Waugh, like Aldous Huxley, satirized the foibles of society in the 1920s in *Decline and Fall* (1928). His later novels, similarly satirical and extravagant, showed a deepening moral tone, as in *The Loved One* (1948) and *Brideshead Revisited* (1945). Graham Greene like Waugh a convert to Roman Catholicism investigated in his more serious novels the problem of evil in human life (*The Heart of the Matter*, 1948; *A Burnt Out Case*, 1961;
Much of the reputation of George Orwell rests on two works of fiction, one an allegory (*Animal Farm*, 1945), the other a mordant satire (*Nineteen Eighty Four*, 1949) both directed against the dangers of totalitarianism. The same anguished concern about the fate of society is the heart of his nonfiction, especially in such vivid reporting as *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), an account of life in the coal-mining regions of northern England during the great depression, and *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), about the Spanish civil war.

The post second world war English novel is peculiarly different in mood and tone from its immediately preceding novel of experiment. The novelists of this era discard the heritage modernism and openly and vociferously denounce the experimental novel. William Cooper declared:

> We meant to write a different kind of novel from that of the thirties and we saw that the thirties novel, the experimental novel had to be brushed out of the way before we could get a proper hearing.²

No clearly definable trends have appeared in English fiction since the time of the post World War II school of writers, the so-called angry young men of the 1950s and 1960s. This group, which included the novelist Kingsley Amis, John Wain and John Braine, attacked outmoded social values left over from the prewar world. Although
Amis continued to write into the 1990s, his satirical novel *Lucky Jim* (1954) remains his most popular work. The working-class or lower-middle class realism in the work of the angry young men gave way in the 1960s and 1970s to a less provincial emphasis in English fiction. Antony Powell, a friend and Oxford classmate of Evelyn Waugh, also wrote wittily about the higher echelons of English society, but with more affection and on a broader canvas. His 12-volume series of novels, grouped under the title *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1951-1975), is a highly readable account of the intertwined lives and careers of people in the arts and politics from before World War II to many years after word. His four-volume autobiography, *To Keep the Ball Rolling* (1977-1983), complements the fictionalized details that from the basis of his novels. In the 1970s interest focused on writers as disparate in their concerns and style as V.S. Pritchett and Doris Lessing. Pritchett, considered a master of the short story (*Complete Stories*, 1990), is also noted as a literary critic of remarkable erudition. His easy but elegant, supple style illuminate both forms of writing. Lessing moved from the early short stories collected as *African Stories* (1965) to novels increasinsingly experimental inform and concerned with the role of women in contemporary society. Notable among these is *The Golden Notebook* (1962), about a women writer coming to grips with life to her art. In 1983 she completed a series of five science fiction
novels under the collective title Canopus in *Argus: Archives*. Other writers noted for novels of ideas are Margaret Drabble and her sister, A.S. Byatt. Drabble has explored the predicament of contemporary educated women in such novels as *The Realms of Gold* (1975) and *The Gates of Ivory* (1991). She investigated the dilemmas faced by intelligent women entering late middle age in *The Seven Sisters* (2002) and other recent novels. Byatt won the Booker prize, England’s highest literary award, for *Possession* (1990), about the romantic involvement between two academics. She completed an ambitious quartet of novels tracing changing patterns of family life in England from the 1950s to the 1970s with *A Whistling Woman* (2002).

Art historians Anita Brookner write of women in search of human connection and established her reputation with *Hotel du Lac* (1984), which won the Booker prize.

Other distinctive talents of the second half of the 20th century include Anthony Burgess, novelist and man of letters, most popular for his mordant novel of teenage violence, *A Clock Work Orange* (1962), which was made into a successful motion picture in 1971; and John le Carre (pseudonym of David Cornwell), who won popularity for ingeniously complex espionage tales, loosely based on his own experience in the British foreign service. Burgess’s prolific output ended with *A Dead Man in Deptford* (1993), which vividly recreates

Dark humor permeates the novels of Muriel Spark, who is known for *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (1961), about a school teacher who turns out not to be what she seems. It was successfully adopted for stage and screen, with actress Maggie Smith in the role of Brodie. Darkness was the dominant mode of much of the fictions of the 1980s and 1990s. Martin Amis, son of Kingsley Amis, produced

Rose Tremain visited overlooked areas of the past for her quirky historical novels, such as *Music and Silence* (1999), set in the 17th century court of the king of Denmark, Christian IV, and *The Colour* (2003), set in New Zealand during the 19th century gold rush. Beryl Bainbridge also mined the past, but from unusual viewpoints, in *Every Man Himself* (1996) and *According to Queeney* (2001). *Every Man For Himself*, which takes place during the voyage and sinking of the Titanic in 1912, is narrated by an assistant to the doomed ship's designer. According to Queeney portrays British lexicographer Samuel Johnson as observed by his friends the thrates and their daughter


On critically examining the novel of the twentieth century, we find a general decline as aptly observed by Gilbert Phelps, "When we remember the scope and variety of English fiction at the beginning of the century in the hands of such writers as Henry James, Joseph Conrad, E.M. Foster, D.H. Lawrence, James Joyes, and Virginia Woolf, it is difficult not to feel that there has been a steady decline."³

This is because of the prevalent philosophies of the period: Existentialism; Surrealism; and Structuralism. The existentialisms as propagated by Sartre, Heidegger, Marcel and Jaspers had a great impact on the literary world. The existentialists tend to emphasize the unique and particular in human experience; they place the individual person at the center of the world. They are suspicious of philosophical or psychological doctrines that obscure their essential individuality by speaking as if there were some abstract "human nature," Some set of general laws and principles, to which men are determined by their conman humanity to conform to. Each man is what he chooses to be or makes himself. The existentialists typically give priority to sincerity
and creativity in the moral life, and appear to regard any decision justified if it is made in perfect honesty and with absolute inner conviction. The other movement that swept literature in the twentieth century novel is called surrealism. It aims at transcending the accepted limitation of reality, bringing into literature material hitherto unused and synthesizing the experience of the conscious and unconscious minds. The surrealist permits his work to organize itself non-logically, so that its pattern may approximate to that of the unconscious itself. Further, the great progress made in the field of science was responsible for the attitude of interrogation and disintegration of moral values. So we find that the modern period in England is obviously not such as when society is functioning on the bases of certain fundamental value. Old values have been discarded and they have not been replaced new once. The modern man is swayed by conflicting intentions, therefore, erratic and inconsistent in his behavior. In no department of life we find postulates which can be accepted at their face value. Murdoch condemns the absence of common bases of value as the causes of degeneration of novel in the twentieth century, and elected the most realistic and humanistic point of view.

According to Bradbury, Murdoch’s attitude towards the patterns of form in the shape of “quasi-shapeless quasi-documentary object.”
literature is involved with the presentation of characters who are "free and independent." Murdoch's terminology provided critics with useful idioms and a serious debate was taken up on the issues raised. It was felt that a humanistic view of literature should enjoin both writer and reader to respect and even love the character of a novel. Bernard Bergonzi records his preference:

The contemporary English novels which I most admire are precisely those which offer the greater plenitude of character.⁶

At the same time it was believed that novel seems unsure of itself because it has lost what used to be, its greatest support the hero.⁷ Wyllie Sypher laments "the loss of the self" in Modern literature. John Bayley declares that the idea of the literally personality has gone down in literature.⁸ Bergonzi feels that if more of the French and American novelists have turned to writing crisis fiction or stories of apocalypse, it has been of outcome of the rejection of the idea of a complex growing characters free actions and the rights and capacities of person to mediate with a substantial world.⁹ And Murdoch considered it to be a romantic ailment that could be set right if the novelist learned to view his characters with love. Human condition then no longer would serve as human nature. John Bayley in his book The Characters of Love touches upon a similar point by asserting that not only should
characters exist independently but that their creators should love them also. Bayley explicates.

What I understand by all author’s love for his characters is a delight in their independent existence as other people an attitude towards them which is analogous to our feeling, towards those we love in life; and an intense interest in their personalities combined with a sort of detached solicitude, a respect for their freedom.10

Bayley’s arguments related art to life as opposed to art committed to formalism or aestheticism. John Bayley contends almost in Murdoch’s terminology, that Tolstoy’s supremacy lies in the way he presents. The World not a world. His characters are identifiable from our own experience of life, they life-like yet they are as opaque and unpredictable as people in real life. Murdoch praises the nineteenth century novel because it is concerned with real various individuals struggling in society. More than any other novelist of her generation Murdoch tries to isolate approach and explore problems concerning art, truth, life, reality, and also the element of humanism to reflect these in her fictional works. I shall now proceed to elucidate the concept of humanism, its nature and extent. Once the concept of humanism comes out clarified and its elements are specified, it would be tenable to analyses the fictions of Iris Murdoch and illustrate from them her
humanistic vision in religion, morality, love, marriage, society, individuality, liberty, goodness and adultery.

Humanism is a comprehensive life stance that upholds human freedom, human reason, individualism, ethics and social justice and rejects supernaturalism, pseudoscience and superstition. Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance, which affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. It stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethic based on human and other natural values in the spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. It is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality. It is based on the respect for his dignity, the right of his personality, the concern for his welfare, and the creations of favourable conditions for his social life. It consists of philanthropic outlook based on equality, fraternity and freedom. It is centered upon the primary of man and a passionate faith in him, and does not go beyond the limits of what is human. Everything by man and for man is the central idea of all humanist ideologies and philosophies. The humanist perspective focuses on the autonomy of man as a dignified being possess the source of truth and right. A very valid and judicious estimation of humanism is determined here.

Humanism's final court of appeal is human reason rather than any external authority; its goal is the greatest good in
this finite existence. Humanism may or may not be linked with religion, science or any specific political system. Its spirit is secular, liberal, and tolerant, its method education, free inquiry and enlightenment.\textsuperscript{11}

Humanism is an approach to life based on humanity and, reason and recognizes that moral values are properly founded on human nature and experience alone. Humanism encompasses atheism and agnosticism but is an active and ethical philosophy far greater than these negative responses to religion. Humanists believe in individual rights and freedoms but believe that individual responsibility social cooperation and mutual respect are just as important. Humanists believe that people can and will continue to find solutions to the world's problems so that quality of life can be improved for everyone. Humanists are positive and gaining inspiration from our lives, art and culture and a rich natural world. Humanism means to believe that people have only one life and it is their responsibility to make it good life and to live it to the full. Religion, knowledge, \textsuperscript{\underline{speciesism}} and optimism are certain aspects of humanism.

According to the history of humanism, renaissance humanism was a moment that affected the cultural, political, social and literary landscape of Europe. Beginning in Florence in the last decades of the 14th century; renaissance humanism revived the story of Latin and Greek, with the resultant revivals of the study of science, philosophy,
art and poetry of classical antiquity. The revivals was based on interpretation of Roman and Greek texts, whose emphasis upon art and the senses marked a great change from the contemplation on the Biblical values of humility, introspection, and meekness. Beauty was held to represent a deep inner virtue and value, and an essential element in the path towards god.

Humanism’s divergence from orthodox Christianity can be identified with the condemnation of plagiarism by Jerome and Augustine. Like the humanism, Pelagius perceived humans as possessing inherent capacity for developing the qualities that the church perceived as necessitating the gift of grace from god. Pelagius rejected the doctrine of original sin. The humanists likewise recognize humans as born not with a burden of inherited sin due to their ancestry but with potential for both and evil which will develop in this life as their characters are formed. The humanists therefore reject Calvinistic predestination, and understandably therefore arouse the hostility of protestant fundamentalists. Renaissance humanists believed that liberal arts should be practiced by all levels of wealth. They also approved of self, human worth and individual dignity.

Humanism has undergone significant stages of development assuming a variety of forms in the modern times. Some thinkers have assayed to associate it with pragmatism which may be characterized as
humanism in theory of knowledge. The communists are also inclined to call themselves humanists. They combine the humanistic outlook with dialectical materialism. Some naturalistic philosophers like to describe themselves as humanists. Jean Paul Sartre, to whom Iris Murdoch was highly influenced, also claimed in existentialism and humanism his philosophical outlook to be humanistic. Whatever shades of humanism, they all converge and overlap. Its form is kaleidoscopic, but its basic concept and spirit has remained unaffected, because there is a common trend is all the emphasis on man and his values. Further details of the forms of humanism will lead me off the direct course, as my concern warrants me to pursue mainly the concept and characteristic features of humanism.

Humanism sees man gifted with an immense strength and power and perceives that he needs only to know himself and vigorate his inner vitality. Every individual is the master of his own lot and responsible for his own action knowing the good and bad results of his deeds. The humanist yearns for a society in which every individual has full opportunity for self development according to his ability. Man should not lose trust in his own capacity and higher values of life. Humanism embraces all attitudes exalting his free will and his superiority over nature. Philosophically humanism makes man the measure of all things. The greatest gift of humanism makes man the
measure of all things. The greatest gift of humanism is that it glorifies human nature and takes a very optimistic and roseate view. Man's ability accompanied by the revival of man's faith in himself in his intelligence and reason. It consists in truth and purity of mind, opposing narrowness, intolerance and incredulity. The humanist loves the qualities of courage and self-confidence, and believes in moving forward with determination.

The humanist stands for human freedom, freedom of thought, freedom of choice, freedom of speech and freedom of civil liberties. He is opposed to determinism of any kind. Freedom is progressive disappearance of all restrictions unfolding the potentialities of individuals, as human being, not as cogs in the wheels of mechanical social organism.

The essence of freedom lies in the enfoldment of the potentialities latent in man which are the creative urge felt by an individual to develop intellect and other human values. The goal of humanism is a free and universal society in which people voluntarily and intelligently cooperate for the common good. The humanist demands a shared life in a shared world. In the modern world, if an individual wants to be free, he should not only enjoy economic sufficiency and security but also free himself from the psychological tensions. Man's struggle for survival is eternal; his urge for freedom is
also eternal. Freedom is the purpose of life. Humanism tries its best to break the chain connecting man with the outer world in order to enjoy true freedom.

Humanism is based on love guided by reason, and reason inspired by love and reverence. It teaches man to be without fanaticism and to be sacred to men regardless of all distinctions of race, creed, colour nationality, status, social or political advancement. The body of man is to be respected, immune from violence and outranged. The life of man is to be held sacred also, given scope, protected from violence from suppression, from mechanization free from belittling forces.

Thus, humanism inspires man to be honorable and merciful, to be untiring in working for his own well-being and the emancipation of others living in society. Good man makes good social system, but no economic and material forces on their own have even made a good society. It is righteous conduct and the spirit of love that makes man good not the wealth itself. Evidently, the principles of humanism ultimately require definite trails in men’s character-honesty and truthfulness, moral purity, simplicity and modesty in social as well as in personal life. In this way, man is free, eloquent, splendid and individual. For this purpose it is not inconvenient to be rich, at least, it is indispensable to have wealth of a prosperous society at our disposal.
Humanists are also exponents of democracy, education, peace, and international cooperation.

Humanism demands justice and without social justice, political legal and economic equality—a good society can not exist. A humanistic society is not possible without eradicating dishonesty, exploitation, miseries, hunger, poverty and human sufferings. That is why, the humanist fights tooth and nail against tyranny, despotism, injustice, and exhort man not to cow down before such corrupting and betraying forces which sap his energy and vitality, but to struggle to uproot them from society. No society can progress if it encourage hypocrisy, punish truth, and stifles the growing mind. Through thrown into such adverse circumstances sometimes man’s real worth and ability to bloom out.

In the modern era, there is a great urgency and relevance of humanism to society and man. The constantly growing man in the 20th century has developed only his egotism and cruelty, greed and lust for possessiveness, and is increasingly alienated from other people. Consequently, he is plunged into so much uncertainly, insecurity, and unsettlement that there are alarming feature in the growth of his emotional disequilibrium and mental insanity. There are neurotic excitements and pathological twrmoils, vehement passions and dangerous indecisions in his mind and life. A dismal undertone runs beneath his everyday talk. His brows are intermittently wrinkled with
worries as his hopes fluctuate alternately. Man lives in long-dawn suspense and anxious expectations. He looks at others for strength but find it nowhere. Fear replaces faith, and perplexity shuttles to and for with confidence. There is a foreboding in his heart and bewilderment in his mind, such are the results of the continuous growth of the individual in the modern times. And he claims that he knows more than his own ancestors. He dose, but he only knows more about things. The main focus in the study is upon the consciousness of the characters who find themselves lonely in a hostile world. While the protagonists in their novels suffer, they make us aware of the essential human values of life? hope, honour and pride.

In real sense, he knows less about himself, about the hidden purpose, and about the world of inner reality. The range of knowledge among the ancestors was limited but the depth of thought was high. Modern progress has given the human character width without depth, fluency without wisdom.

Now, there is a dire necessity of reconstructing ourselves. People have to understand to themselves, understand behind all our activities-scientific, ethical and spiritual. They must have faith in the spirit of man, the spirit capable of suffering and compassion, of endurance and sacrifice. This life is, after all, the life of man. He must give himself to other people and be useful to other people; otherwise,
the egotistic isolation deprives life of meaning and makes it absurd. The growth of society contrary to the interest of the individual are equally unprogressive in there essence. A genuine type of man can be formed only in a society based on truly humanistic foundations. There is no progress of society without the progress of man.

Thus, having established a background of trends in contemporary fiction and the concept, nature, aspects and scope of humanism, and its relevance to society, the present study proceeds to analyse, in the thirteen major novels of Iris Murdoch in three ways; human freedom, individual versus society and social justice, through the analysis of the plot, situation character and whenever necessary, style and technique of the fictions, the humanist perspective of Iris, as implicit in them, will be highlighted.

*****
References

1. The Study was funded by the Medical Research Council and was conducted by University College London and the MRC cognition and Brain Science Unit in Cambridge.


5. Ibid


7. Hereafter cited as The Situation of the Novel.


10. The Situation of the Novel, p.35.