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An Idea of the 'Good' in Iris Murdoch's Novels

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Among the novels after the thirties of our own century only Iris Murdch's, it seems to me, impress us. She has her own clear vision of her works, which the other writers do lack. She suggests something very important, something very difficult which we are not yet cope with. Even Murdoch herself seems not sure. All her novels are very enjoyable partly because, I think, she never minds to use any old-fashioned technique such as that of the picaresque, melodrama, and of detective stories. However they cannot be discussed equally with those of her contemporary writers, so-called 'University Wits' who seem to have made a simple U-turn to the picaresque novels. It is very interesting that in stead of these facts almost every novel of hers impress us with its novelty. We may say that the very aspects of her anachronism paradoxically turns out to be very orginal. It seems because her clear literay vision itself surpasses the means and obviously directs our attention to something, which I shall review here.

I

I'm not going to say her novels are great ones. Far from that they have some aspects which make us think they are rather queer mechanical repetitions of the same pattern. But I will lay emphasis on the fact that at least they have something very sincere which we may temporarilly call 'attention to the Good' or 'virtue'. It is significant that before her maiden work, *Under the Net*, she published a philosophical study under the title of *Sartre : Romantic Rationalist* 'who as philosopher, as politician, and as novelist, is profoundly and self-consciously contemporary and who has the style of the age'.[1] Criticizing Sartre, who neverthelsss seems a best criterion to her, she worked over her literary ideas and her concepts of human reality to start as an unti-existentialist.

She thinks that much existentialist thought relies just upon a form of 'romantic self-assertion'. The picture of sincerity and self-knowledge of Antoine, hero of *The Diary of Antoine Roquentin* by Sartre, seems to her less important, after all nothing but a subjective and self-righteous romanticism. The modern novels, she also thinks, which brood upon the senseless fragmentation of our experience or on the fabricated nature of its apparent sense are quite nonsensical.[2] Virginia Woolf displayed, she says, 'the idle succession of moments', Proust told us that 'what we receive in the presence of the beloved is a negative which we develope later', and 'Joyce piled up 'detailes until no story contour is visible any more'.[3] Really it may not be denied that they make us feel there is no way out. Thus as V. Woolf had presented her own literary vision of the age scores of years before, Murdoch also did in her another essay, *Against Dryness* ; 'we need to return from the self-centered concept of sincerity to

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the other-centered of truth'.[4]

She thinks that 'our states of consciousness differ in quality, our fantasies and reveries are not trivial and unimportant, they are profoundly connected with our energies and our ability to choose and act, and that if quality of consciousness matters, then anything which alters consciousness in the direction of unselfishness, objectivity and realism is to be connected with virtue'.[5] She proposes that we should, by opening our eyes, direct our attention outward, away from self which reduces all to a false unity, toward the great surprising variety of the world. It is, she thinks, the key to 'liberate' us. 'The freedom which is a proper human goall is the freedom from fantasy, that is the realism of compassion'[6] Thus she refuses the idea of life as self-enclosed and purposeless and proposes to direct attention outward. At the same time she presents us some problem greatly difficult and imporant, which seems to make an epoch in the lierature after the fiftieth and gives some guide to the future novels if they are to survive, and except that I have nothing to discuss about her novels.

Murdoch's notion that the idea of life as self-enclosed and purposess is not simply a product of the despair of our own age but also the natural product of the advance of science and that it has developed over a long peoriod is quite right. 'Is it possible for us human beings to bear such an idea still for a long time from now on?' is quite a natural question we have next. I think Murdoch is the first that positively presents the answer, 'No,' in the modern novels. Her attitude to the life surely gives us a kind of impetus, in stead of a sense of despair, to see through this modern chaotic condition of our world and give it some value. She criticizes Sartre, saying that 'the value of the person is detected by him simply in his experience of the pain of defeat and loss and that he has nothing positive to cling to than this last fragment of faith in the preciousness of the human person, stripped at last of its traditional metaphysical ramification.'[7] And she seems to attempt to detect the human beings in her 'patient study of the complexity of human relations', and want to have something more positive than Sartre. Here lies the difference between them. I'm not sure whether she is right when she harshly says that 'the Enlightenment Romanticism and the Liberal tradion are the elements of dilemma, whose chief feature is that we have been left with far too shallow and flimsy an idea of human personality.'[8] Because I think, though the modern Liberal theory stripped us of all the virtues and values against which we can evaluate ourselves and made us think we have no salvation, this conception of the individual as naked and solitary is only a necessary and inevitable process to lead us to the more essential notion of us human beings. However her judgement as follows seems right. That is, we have bought the Liberal theory 'at the cost of surrendering the background,' and that 'what we have never had is a satisfactory Liberal theory of personality, a theory of man as free and separate and related to rich and complicated world from which, as a moral being, he has much to learn.'[9]

In this point she refuses Sartre who does 'believe only in Reason' and for whom 'the reality is the psychology of the lonely individual' and 'the supreme virtue is reflective self-awareness.'[10] He, it seems to her, deadly wishes to assert that 'the individual has an absolute jmportance and is not to be swallowed up in a historical calculation'[11] and aspires to create 'a total picture of the broken totality.' For him there is 'no middle way between non-existence and this swooning abundance.'[12] Murdoch thinks this dilemma of Sartre's is 'a powerful but abstract model of hopeless dilemma, coloured by a surreptitious romanticism which embrace 'the hoplessness.' She dares to say that 'when one is caught between the intolerable and impossible nothing is justified except a state of rebellion, however vain, and that when in insuperable practical difficulties a sense of "all or nothing" is what consoles.'[13] Sartre who rejects the comfort of the appeal to tradition and unreason, seems to her 'to

take refuge instead in a deliberately unpractical idea of rationality.'[14] It is a sense we all hold in common that we can no longer formulate a general truth about ourselves, and it is this sense of 'a broken totality' that her polemical study is based on. She sincerely says 'we are what we seem to be' transient mortal creatures subject to necessity and chance.' It is to say that 'there is no God in the traditional sense of that term. We are simply here. And if there is any kind of sense or unity in human life, and the dream of this does not cease to haunt us, it is of some other kind and must be sought within a human experience which has nothing outside it.'[15] It may be noticed that she appeals mainly not to our emotion but intellect. She thinks that a singleminded faith in science, together with the assumption that we are all rational and totally free, made us lose the curiousity about the real world, fail to appreciate the difficulties of knowing it. She says we are not isolated free choosers, monarchs of all we survey as has been thought, but benighted creatures sunk in a reality. Then she emphatically says that 'what we require is a renewed sense of the difficulty and complexty of the moral life and the opacity of person.' Quoting Simone Weil's word, 'morality is a matter of attention not of will,' she says we need a new vocabulary of attention.[16]

Thus she thinks it is only to concentrate 'attention' to look at all, without falsifying the reality that matters. She properly says that we have no God in the traditional sense and that the traditional sense is the only sense. She suggests 'we need to be enabled to think in terms of degree of freedom, and the picture, in a non-metaphysical, non-totalitalitarian' and no-religious sense, the transcendence of reality,'[17] which can play a real consoling and encouraging role to make us look properly at evil and human suffering even if it is so unbearable, and which may be called the 'Good' in her vecabulary.

Then she, who thinks the authority of morals is the authority of truth, that is, of reality, comes back to the beginning and suggests us to look again at the powerful energy system of the self-defensive psyche in the light of the question : 'How can we make ourselves better ?'[18] looking properly at the world just which is hopelessly evil. Moral philosophy, she thinks, is the examination of the most important of all human activities. Here she seems to wish to revive the word 'morality' which has so far sounded stale. However her idea is never easy to be held, may be said to hang in balance. It is feared that it becomes an optimistic one or transforms into another fantasy. This difficulty is plainly proved in all of her novels one of which I shall review later. She takes great pains to answer the question : 'How can we largely mechanical creatures, this slaves of relentless strong selfish force, make ourselves better ?' The Idea of the Good, she says, does not exist as people used to think as God existed.[19] 'Good is mysterious because of human frailty, because of the immese distance which is involed.'[20] 'The indefinability of Good is connected with the unsystematic and inexhaustible variety of the world and the pointlessness of virtue. In this respect there is a special link between the concept of Good and the ideas of Death and Chance.'[21] She emphasizes that the concept of Good resists collapse into the selfish empirical consciousness.[22] Then following a hint in Plato she says to pay 'attention' to nature or beauty in order to clear our minds of selfish care is a starting-point of the good life.[23] The self, the place where we live, she thinks, is a place of illusion. So to forget self means to be realistic, to perceivve justly and to respond to the real world in the light of virtuous consciousness. This very attempt is connected with Goodness.

Thus she thinks '"Good is a transcendent reality" means that virtue is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is.'[24] She, then, presents us the key word of her conception, that is, 'Love.' By this she does not mean such human love that is usually self-assertive which she call 'false love.' She uses the word 'love' as the general name of the quality of 'attachment'

or 'passion without sentiment or self.' It is, to her, the ability to direct attention away from self. Also it is 'the tension between the imperfect soul and the magnetic perfection which is conceived of as lying beyond it.'[25] With the word, 'Good is the magnetic center toward which love naturally moves,'[26] she suggests that the image of the Good as a transcendent magnetic centre is the least corruptible and most realistic picture for us to use in our reflection upon the moral life.

So far some characteristic has been found in her way to present her ideas. It is that she dares to use often such words as 'morality,' 'virtue,' 'good.' 'love,' which seem to have been worn out and rarely mentioned by her contemporaries. She well knows 'good' is no longer thought to mean an objective reality. As the hero of *The Diary* finds that language makes him sick, the sense of a loss of confidence in the communicative power of language is common to all thinking beings. She thinks language as exact communication is possible only against the background of a common world. Then it seems to her natural that it lost its power when we lost our common background of ideas, of values and of realities which transcend us. Sartre thinks it is 'the source of all violence.' And so does Murdoch. She, above all, dreads that in the realm of morals and theology, a great sophistication about the function of words leads to a weakening of that sense of a common world. Then the words of an English critic, D. S. Savage sound proper to her, ····· that is, 'language is not isolated, is not magical. It is the vehicle of communication, and is related intrinsically to meaning, and through meaning to truth ····· which is a transcendent value. Language is healthy when it is related directly to meaning, and it can be so related only when the mind itself aspries vertically to truth as an absolute centre.'[27] Thus, unlike Roquentin of Sartre who could not find any salvation other than the tenuous personal one, she tries to find it in her taking 'a middle way (a third way) between the ossification of language and its descent into the senseless, between the bad faith of "salauds" and spiritual chaos, between an acceptance of totalitarian standards (capitalist or communist) and political cynicism.'[28] Deeply impressed by Savage's words ; 'art is speech, and speeches ultimately impossible when there is no absolute existential relation to truth,'[29] she tries to take this difficult 'task' by making it be based on a simple attitude ····· that is, to pay 'attention' outward, to love. Really here she has at least got a starting-point.

'The novelist proper is, in his way, a sort of phenomenologist,'[30] who 'has always been a describer rather than an explainer ; and in consequence he has often anticipated the philosophers' discoveries,' says Murdoch to whom the novel is an art of image rather than of analysis, which reveals a mystery rather than a problem. Then one of her final judgement of *Sartre* is 'Sartre seems blind to the function of prose' not as an activity or analytic tool, but as creative of a complete and un-classifiable image.[31] Here she seems to try to make literature play such a great important role through that we can re-discover 'a sense of the destiny of our lives'[32] and help us to apprehend 'the absurd irreducible uniqueness of people and their relations with each other.'[33] Then Murdoch, philosopher, transforms into a novelist.

One of her novels is 'as macabre as a Jacobean tragedy, as frivolous as a Restoration comedy,' and it takes 'sombre themes ····· adultery, incest, violence and suiside·····and yet succeeds in making of them a book that is brilliantly enjoyable.' This is a commercial message on the cover of her fifth novel, *A Severed Head.* Really it is very significant that not only this but all the others of her novels are conspicuously 'enjoyable' and thrilling. We might find that it is one of the reasons why her books, instead of the old fashioned form, impress us wish its novelty. In that form they vividly present us the 'real' picture of our present situation, which she thinks in analogous to that of the 18 th century, the era of rationalistic

allegories and moral tales. Unlike the people of the century we have no transcendent world of ideas and values. Nevertheless we still retain a rationalistic optimism combined with 'a romantic conception of the human condition,'……a picture of the individual as naked brave will, totally free and responsible, knowing everything we need to know for the important purpose of life. Murdoch thinks this optimistic picture of ourselves makes us unable to imagine evil and that it is why 'modern literature, which is so much concerned with violence, contains so few convincing pictures of evil.'[34] To see such pictures of evil……new reality, as it is, can be, she says, the first step to 'require a renewed sense of difficulty and complexity of the moral life and the opacity of persons.'[35]

Then she tries to present them fully with a detached view in a kind of allegorical myth,……a traditional form of the novel which seemed so far to have been left only to writers of lesser talent. And this is her only way to go back to a living contact with the real world. In her somewhat demonic world she dares to use such words as 'love,' 'virtue,' and 'morality' as a medium of communication. The contrast is brilliant. I picked up here *A Severed Head* which is to be tentatively reviewed because it seems to contain a clear allegory of the most complicated contingency of a reality and manifests the author's vision.

II

'Attention is rewarded by a knowledge of reality' is the key word of Murdoch's conception which is clearly embodied in *A Severed Head* as a fantasic allegory in a realistic way. Martin Lynch-Gibbon and all the other characters except Honor Klein whose personality is a crux of this novel are situated in a world of fantasy which deforms the nature of a reality, a world which has no transcendent reality. And these civilized and intelligent people are confident in their free will. As they have no moral law, the words, 'all is permitted,' 'all is pessible,'……then 'nothing is impossible,' which might have been seriously and bitterly uttered by Dostoevskii, are in a cynical sense somewehat optimistically in the minds of these people.

'You're sure she doesn't know,' said Georgie.

Antonia? About us? Certain.'

Georgie was silent for a moment and then said, 'Good.'[36]

The novel opens with this curious conversation. It is suggestive of something that the word 'know' is in the first sentense and that it is often used in almost every chapter. Only 'to know' or 'to be found out' is to be a great problem to the people, which is symbolized in Martin's following word.

> 'Kowledge, other people's konowledge, does inevitably modify what it touches. Remember the legend of Psyche, whose child, if she told about her pregnancy, would be mortar, whereas if she kept silent it would be a god.'[37]

It is natural that in a world where no universal rule is found and all is permitted, only to be found out is fatal to them. Martin says when his relationship with Georgie was found out, 'you know how important it was to me not to let this be known, especially now. I simply can't cope with Antonia's knowing it. I can't cope with the "way" she knows it.'[38] And also when Palmer, a psychoanalyst, was found out lying with his sister, Honor Klein, his first word is 'How did you know I was here?'[39] He never does 'attempt to minimize its importance or cover it with any veil of distracting mystification.'[40] His only concern is how to cope with its terrible shock of 'being known' to Martn. On the other hand, instead of this fact, they are curiously eager to 'understand' or to 'be understood' each other. Antonia is given a sort of sexual thrill by 'a perfect communication of souls' toward which she thinks all human beings should aspire. While Martin who loves Georgie (his mistress) with a sort of gaiety and insouciance which was more spring-like than the real spring'[41] finds himself unable to love her any more when his essentially sweeter relationship with Antonia broke up. Thus their egocentric conceptions of freedom encourage their self-deception, their dream-

like facility' to deform the nature of reality. Without noticing that they are the sports of its contingency, they never cease to justify and console themselves by their self-deceptive rhetoric of Rationalism.

As there is nothing which cannotbe explained and justified, nothing can restrict their action. This is clearly presented in the following words of Palmer who explains his adultery to his lover's husband, Martin, using Freudian theory.

> I don't say happier, though that might be so too. But we shall grow. You have been a child to Antoia and she a mother to you, and that has kept you both spiritually speaking at a standstill. But you "will" grow up, you "will" change, more than may now seem to you possible.'[42]

As Martin, who is the clearest victim of the contingency, in this novel, has nothing against which he can judge and evaluate, all abnormal matters seem to him to change into normal ones of itself. He utters such words as 'you're my wife and I love you and I want to go on being married to you, so you'd better resign yourself to having a husband and a lover.'[43] He even serve his unfaithful wife and her lover who are lying in a bedroom, 'watching him, smiling, she infinitely soft and tender, he candid, confident, brilliant.'[44]

However, though he says 'I hold no religious belief whatever and roughly I cannot imagine omnipotent sentient being sufficiently cruel to create the world we inhabit,'[45] Martin is the only person that searches for 'the transcendent reality,' which Murdoch progressively reveals to him in her typical pattern. In another words a typical plot of her novels which develops quickly and unexpectedly makes Martin face 'realization' and 'disillusionment' by turns till he finally reaches some 'real' realization. Murdoch present Honor Klein as a person who has the ability to think the transcendent reality, ····· a dubious guide of Martin. She is the first that pointed out to him a great capacity for self deception of both Palmer's and Antonia's, saying : 'They look to you for help. Can you not see that ?' And that truth has been lost long ago in this situation. In such matters you connot have both truth and what you call civilization. You are a violent man, Mr. Lynch-Giddon. You cannot get away with this intimacy with your wife's seducer.'[46] The echo of her voice, 'You do not really want your wife back after all,' is finally to destroy his dreamlike fantasy to wake up to the reality. Murdoch is a good technician who, with the word ; 'what happened next may seem a little improbable, but the reader must just believe me that it did occur,'[47] properly makes both of them crash and touch each other. Martin is sitting quiet for a minute feeling extremely confused after he with his hand had struck Honor three times, a sideway blow across the mouth wondering what he is doing. This strange act of his consequently makes him realize that 'she is a person worthy of his respect and one who pre-eminently deserve the truth,'[48] and that 'he is desperately, irrevocably, agonizingly in love with her.'[49]

It is clear that Murdoch takes great pains to present this awakening ····· the extreme love, solemly and mysteriously as possible as she can. It is also described as the mist, which is always enclosing Martin, sun-pierced. Really these scenes contain the key points of her conception of moral life. 'The force that drew me (Martin) now towards Honor imposed itself with the authority of a cataclysm.'[50] The nature and genesis of this love Martin himself wonders and says, 'It was hard to say and the harder because of the peculiar nature of this love. When I thought how peculiar it was it struck me as mavellous that I had nevertheless such a deep certainty that it was love.·····It was in truth a monstrous love such as I had never experienced before, a love out of such depth of self as monsters live in. A love devoid of tenderness and humour, a love practically devoid of personality.'[51]

It is peculiar to this novel that the image of 'real' love, clearly distinguished from the ordinary love as mere passion with flesh, is carefullly presented as a terrible and somewhat mystical one by such adjective words as 'dark,' 'savage,' 'violent,' 'barbarous,' 'un-

real,' and 'opaque,' which are contrasted with stch words as 'soft,' 'tender,' 'candid,' 'confident' and brilliant' that characterize the image of 'false' love of the other characters. Honor Klein, answering Martin who asked her if she realized how much he loved her, says, 'I'm touched that you love me. That's all.'[52] She never tries to 'know' or 'understand' in an ordinary sense. Finally at the climax she reveals herself as a prophet who is 'a severed head such as primitive tribes and old alchemists used to use, anointing it with oil and putting a morsel of gold upon its tongue to make it utter prophecies, saying that, 'and who knows but that long acquaintance with a severed head might not lead to strong knowledge. For such knowledge one would have paid enough. But that is remote from love and remote from ordinary life.'[53] This is the most allegorical scene. In fact Martin, in stead of oil and a morsel of gold, gare her three times of a sideway blow across her mouth and she utetred a prophecy ; 'Return to reality.'

However here again Murdoch has difficulties to explain. Though Honor has not come to 'torment'' Martin, she must make it clear that she does not give him hope. She says to him only that their peculiar relationship is not to be changed into 'something else, something heavy or sharp that he carries within and binds around with his substance until it ceases to hurt, but that is his affair.'[54] To Martin at least the following points are clear. The fact that he is at least with her precisely does make her real for him.[55] 'He had never felt so certain of any path, but, the path might likely lead to humiliation and defeat …… not hope.'[56] 'However wherever it might lead, it is sufficiently what it seemed and utterly to do with him. He would not, could not, attempt to disown it or explain it away. If it was grotesque, it was a grotesque which was of his own substance and to which, beyond any area of possible explanation, he laid an absolute claim. He was doing what he had to do and his actions were, with a richness, his own.'[57] Here the author's conception of love revealed. That is inseparable from justice and clear vision from respect for the real. It is really an exercise of justice and realism and really looking.

It is proper to say that Martin's relationship with Honor suggests that he is going to be aware of the Good, the trancendent reality as a centre of focus of attention which reveals him all things as they really are, and which may finally let him be aware the unity and interdependence of moral world. This seems the author's humble answer to the question which was mentioned early in this essay. However at the last scene she again carefully reminds us of the fact that 'this has nothing to do with happiness, nothing whatever.'[58] Martin's last word, 'well, we must hold hands tightly and hope that we can keep hold of each other through the dream and out into the waking world,'[59] makes one feel that nobody can say this might not turn into another disillusionment. Especially when one reads carefully her explanation why Honor came back to Martin, referring to the story of Gyges and Candaules, one cannot but doubt his confidence in her who is the very person that was lying with her own brother. Without answering to the final serious doubt, Murdoch closes the novel as she usually does in almost all the noves of hers. This kind of incompleteness is one of the features of her novels, whose forms are on the other hand completed as a small myth self-contained and self-satisfied. This may be partly because she thinks good artists should not so representative of their concepts, but mainly because of her own dilemma which she herself seems to realize. She humbly says 'the direction of attention should properly be outward, away from self, but it will be said that it is a long step from the idea of realism to the idea of transcendence,'[60] and that 'the task is difficult and the goal is distant and perhaps never entirely attainable.'[61]

What she clearly says is that 'Goodness is connected with the acceptance of real death and real chance and real transience and only against the background of this acceptance can we understand the full extent of what virtue is like. The acceptance of death is

an acceptance of our own nothingness which is an automatic spur to our concern with what is not ourselves.'[62] Then she adds this task is 'psychologically so difficult.'[63] It is, I think, why she can find no other form but a mystical allegoly in which she can reveal something that exists independently of her.

However here it must be noticed that the mystical aspects of her image of love is not mistaken for such one of D. H. Lawrence's which, as Spender points out, having a self assertive ferocity, mainly appeals to our emotion and consequently reveals 'a destructive element.'[64] Far from that hers is well based upon the intellect. It may be called a precious humman choice which may move toward an empty space,……Good. It is to give sense to the notion of a reality which lies beyond appearance, to exhibit virtue in its true guise in the context of death and chance.

Anyway no one says that the way of Martin's to humiliation and defeat, if it is, might not be a rare path to rare virtue. Murdoch properly refers to Simone Weil's word, 'the exposure of the soul to God condemns the selfish part of it not to suffering but to death. The humble man perceives the distance between suffering and death. And although he is not by definition the good man, perhaps he is the kind of men who is most likely of all to become good.'[65] Though we cannot deny her novels are filled with her strong pessimism, her positive attempt to make a kind of religion of Good play as some moral Law in this chaotic modern world is itself to be estimable. Her dilemma makes us realize that 'literature is to be an activity going forward in a world where certain reconciliation are impossible and certain conflicts inevitable.'[66]

Notes

1) Iris Murdoch : *Sartre : Romantic Rationalist,* Yale University Press, New Heaven, 1960, p.vii.
2) *Ibid.*, p. 11.
3) *Ibid.*, p. 11.
4) Iris Murdoch : "Against Dryness ; A Polemical Sketch," *Encounter,* XVI, Jan., 1961, p. 19.
5) Iris Murdoch : *The Sovereignty of Good,* Schocken Press, N. Y., 1971, p. 84.
6) *Ibid.*, p. 66.
7) *Sartre : Romantionalist,* p. 75.
8) "Against Dryness," p. 16.
6) Ibid., p. 18.
10) *Sartre : Romantic Rationalist,* p. 70.
11) *Ibid.*, p. 77.
12) *Ibid.*, p. 3.
13) *Sartre : Romantic Rationalist,* p. 76.
14) *Ibid.*, p. 76.
15) *The Sovereignty of Good,* p. 79.
16) "Against Dryness," p. 20.
12) *IbId.*, p. 19.
18) *The Sovereignty of Good,* p. 83.
19) *Ibid.*, p. 74.
20) *Ibid.*, p. 99.
21) *Ibid.*, p. 99.
22) *Ibid.*, p. 93.
23) *Ibid.*, p. 84.
24) *Ibid.*, p. 93.
25) *Ibid.*, p. 102.
26) *Ibid.*, p. 102.
27) *Sartre,* p. 38.
28) *Ibid.*, p. 44.
29) *Ibid.*, p. 38.
30) *Ibid.*, p. ix.
31) *Ibid.*, p. 112.
32) "Aginst Dryness," p. 20.
33) *Sartre,* p. 112.
34) "Against Dryness," p. 20.
35) *Ibid.*, p. 20.
36) Iris Murdoch : *A Severed Head,* Penguin Books, 1969, p. 5.
37) *Ibid.*, p. 13.
38) *Ibid.*, p. 84.
39) *Ibid.*, p. 130.
40) *Ibid.*, p. 131.
41) *Ibid.*, p. 19.
42) *Ibid.*, p. 29.
43) *Ibid.*, p. 26.
44) *Ibid.*, p. 108.

45) *Ibid.*, p. 14.
46) *Ibid.*, p. 64.
47) *Ibid.*, p. 110.
48) *Ibid.*, p. 116.
49) *Ibid.*, p. 124.
50) *Ibid.*, p. 124.
51) *Ibid.*, p. 125.
52) *Ibid.*, p. 175.
53) *Ibid.*, p. 182.
54) *Ibid.*, p. 182.
55) *Ibid.*, p. 182.
56) *Ibid.*, p. 125.
57) *Ibid.*, p. 126.
58) *Ibid.*, p. 204.
59) *Ibid.*, p. 204.
60) *The Sovereignty of Good*, p59.
61) *Ibid.*, p. 89.
62) *Ibid.*, p. 103.
63) *Ibid.*, p. 103.
64) Sten Spender : *The Destructive Element*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1935, p. 181.
65) *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 104.
66) *Sartre*, p. 67.

アイリス・マードックの小説における『善』の概念について

伊藤　節

（昭和56年 9 月29日受理）

サルトルを批判する過程でその文学的ヴィジョンを練りあげていったマードックは，現代人の陥った迷妄からはいあがる手段として「超越的実在」といったものを呈示する。それがいかにしてこの不透明な現実の中で見出されていくかという問いそのものが，矛盾と困難さを含めて作品化されているのだが，このうちからアレゴリカルな意味が分析しやすい『切られた首』をとりあげ，マードックの「善」の概念とはどのようなものかを作品の文学的価値をもあわせて考察している．