

Iris Murdoch's The Nice And The Good as the Quest Of Goodness

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ABSTRACT

Dame Jean Irish Murdoch is a British author, philosopher, poet, and novelist of Irish descent who won the Booker Prize. Her writing style is humanistic in nature. She is aware of the inexorable influence that the practical world wields over humanity and individuality. Iris was a humanistic, free-will author who preferred to give her characters their individuality from the full person rather than just one component. By examining human behaviours, sentiments, temperaments, acts, wants, and choices to establish humanity in the sphere of the less humanistic world, this study displays the author's passion for discovering the significance of human goodness in society.

The conflict between an individual and society, which causes strong human resistance to acceptance of the sensible reality of human existence, is discussed in detail in this essay. Murdoch's support for one of the key components of humanism known as "goodness" is also revealed. This essay explores Murdoch's passion for mankind and her yearning for human virtue. Murdoch demonstrates her capacity to understand human minds and reach human hearts.

KEYWORDS - Humanism, Humanity, Goodness, Morality

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest and most renowned authors of the 20th century is Dame Jean Iris Murdoch (1919–1999). Over the course of forty years, she produced 26 novels. Iris Murdoch has made a solid name for herself among writers of the 20th century by her unique and vivacious social commentary. Because she was greatly influenced by philosophers like Sartre, Plato, Freud, Simone Weil Raymond Queneau, Samuel Beckett, and Wittgenstein, she began her writing career with her first philosophical essay, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953). She was influenced by 19th-century authors including Fyodor Dostoevsky, Marcel Proust, and William Shakespeare in addition to philosophers. *The Flight from the Enchanter* (1956) and *The Sandcastle* (1957) were written by her after *Under the Net*, her first published book, was named one of the 100 finest English language novels of the 20th century in 2001 by the editorial board of the American Modern Library. Her 1960s novels, *A Severed Head* (1961), *An Unofficial Rose* (1962), *The Unicorn* (1963), *The Italian Girl* (1964), *The Red and The Green* (1965), *The Time of The Angels* (1966), *The Nice and The Good* (1968), and *Bruno's Dream* (1969); portray the social and intellectual life of the mid-20th century. *The Bell*, published in 1958, is regarded by many critics as one of her finest novels.

Murdoch was regarded as a "saint" and "a living paradigm of the inspiration of goodness" throughout her life. This idea of goodness was essential to both her life and her works. She was also recognised for being a very modest person. She experienced some of the most horrifying events of the 20th century as a creative and morally committed thinker, including World War II, social injustices, sexual restrictions, and a rigid social code of conduct for female writers, but despite all of these challenges, she never stopped looking for an outmoded idea of goodness and optimism and incorporates it into her fiction. As a result, the focus of this paper's research is to examine how society could be affected by the pursuit of goodness.

The Nice and the Good

The Nice and the Good by Iris Murdoch was initially released in 1968. The central theme of the book is making happy marriages work again. It includes a brutal death, extortion, rumoured monitoring, dark arts, tension, and anxiety, yet real love and a feeling of goodness triumph over all of these. There are several unusual combinations in *The Nice and the Good*,

some of which are anticipated and others of which are not. The author frequently employs manipulation and reality as themes, and in this book, she uses them to examine the true distinction between "just being nice" and "doing really well." The actual good is outside the purview of common sense, and the lovely is not always the good. Murdoch aspires to a kind of believing in the one and only monarchy position of virtue or asset in human existence.

The plot of the brief description revolves upon John Ducane, a senior official in Octavian Gray's White Hall office, who is tasked with determining if Joseph Radeechy's suicide did not pose a security danger. Through the media, John Ducane learns that the chronicle could be about blackmail. He looks into the possibility that Radeechy may be blackmailed by Peter McGrath, the office messenger who sold the material to the media. Richard Biranne, one of Octavian's undersecretaries who handled the body after an accident, is questioned by McGrath. When Radeechy was left-handed, John discovers the pistol on his right side. Due to his recent attachment to Kate, Octavian's wife, Ducane wants to break up with Jessica Bird, his lover; Richard's ex-wife Paula, who lives with Kate, is concerned due to the hasty arrival of her lover Eric; and Mary Cloister, a widow and the mother of a teenager named Pierce who is desperately in need of a job, is worried.

Radeechy's home is the only place Ducane looks for the clue. Richard's confession serves as the catalyst for Ducane's probe. In the meanwhile, he replaced the gun. He accepts the corpse simply to determine whether Radeechy was still alive or not. He displays Radeechy's suicide note, in which he admits that he killed his wife, Claudia, by throwing her out of a window because he had worries about her relationship with Richard. Richard saw his murder and has since tried to blackmail him.

Ducane has now learned through the suspense that Radeechy committed suicide because she felt guilty about committing a crime and was afraid of Richard and McGrath's extortion. As soon as Kate and Jessica learned that they shared a love for Ducane, they both left Ducane. Paula expresses her want to see Richard again and talks to Ducane about his issue. Ducane puts his life at danger to protect Pierce from the approaching sea monster. This event completely alters Ducane. He resolves not to criticise or chastise anybody. Richard is anticipated to lose his position, but Ducane really steps down. After a protracted separation, he aids Paula and Richard in getting back together. Ducane pardons Peter McGrath and hires him as his chauffeur. Mary, who is Ducane's equal in morals and virtue, is chosen as his bride.

The Nice and the Good has a detective-novel-like beginning. Married pair named Kate Grey and Octavian Grey, who is both philanthropic hedonists, is at the focus of the story. The Greys stand for the lovely who always values society above all other members of the so-called refined and sophisticated society.

CONCLUSION

Murdoch's message that one should not gaze at evil but rather at good is delivered through Theodore's brooding in *The Nice and the Good*. This is crucial because it is the only thing that can end the tyranny of the past. It dismantles evil's hold on the personality. Theo contemplates, "In the light of the good, evil can be seen in its place, not owned, but just existing, in its place" (346). It is possible to draw the conclusion that the good characters, such as Duncane, Mary, Theo, and Willy, engage in positive kindness, freedom, morality, and love for individuals, whereas Kate and Octavian only refrain from harming society by not doing well to others. Murdoch demonstrates via Duncane how decent people never abuse their position of authority over defenceless others for their own gain. They utilise their power over others to improve those who don't have enough happiness in their life. In the end, it demonstrates that doing genuine good and acting morally are necessities for society. Being kind to others all the time is not always the best course of action because goodness benefits both society and the individual and their pursuit of happiness. Goodness must be acquired in order to obtain justice and love.

As with the choices made by the author for the protagonist of the novel, whose acts of selflessness are the true adaptation of human goodness, the concept of the good exists in the inner side of consciousness and comes out naturally in man's preferences, choices, deeds, and goals. Murdoch's moral philosophy is grounded on realism, with the central premise being trust in and acceptance of the fact that goodness exists. This leads the author of this article to the final conclusion that humanity's primary job is to translate the ideal of kindness into tangible reality. To get knowledge and moral prosperity, which can lead to real happiness, joy, freedom, fraternity, equality, and finally the ultimate objective, humanity, one must believe in goodness and act morally.

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