

## Philosophical Content of Iris Murdoch's Novel

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**Abstract:** This article is dedicated to the philosophical content of Murdoch's novels. The originality of Murdoch's artistic pursuits is directly related to her profession. For many years, the writer has been teaching a course in philosophy, primarily existentialism, at Oxford University. Teaching does not interfere with creativity: Murdoch is the author of more than thirty novels. She poses and solves moral and philosophical problems based on the material of private life, avoiding social and historical concreteness in the depiction of the characters' destinies and their inner appearance

**Key words:** novel, Iris Murdoch, existentialism, creativity, "net", characters

Speaking about the philosophical content of Murdoch's novels, it should be noted that it does not differ in particular depth. The philosophical principle is manifested in the ideological disputes that the characters lead, in the plot development of the work, in a conflict situation. But using the ideas of a particular teaching, the novelist consciously simplifies them, adapts them to the psychological or moral and even everyday situation that interests her. In each theory used by Murdoch, she tries to single out what lends itself to immediate concrete and artistic embodiment, philosophical collisions are obviously found.

A. Murdoch made her debut with the novel "Under the Net" (1954), immediately showing herself to be a talented master of words, able to give the narrative both lyricism and elegant humorous coloring. Already in this work, the future distinctive features of the novelist are reflected – an interest in the topic of art, in the depiction of a creative personality and a fascination with moral and philosophical problems, the interpretation of the behavior of characters in the light of modern theories, in this case, linguistic philosophy and existentialism. The originality of Murdoch's artistic pursuits is directly related to her profession. For many years, the writer has been teaching a course in philosophy, primarily existentialism, at Oxford University. Teaching does not interfere with creativity: Murdoch is the author of more than thirty novels. She poses and solves moral and philosophical problems based on the material of private life, avoiding social and historical concreteness in the depiction of the characters' destinies and their inner appearance. Sometimes only by some details (the characters drive cars and fly airplanes) it is possible to determine that the action takes place in the XX century. socio-political reality is present in Murdoch's novels only in individual echoes, not reflected in the central conflict of the novel. At the same time, the private life of the characters is inscribed in the overall picture of a philosophically interpreted existence, the idea of which Murdoch relies on the idea of human loneliness, his dependence on fatal accidents, passions, the idea of the incomprehensibility of truth, the lack of mutual understanding among people, the Freudian interpretation of the human psyche.

"Under the Net" is, to this day, perhaps the clearest Murdoch novel. It is permeated with a sense of the incompleteness of life, only emerging opportunities. It was written before the era of the "underground" and counterculture, the leftist convulsions of the youth revolt, the "sexual revolution" and international terrorism. It feels the tradition of life in the British Isles and the charm of old Europe, not yet touched by the newfangled obscurations of thought and morality. And such a cute "antihero" as Jake, who combined the features of a charming rogue from a roguish novel and a simpleton from the novel "the high road", will not be repeated in Murdoch's prose. Therefore, apparently, the comedy of life prevails here over its tragic beginnings and simple miracles still come with the actors, and they are able to distinguish them in the rotation of existence. With all that, the problems of Murdoch's creativity are laid down and defined already here, and here she appears equal to herself – unique, instantly recognizable by intonation and slyly uninhibited; according to the fusion of fact and fiction in prose, that is, the sensual visibility of the objective world and the exciting, slightly trembling haze into which the personal perception of the characters and the author wraps this world; according to the obsession with a circle of problems dating back to what the philosopher's students are doing on the pages of the novel: "... the world is a mystery to which they consider it possible pick up the key." Murdoch books are

a bunch of such keys, and everyone is able to unlock one small hiding place, but not the secret of the world, because it is unknowable. In fact, all her novels are written about this unknown ability and the tragicomedy of life generated by it. The name of the first of them is ambiguous. You can decipher it in such a way that Jake is confused about himself - his feelings, aspirations, actions. But is it only one thing? "Bad people consider time to be discontinuous. They purposely blunt their perception of natural causality. The virtuous perceive existence as an all-encompassing dense network of the smallest interweaves," the novel "The Black Prince" says. It's hard to consider Jake virtuous, although you can't call him bad, and he, like the vast majority of the writer's characters, flounders under this net. In Murdoch's understanding, the "net" itself is neither good nor bad, but there is an objective embodiment of the chaos of being in human life.

In the eyes of the writer, the "net" symbolizes the primordial chaos of existence, which, within the framework of human life, is transformed into a tragicomedy. The latter is fed and reproduced by what, in relation to Murdoch's work, can be defined as the Tower of Babel syndrome - a total misunderstanding of others, his environment, and even himself. In each novel, the syndrome gives a different clinical picture, manifests itself in externally dissimilar symptoms. Then it is the presumptuous willingness of the characters to "pick up the key" to something that no key can open. It is an equally presumptuous determination to attribute feelings, thoughts and aspirations to others that they do not have. "Hartley loves me and has been regretting losing me for a long time. How else. She does not love her husband" ("The sea, the sea.") this incomparable "how else" clearly demonstrates the simple mechanics of self-delusion. That very elementary egoism, "the feeling of the possessor, the desire to grab and not give away" (ibid.). At best, it is the original secret of a person's inner being, not always intelligible to himself, as the hero of "Under the Net" well said: "The essence of my life is a secret conversation with myself, and to turn it into a dialogue would be tantamount to suicide." Such a complete focus on themselves often makes Murdoch's characters blind, deaf and unreasonable, more than complacent – self-sufficient. "You are so fresh, so peaceful, like a newly-born cat," his ex-wife ("The Black Prince") throws to the hero, immersed in the sensual relish of the newly flared love passion. But it, this self-sufficiency, turns their best intentions into stones, which, according to a well-known saying, pave the road to hell, and in the same book a person is called to escape "from the bestial, egocentric night, which is in close proximity to any, the most civilized of us." And all because of the same arrogance, Murdoch's heroes fall into grotesque situations, that is, ridiculous and bitter at the same time.

Critics have noticed that in many Murdoch novels, this dance has its own master, or conductor, whose will and desire determine its intricate figures, that is, ultimately the fate of the characters. For the most part, such a manager plays a sinister role; he is mysterious, eccentric, endowed with distinct demonic properties and performs the functions of an evil wizard in the plot. These are Misha Fox in the novel pointedly titled "Escape from the Wizard" (1956), psychoanalyst Palmer Andersen from "Severed Head" (1961), "femme fatale" Emma Sands ("Wild Rose"), rich Julius King ("Quite a worthy Defeat"), historian David Crimond ("The Book and Brotherhood", 1987).

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