

# Iris Murdoch and Morality Edited by Anne Rowe and Avril Horner



Iris Murdoch and Morality

#### Also by Anne Rowe

IRIS MURDOCH: A Reassessment (*editor*) SACRED SPACE, BELOVED CITY: Iris Murdoch's London (*with Cheryl Bove*) THE VISUAL ARTS AND THE NOVELS OF IRIS MURDOCH

#### Also by Avril Horner

BODY MATTERS: Feminism, Textuality, Corporeality (co-edited with Angela Keane)

DAPHNE DU MAURIER: Writing, Identity and the Gothic Imagination (*with Sue Zlosnik*)

EUROPEAN GOTHIC: A Spirited Exchange, 1760–1960 (editor)

GOTHIC AND THE COMIC TURN (with Sue Zlosnik)

LANDSCAPES OF DESIRE: Metaphors in Modern Women's Fiction (with Sue Zlosnik)

LE GOTHIC: Influences and Appropriations in Europe and America (*co-edited with Sue Zlosnik*)

# Iris Murdoch and Morality

Edited by

Anne Rowe

and

Avril Horner





Introduction, selection and editorial matter © Anne Rowe & Avril Horner 2010 Individual chapters © contributors 2010 Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2010 978-0-230-22445-2

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6-10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The authors have asserted their rights to be identified as the authors of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2010 by PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave  $^{\otimes}$  and Macmillan  $^{\otimes}$  are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-30947-4 ISBN 978-0-230-27722-9 (eBook) DOI 10.1057/9780230277229

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

								2	
19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10

For Iestyn Gareth Rowe, Samuel Kosey Horner and Felix Matthew Horner This page intentionally left blank

### Contents

Ack	nowledgements	ix
Not	tes on Contributors	х
Not	es on References and Abbreviations	xiii
	roduction: Art, Morals and 'The Discovery of Reality' <i>ne Rowe and Avril Horner</i>	1
Pa	rt I Morality and the Novel	
1	Murdoch's Mannered Realism: Metafiction, Morality and the Post-War Novel <i>Bran Nicol</i>	17
2	The Preacher's Tone: Murdoch's Mentors and Moralists <i>Priscilla Martin</i>	31
3	Stories, Rituals and Healers in Iris Murdoch's Fiction <i>Rob Hardy</i>	43
4	Laughing at Something Tragic: Murdoch as Anti-Moralist <i>Peter J. Conradi</i>	56
5	'Refinements of Evil': Iris Murdoch and the Gothic <i>Avril Horner</i>	70
Pa	rt II A Moral Union: Philosophy and Literature	
6	Iris Murdoch, the Ethical Turn and Literary Value Simon Haines	87
7	Murdoch's Fictional Philosophers: What They <i>Say</i> and What They <i>Show Scott H. Moore</i>	101
8	Death and Goodness: <i>Bruno's Dream</i> and 'The Sovereignty of Good over Other Concepts' <i>Mark Luprecht</i>	113

#### viii Contents

9	<i>Jackson's Dilemma</i> and 'The Responsible Life of the Imagination' <i>Frances White</i>	126
	rt III Morality without God: Iris Murdoch's cular Theology	
10	'The Dream that does not Cease to Haunt us': Iris Murdoch's Holiness <i>Anne Rowe</i>	141
11	'A Story about a Man': The Demythologized Christ in the Novels of Iris Murdoch and Patrick White <i>Pamela Osborn</i>	156
12	Do not Seek God outside your own Soul: Buddhism in <i>The</i> Green Knight Tammy Grimshaw	168
13	The Moral Fate of Fictive Persons: On Iris Murdoch's Humanism <i>William Schweiker</i>	180
Inde	ex	194

### Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank Frances White for her assistance with editing and proof-reading and for helping with research for the introduction to this volume. Pamela Osborn also provided invaluable editorial help. John Ibbett gave generously of his time for consultation and advice. Extracts from *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, and *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* by Iris Murdoch, published by Chatto and Windus, are reprinted by permission of the Random House Group. US rights to use extracts from these titles were granted by Penguin, a division of Penguin Group (USA) Inc.

We are also grateful to Paula Kennedy of Palgrave Macmillan for her constant encouragement and support.

### Notes on Contributors

**Peter J. Conradi** has been since 1997 Emeritus Professor of English at Kingston University and Honorary Research Fellow at University College, London. He is author of *The Saint and the Artist: A Study of the Fiction of Iris Murdoch* (1986; third edition 2001) and editor of *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature* (by Iris Murdoch). He is the author of *Iris Murdoch: A Life*, the authorized biography of Iris Murdoch, published in 2001. He is adviser to the *Iris Murdoch Review* to which he contributes articles and reviews. He has also written books on John Fowles, Angus Wilson and Dostoevsky. His *At The Bright Hem of God: Radnorshire Pastoral* was published in 2009 and his edition of Murdoch's letters and a journal *A Writer at War: Iris Murdoch 1939–45* is forthcoming in 2010.

**Tammy Grimshaw** is a freelance writer who lives near Cordoba, Spain. She is the author of several literary publications, including *Sexuality*, *Gender, and Power in Iris Murdoch's Fiction* (2005). She has also written recent articles for *Modern Fiction Studies*, *The Explicator* and *The Literary Encyclopedia*.

**Simon Haines** is Professor of English at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he is also Deputy Director of the International Centre for Human Values. He was formerly Head of the School of Humanities at the Australian National University. His publications include *Poetry and Philosophy from Homer to Rousseau: Romantic Souls, Realist Lives* (Palgrave 2005) and *Shelley's Poetry: The Divided Self* (Macmillan 1997) as well as articles and book chapters on Romantic and Victorian literature and on literature and ethics. His current projects include a sequel volume on the modern self in poetry and philosophy.

**Rob Hardy** practised as a social worker in a psychiatric hospital and mental health area team before moving into further education. His most recent full-time post was Assistant Principal, Higher Education, at the Bournemouth and Poole College. He now teaches English part-time for the Open University. **Avril Horner** is Emeritus Professor of English at Kingston University, London. She has co-authored three books with Sue Zlosnik, the most recent of which is *Gothic and the Comic Turn* (Palgrave 2005), as well as numerous articles and essays. They also co-edited *Le Gothic: Influences and Appropriations in Europe and America* (Palgrave 2008) and have an edition of E.S. Barrett's *The Heroine* in press. She is the editor of *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange, 1760–1960* (2002) and is currently writing, with Janet Beer, a book on Edith Wharton's late fiction. She and Sue Zlosnik were Co-Presidents of the International Gothic Association, 2005–09.

**Mark Luprecht** is Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the English Department at the University of Tennessee. He is the author of books exploring the common intellectual heritage of Sigmund Freud and Arthur Schnitzler, and the last painting of Paul Klee in its intellectual setting. He is currently researching the circle surrounding Iris Murdoch and Elias Canetti.

**Priscilla Martin** teaches English and classics at St Edmund Hall, Oxford. She has also taught at the Universities of Edinburgh, Colorado, California, Hawaii, Washington and London. She is the author of *Piers Plowman: The Field and the Tower* and *Chaucer's Women: Nuns, Wives and Amazons*, and has also published on the Gawain Poet, Tyndale, Shakespeare and modern novelists. She is currently working on *Literary Lives: Iris Murdoch* with Anne Rowe for publication in 2010.

**Scott H. Moore** is Associate Professor of Philosophy and Great Texts and Director of the Great Texts Program in the Honors College at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, USA. He is the author of *The Limits of Liberal Democracy: Politics and Religion at the End of Modernity* (IVP Academic) and is currently writing a book on Iris Murdoch's 'devilish metaphysics as a guide to morals'.

**Bran Nicol** is Reader in Modern and Contemporary Literature at the University of Portsmouth. His publications include *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction* (2009), *Iris Murdoch: The Retrospective Fiction* (2nd edition: Palgrave, 2004), *D.M. Thomas* (2004) and *Postmodernism and the Contemporary Novel: A Reader* (2002).

**Pamela Osborn** was awarded a PhD Studentship by Kingston University, in association with The Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies, in 2008. She gave a paper at the 2008 International Iris Murdoch Conference

entitled 'Redemptive Failure in *The Unicorn'* and is currently researching mourning and bereavement in Murdoch's novels.

Anne Rowe is Director of the Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies at Kingston University. She is the author of *The Visual Arts and the Novels of Iris Murdoch* (2002), editor of *Iris Murdoch: A Reassessment* (2006) and co-author with Cheryl Bove of *Sacred Space, Beloved City: Iris Murdoch's London* (2008). She was Editor of the *Iris Murdoch News Letter* 1993–2007, and is now Lead Editor of the *Iris Murdoch Review.* She is currently working on *Literary Lives: Iris Murdoch* with Priscilla Martin for publication in 2010.

**William Schweiker** is the Edward L. Ryerson Distinguished Professor of Theological Ethics at the University of Chicago where he is also the Director of the Martin Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion. Professor Schweiker is the author of many books, including *Theological Ethics and Global Dynamics: In the Time of Many Worlds* (2004), and most recently, with David Klemm, *Religion and the Human Future: An Essay in Theological Humanism* (2008). He also contributed to and edited, with Maria Antonaccio, *Iris Murdoch and the Search for Human Goodness* (1996).

**Frances White** is a research student at Kingston University, London, writing a thesis on remorse in the philosophy and fiction of Iris Murdoch. She is Assistant Editor of the *Iris Murdoch Review* and Assistant Director of the Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies. She has published essays in the *Iris Murdoch Review* and the Literary Encyclopaedia Online. '"The World is just a Transit Camp": Diaspora in the Fiction of Iris Murdoch' was awarded the CWWN Postgraduate Prize for 2008, and 'Two Women in Dark Times: Iris Murdoch and Hannah Arendt' is published in *Iris Murdoch's Scenes: An Anthology of Moral Imagination*, ed. Simone Roberts (2009).

# Notes on References and Abbreviations

References to the following texts refer to the editions indicated and are abbreviated as follows:

- Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, ed. Peter J. Conradi (London: Chatto and Windus, 1997): *EM*.
- Peter J. Conradi, *The Saint and The Artist: A Study of the Fiction of Iris Murdoch,* 3rd edition (London: Harper Collins, 2001): SA.
- Peter J. Conradi, Iris Murdoch: A Life (London: Harper Collins 2001): IMAL.
- Gillian Dooley, From a Tiny Corner in the House of Fiction: Conversations with Iris Murdoch (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2003): TCHF.
- Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992): *MGM*.
- Iris Murdoch, The Sovereignty of Good (London: Routledge, 1970): SG.
- Anne Rowe, ed., Iris Murdoch: A Reassessment (London: Palgrave, 2007): IMAR.
- The Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies at Kingston University is abbreviated as CIMS.
- Iris Murdoch's novels are fully referenced at the first mention in each chapter. Thereafter page numbers appear in parentheses.

This page intentionally left blank