

Michelle Mahoney

The Ontological Impossibility of a Flourishing Self in the Absence of the Other

Studia Philosophiae Christianae 50/1, 233-248

2014

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

MICHELLE MAHONEY

THE ONTOLOGICAL IMPOSSIBILITY OF A FLOURISHING SELF IN THE ABSENCE OF THE OTHER

Abstract. This paper follows Iris Murdoch in an ongoing critique of existentialism that saw the beginnings of her philosophical work with Sartre and its conclusion with her manuscript on Heidegger. The continuity of her critique focuses upon her concern with the magnetism of the ego over and against attention toward the other. Heidegger, as a metaphysician working to close the post-Enlightenment subject/object separation, engages her thought regarding new possibilities for a future metaphysics. For Murdoch, seeking an ontology that rejects a transcendent God requires a notion of goodness that provokes a point of contention with Heidegger's ontology of Being, where a new dualism of authenticity and inauthenticity toward Being undermines any ethos of the other.

Keywords: Aletheia, art, authenticity, inauthenticity, Dasein, Eros, Ego, Good, Other, *Sorge*, self, death

1. Eros and the other. 2. The untethered Ego. 3. Attention to the other. 4. The reality of goodness. 5. The Good and the real. 6. Authenticity, inauthenticity, and others. 7. Eros and *Sorge*. 8. The Good and the other.

In this essay I will analyze Iris Murdoch's views on how the human subject attains authenticity in selfhood, and how this process relates

to goodness and being. I will first describe Murdoch's view of the nature of moral activity. Then, after a brief look at Sartre's existentialist position on self, I will explore what I have been able to glean from Murdoch's manuscript 'Heidegger' to look at her insight into the work for which Sartre's writing has been said to be a footnote. Through Murdoch's critique of existentialism on the one hand, and Heideggerian philosophy which grounds it, I will further suggest Murdoch's direction for a substantive theory of moral action.

1. EROS AND THE OTHER

In her book *The Sovereignty of the Good*¹ Murdoch formulates an ontology and a praxis where the human subject evolves during its lifetime. Murdoch fleshes-out the Platonic 'line' as an ascent² for knowledge and the good toward which we are compelled to strive. This is how the self's becoming happens through careful practice of moral improvement and of striving toward the ideal. Eros is the medium or sign through which this flourishing occurs. In that eros can be manifested as the desire to reach toward the other, it reveals lack within the self. Awareness of such lack is simultaneous with knowledge of the incomplete nature of the subject itself. The ego of the naïve self is recognized as an impediment to fulfillment. So the acknowledgement of lack within the self, and the need that accompanies Eros, cannot be allowed to fall into sado-masochism and despair. Suffering is not an aim in itself. The self then, needs to acknowledge that one's own flourishing is not to be found ultimately by looking inward toward an alienated neo-Kantian subject, but instead needs to recognize the heteronomous nature of the moral development of human beings through practice of attaining toward the good. "The aim of morality cannot simply be action. Without some more positive conception of the soul as a substantial and continuously developing mechanism of attachments, the purification and reorientation of which must be the task of morals, 'freedom' is readily

¹ I. Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, Routledge, New York 1971.

² Plato, *The Republic*, trans. F. Macdonald Cornford, Oxford University Press, New York 1968, chapter XXIV, 221.

corrupted into self-assertion and ‘right action’ into some sort of ad hoc utilitarianism.”³

2. THE UNTETHERED EGO

In Murdoch’s view, moral activity does not require overt action for its consummation. Equally, she holds that the moment of moral choice need not be manifested in some great, dramatic, isolated act of will. Here, I refer to an existential account of what it means to act morally.

On the existentialist account, an isolated act of will is the will acting for a self with no tethers to the sun, to use Nietzsche’s version of the Platonic metaphor. That is to say, the act of will is isolated in two ways. Firstly, there is no pre-given externally constituted purpose for the existentialist. And secondly there is no persistent self by which the absolute power of the will could be qualified or compromised. That is because a) there is no telos other than self-valuation or the will to power and b) the self is a blank slate which through its acts of willing creates its own nature and values however ephemerally.

For Sartre, to be bound to any given purpose is to deny freedom and render us wholly determined. We would therefore have the status of a natural object or ‘being in itself’ in that there would be no new possibilities open to us in our actions. To admit a given purpose or norm would be to deny the complete, undetermined openness or ‘nothingness’ with which we are faced whenever we make a choice. Hence choice is the power of the will to appoint value as an act takes place. So too, the power to negate or deny any given value is the power to exercise free will.⁴

As each moral act springs out of the nothingness of complete freedom, moral choices are not cumulative. Instead, we must fill the emptiness of free self with the groundless decisiveness of our own actions. The will treats each dilemma as if it were its first. Sartre holds that we choose not only our actions but our characters as well, and this choice

³ I. Murdoch, *op. cit.*, 69.

⁴ M. Warnock, *The Philosophy of Sartre*, Hutchinson & Co, London 1966, 121.

occurs only at the moment of the act and in each separate act. Indeed, the question arises whether the notion of character has any meaning in this context with such an absence of a sustained source of action.

Murdoch maintains that the existentialist⁵ holds that the empty, groundless power of will is the center for human 'moral action.' She disagrees with this position as an account of moral activity because it is inward-looking and world-denying. "Willing' through an empty ego can only look inward in its creation of itself for itself. That there is any link between reason and teleology is denied. That is to say, the relationship between reason and action is wholly governed by the subjective will of the individual.

Here, Nietzsche's parable of the madman provides a helpful picture. The madman is mad because he comes to the realization that once God is dead, the focus of our moral activity is cut off from reality. We are no longer tethered to the sun. Instead each individual must be himself a lantern, and each individual is only as good as the act in which he creates his own values. There is good only insofar as it is willed and chosen to be so.

3. ATTENTION TO THE OTHER

Murdoch rejects this picture without returning to theosophy as a source for guidance. Instead she posits a specific kind of reality which persists and upon which we can focus, and toward which we aim and strive. This indefinable reality, the Good, cannot be incarnate in an exhaustible way, but is the Good to which we try to relate and re-relate in a seemingly external way.⁶ She sees the awareness of the Good as related by degrees to the self in the following way.

The self for Murdoch is a persistent self. That is to say, it has a character, history, and attachments. We make decisions through reflecting upon our relationships with others and the world in which we live. This reflection comes through 'attention' to, or looking at the world and it

⁵ Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Sartre are each discussed in I. Murdoch's book *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, Vintage, London 2003.

⁶ I. Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, op. cit., 61.

is this way we become who we are. The artist gives us the clearest example of attention to the world. By forgetting her own needs and wants, the artist can give all energies over to the thing she is trying to attend to in her work. Overcoming the self allows the artist to attend obediently to an object outside herself which emerges in the course of its creation. Similarly, by looking outside ourselves and by attending to people and things which we encounter we become what we are. We attend to things, make moral assessments of our relation to these things, and then decide what we are and what we are to do in this relation. We pay attention to reality, reality reflects back on the self and informs the self. Attention to reality thereby gives us the ability to receive the moral. Murdoch writes, "I can only choose within the world I can 'see' which implies that clear vision is a result of moral imagination and moral effort."⁷

To say that we are, in a new sense, substantial selves is to say that our moral activity flows from a prior disposition or character which has been formed through a culmination of the numerous choices we have made. That is to say, there is no empty self which has only a solitary will to guide it. Our substantial self is what informs our attention to the world.

The work of attention strives toward perfection. It requires continuous moral effort and "imperceptibly it builds up structure of value round about us." Against existentialism, the implication for freedom is that "the exercise of our freedom is a piecemeal business which goes on all the time and not a grandiose leaping about unimpeded at important moments."⁸

4. THE REALITY OF GOODNESS

Imagination and attention reveal a knowledge of 'something' which exists independently of the self. That 'something,' Murdoch holds, is

⁷ Ibid., 37.

⁸ Ibid. For a further discussion on this description of freewill see Ch. A. Campbell, *In Defense of Free Will*, George Allen & Unwin, London 1967, 35.

the good in that one might start from the assertion that morality as goodness is a form of realism.⁹ The relation of the idea of realism to the idea of transcendence can be constantly re-related through the artist's conception of a transcendent beauty.¹⁰ Because the good is external to the self it is difficult to access. However, Murdoch says that art is goodness by proxy because the great artist banishes the self in the pursuit of higher aim. So Murdoch attempts to uncover the main characteristic of the good through the model or metaphor of art. Understanding goodness through art involves a recognition of unity and form, hierarchy and authority. "The mind which has ascended to the vision of the Good can subsequently see the concepts through which it has ascended (...) in their true nature and in their proper relationships to each other."¹¹

The unity of the Good is here defined as constituting a hierarchy of virtues. The ideas of hierarchy and transcendence replace the attempt to see and respond to the real world in light of a virtuous consciousness. The unity of virtues as they converge toward the good are a metaphor for the virtuous man. However, while the unity of the good stretches over all our modes of living and informs the quality of all relations, it does so only as the shadow of an as yet unachieved unity. The good artist will excel in his care and concern for his subject matter and this ability will, on the hierarchical scheme, make him more disposed to being a good person. By the same token, the man who (for example) lacks in courage to stand up for what he sees to be just, has little chance of knowing the good in other important ways. These tendencies all point to the hierarchical unity of the good. It is the possibility for the transcendent which leads Murdoch to keep in mind the idea of the virtuous peasant, who need not have ever looked at the fire of the self before ascending from the cave into the light of the sun. Those who have avoided the inward gaze are less corrupted and corruptible. Indeed, the further Murdoch emphasizes and elaborates the idea of the transcendent unity of the Good, the more she suggests the limits for

⁹ I. Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good*, op. cit., 57.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 95.

the self of the inward gaze. Most of us “are blinded by the self, [and] denuded by selfish fantasy (...) our autonomy of will and self is false.” The magnetic center of the transcendent Good draws us, though “the occupation is perilous for reasons connected with masochism and other obscure devises of the psyche.”¹²

Hence Murdoch’s revival of the view of beauty and art through 1) the virtuous peasant who is one of those ‘ordinary people’ who does not believe he can create his own values through choice alone and 2) through the complex attention toward beauty in art, experience of the sublime reminds us that we cannot avoid confronting the awful contingency of nature or human fate.¹³ Good art presents us with a “truthful image of the human condition in a form that can be steadily contemplated.”¹⁴

5. THE GOOD AND THE REAL

What becomes clear, as we read *Re-reading Plato*, Section 7 of *Existentialists and Mystics*¹⁵ as well as *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, 1992, and manuscript *Heidegger* 1993¹⁶ is that the tension between the Good as ideal and the Good as real comes to the fore. Murdoch’s reading of Plato highlights the role of Eros in joining the Good to the real and everyday. She writes: “Plato’s Eros is a principle which connects the commonest human desire to the highest morality and to the pattern of divine creativity in the universe (...). This Eros [is] a daemon, a mediating spirit of need and desire, the mixed up child of Poverty and

¹² Ibid., 101.

¹³ Ibid., 81.

¹⁴ Ibid., 84.

¹⁵ I. Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, ed. P. Conradi, Penguin, New York 1998, 297–496. (Collected essays written 1950 through to 1997).

¹⁶ I. Murdoch, *Heidegger*, 1993. This is an unpublished manuscript for a 224 page book in typescript form at the Iris Murdoch Institute at Kingston University, London, UK. With the permission of John Bailey, Justin Broackes has published the first section of Murdoch’s typescript, *Sein und Zeit: Pursuit of Being* in his book *Iris Murdoch, Philosopher: A Collection of Essays*, Oxford University Press, New York 2012.

Plenty (...). Eros is the desire for good, and joy which is active at all levels in the soul and through which we are able to turn toward reality.”¹⁷

Eros provides humility in the knowledge that existence is essentially contingent rather than harmoniously integrated into a single unity. This is especially made clear in the *Timaeus* which Murdoch describes as both realistic and pessimistic. In this Trinitarian creation myth, the world soul as logos she says “can also represent human activity, sunk in contingency and confusion, yet also vitally connected with the power of spirit.”¹⁸ Murdoch is questioning the early Judeo-Christian dualistic account of Plato. Current scholar David Robjant, in his 2011 paper on Murdoch entitled *The Earthly Realism of Plato’s Metaphysics*¹⁹ makes a case for an empiricist take on Murdoch, based upon her work on Plato. Suffice it to say for the moment, that her objections to a Nietzschean and Heideggerian reading of Plato as a simple dualist, do not make her an empiricist. In fact, to make this claim is to unwittingly continue a dualistic argument. Through Murdoch’s re-reading of Plato, where she attempts to lay out an ontological account of the Good that is not dualistic in terms of subject/object and not closed, as well as her position on the existential self of Sartre, one can discern the direction she will take with regard to Martin Heidegger.

Murdoch does find traction with Heidegger as he looks beyond the metaphysical subject of Descartes and Hegel toward consideration of contingency, metaphysics and truth. He too is compelled to reject the radical subjectivity of the 20th century, and he too attempts to find voice for the reality of the finite world giving it strength in art, poetry, and beauty.²⁰

¹⁷ I. Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics*, op. cit., 419.

¹⁸ I. Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, op. cit., 145.

¹⁹ David Robjant’s paper *The Earthly Realism of Plato* was given at the University of Wales in 2011.

²⁰ What follows represents my understanding of Heidegger and my impression of Murdoch’s insights and understanding as taken from my notes on reading ‘Heidegger’, the manuscript. Where necessary, I have paraphrased and footnoted but not directly quoted the manuscript *Heidegger* in accordance with the condition of the Iris Murdoch Institute at Kingston University.

6. AUTHENTICITY, INAUTHENTICITY, AND OTHERS

In Heidegger's work, the self of Dasein is not a rationally autonomous subject such as we would find in Kant. Nor is Dasein a radically free subject governed by will which we find later in Sartre. Murdoch sympathizes with Heidegger in that he attempts to reclaim the dialectic struggle from Hegel, where he sees the subject/object division retained in the assertion of the Absolute and the History of Mankind. She sees that Heidegger strives for a view of life that is grounded in finitude in order to escape both idealism and neo-enlightenment science. Dasein arrives pre-subject/object divide in a state of thrownness into the facticity of which it is a part. Its truth is to be found through glimpses of primordial Being and its own being-toward-death, where lack is defeated by fulfillment in Being.

Beings of Dasein are to be fully present to the call of Being, but because of their finite, flux ridden, contingent states, are at odds with their own nature. They *do* have the capacity to look beyond that state through a quietude, an attention toward the aesthetic of great art or great poetry or primordial nature. It is through this process that Dasein might achieve a negation of its fallen, average, everyday inauthenticity, and thus allow for the presencing of Being. Its destiny is toward self-negation, to reach the truth of Being in that the factual self can yield to beauty and truth. "Preserving the work [of art] does not reduce people to their private experiences, but brings them into affiliation with the truth happening in the work. Thus it grounds being for and being with one another as the historical standing-out of human existence in reference to unconcealedness."²¹

For Heidegger beings are ever-becoming through their concern/*Sorge* with authenticity. In the search for truth/aletheia, which can proffer authenticity Dasein must clear ground so that it can discern Being which is hidden by the noisy chatter of the everyday. The quietude of simplicity, for example a bridge in Heidelberg, can bring forth an

²¹ M. Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter, Harper & Row, New York 1971 (*Origin of the Work of Art*), 69.

originary moment of purity in existence normally obscured by instrumentality and efficiency. The more the individual tries to be at one with aletheia, the more angst resounds in his being, calling for the ineffable. Truth is the shoes of the peasant, removed once by Van Gogh and then by Heidegger. The artist comes close to capturing the life of the peasant through what represents the peasant's work and deeds and values, but then the thinker through unthinking its representational interpretation, takes this as the artwork working back to its thingly feature. This reminds us of authentic existence as purity in need, habit, and peacefulness of thought²² – 'the smoke rising from the tobacco pipes of the restive workers of the land.'

Although Murdoch appreciates the significance of Heidegger's aesthetics, she holds that there is little point in truth of this kind as it has no affiliation with goodness. The huge disconnect Heidegger creates between himself and the Platonic, and Judeo-Christian heritage is manifest in the difference in the analogical relation between *care/Sorge* toward authenticity, compared with *eros/love/* toward the other. Both *Sorge* and *eros* should bring forth fulfillment where there is lack, but because Murdoch sees love as the mediation for the Good, she takes the concept of self as ever-becoming, and relates it to the constant vibrancy of everyday contact with others.

Murdoch, along with Adorno²³ whom she admires, would see the shoes back on the feet of the peasant and see him not in cultural 'primalness' but in his work with others in the daily struggles of distracting life. The thoughts, words, and deeds that relate one person to another are the fabric of existence itself, if existence has anything to do with consciousness.

In contrast, the unconcealment of the house of Being in a Greek temple is expressive of a truth about finite being. It is the lack in the nature of Dasein itself that keeps it from fully participating in this revealing. It is within the purview of very few to glimpse aletheia. It is

²² Ibid., 34–39.

²³ Th. Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. K. Tarnowski, F. Will, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill. 1973.

experientially available only to those who can evade the inauthenticity of daily life and seek primordial Being.

Heidegger then departs from the history of metaphysics in his anti-metaphysical assertion of facticity and historicity, only to alienate that very historicity insofar as it is not permitted to validate the contexts of lives as authentic in the lived everydayness. More crucially though, it lacks recourse to the dignity and value of goodness of lives themselves.

7. EROS AND *SORGE*

Murdoch views *Sorge*/care to Being as a humble analogy of Eros in its relation to the Good. She sees Heidegger as utterly bereft in his alienation of the everyday connection to others and in the fundamental absence of love and the good in his ontology. In the newly published introductory section of *Heidegger*, “The Pursuit of Being,” she describes the origin of this alienation of the self to others and to the Good. She writes: “The concept of Dasein, as starting point, transcends the old dualism of subject and object and also (with that) outmodes the (from a Heideggerian point of view mechanical) Hegelian dialectic. There is the continual movement or ‘play’ of presence and absence as beings, manifestations of Being, come and go. Being is not a thing, but an infinite possibility of manifestation, and in this sense a transcendent presence. Each Dasein, as it responds to Being and enables its manifestations of beings, creates its own world.(...) This world however maybe filled with illusions, constant temptation to error.”²⁴

Dasein then, is in a state of thrownness into the contingent, finite, noisy world of everydayness where it always confronts ‘more and

²⁴ I. Murdoch, *Sein und Zeit: Pursuit of Being from Heidegger*, from *Iris Murdoch*, ed. J. Broackes, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2012, 98. (Iris Murdoch Institute, Director: Anne Rowe, Kingston University, London. Under protection of John Bailey. Except in the case of the introductory chapter which has been published by Justin Broackes with permission of John Bailey, this work has been closely paraphrased where needed but not directly quoted, in accord with the viewing conditions of the Institute).

other' already inscribed by lack.²⁵ Dasein is in a state of groundless floating in the everyday of *Gerede*/idle chatter in relation to itself and to others. 'Even in its fullest concretion Dasein can be characterized by inauthenticity – when busy, when excited, when interested, when ready for enjoyment.'²⁶ Although Heidegger maintains that this inauthenticity is not a lower level of Being, he does not include in the everyday any moral activity nor a moral point of view. That is, there is no relation to authenticity whether we tell lies or truths in the context of *Gerede*/idle talk. Murdoch writes: "There is a kind of contempt for human existence if not in some way 'exalted,' implied in Heidegger's condescension toward *Gerede* and similar 'inauthentic' activities. His account, perpetually suggests that value, moral orientation, virtue, exist only at a level markedly above that of the everyday."²⁷ Heidegger writes: "To the everydayness (...) there belongs further the comfortableness of the accustomed, even if it forces us to do something burdensome and repugnant. (...) In everydayness Dasein can undergo dull suffering, sink away in the dullness of it."²⁸

Die Irre/darkness or error is the compulsion within the inner structure of Dasein that distracts through ignorance or willful denial, which in turn obscures Being. If we infer the disruption in contingency as error, we highlight the separation of freedom from the everyday, to a resolution which will override such temptation. Freedom here 'dominates' rather than 'endows' our lives in any process of the revelation of the truth of Being.²⁹

Murdoch further explores notions of resoluteness and freedom in Heidegger's essay, *What is Metaphysics* where the world is revealed variously: through logic, knowledge, and states of mind. We discover ourselves among things as a whole if we are in a mode of attunement.

²⁵ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie, E. Robinson, Harper & Row, New York 1962, 221–222.

²⁶ I. Murdoch, *The Pursuit of Being*, op. cit., 99.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, op. cit., 422.

²⁹ I. Murdoch, *Heidegger*, op. cit.

But the most telling of these through which we come to know anything is a state of Angst. As beings, we lose ourselves, in wonderment of why we, or anything exists rather than nothing so that Angst is beyond dread. It is from the sheer darkness of anxious wonder that primal openness of beings comes forth. This is transcendence enabled by Dasein,³⁰ whilst as the human conscience of soul, gripped by an awareness of nothing, creates a void into which Being may advance. Heidegger sees this as an exercise of freedom.³¹ He contrasts his 'positive' meaning of 'nothing' with a sense of nothing as non-being or – *ex nihilo nihil fit*. If the essence of truth is freedom then it is freedom that reveals something already overt.³² The void is paradoxically real.

This is in contrast to the Christian picture of nothing existing outside of God – *ex nihilo fit ens creatum*, although here 'nothing' points toward beings. This does not properly pose the question of Being and nothing, since God must relate himself to nothing, to create out of it, but as Absolute, must exclude nothingness and so be unable to know 'nothing'. The Christian picture devalues the power and reality of 'nothing' since the darkness which confronts an individual must be thought of as containing, indeed being, God.³³ However without God, there is no resurrection, and no conciliation therefore 'nothing' itself can perform its function purely and reveal the truth of Being. Heidegger here has taken away the energy of love, or the supremacy of Plato's Good as that which connects nothing with the coming of beings and here then has a great break with both Christianity and Platonism. Murdoch suggests the 'nothing' of Cordelia to King Lear as an example of the fullness of Christian nothing. The self-abnegation she attempts can

³⁰ M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings, from "Being and Time" to "The Task of Thinking"*, ed. D. F. Krell, Harper & Row, New York 1977, 105.

³¹ Werner Marx, in his book *Is There a Measure On Earth* makes the point that freedom for Heidegger is removed from the realm of human agency in the Schellingian view, and allows it to be subsumed into Being.

³² M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings, from "Being and Time" (1927) to "The Task of Thinking"*, op. cit., 126.

³³ I. Murdoch, *The Pursuit of Being*, op. cit., 90.

never make void her love for her father. Her nothingness, can never be more than an appearance of absence.³⁴

8. THE GOOD AND THE OTHER

Despite Heidegger's brilliance in exploring metaphysical questions, Murdoch suggests that he shows great trouble in comprehensively answering any because he removes the moral human element from the equation. Where Nothing does invoke Being, it is "as rarified presenting birthed by Angst."³⁵

Angst may help Being to become present through art, but not through morals. Courage, resolution and heroism become the spiritual energy, rather than desire for the good.³⁶ The imagination is stirred by a resoluteness toward stoicism through courage where a fatedness replaces any notion of the positive freedom as human agency.

Consistent with this etiolated view of freedom, as it is loosed from human agency in any moral sense, is also the exchange of redemption or forgiveness with Heidegger's guilt which actually enables us the 'highest possibility' to be free to discover our true selves. Conscience draws to it Resolution as Dasein faces mortality in its aim to overcome the incompleteness of authenticity. Further, Heidegger writes: "Resoluteness as a mode of the authenticity of care, contains Dasein's primordial self-constancy and totality, [where] (...) Care does not need to be founded in a self."³⁷ The rise of conscience, then as an aspect of Angst is nothing comforting or reassuring, but it is an inexpressible state of mind disconnected from an agency in the context of moral events.³⁸

Murdoch holds that the everyday is the contingent context in which we become ourselves. If there is any such thing as authentication outsi-

³⁴ I. Murdoch, *Heidegger*, op. cit.

³⁵ I. Murdoch, *The Pursuit of Being*, op. cit., 92.

³⁶ I. Murdoch, *Heidegger*, op. cit.

³⁷ M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, op. cit., 370.

³⁸ I. Murdoch, *Heidegger*, op. cit.

de a metaphysical subject, such as Descartes', it is here. For Murdoch, activity in the world, that is, thinking, acting, exercising moral agency, is imbued within the flux of contingency itself. Facticity is the medium of the moral. In this way, Murdoch presents the inverse of the order that Heidegger presents in the search for the truth of Being. And Sartre appropriates the homeless, nameless, naked nature of Dasein, abandoned by goodness and re-defines it as an alienated self of radical freedom, which has overcome its hypostatized state.³⁹ For Murdoch, the Good is distant but accessible through daily life. Aesthetically, the works of George Eliot and Leo Tolstoy grapple with goodness as always potential in the lived life with others. If for Heidegger, *Sorge/care* is some attempt to enable Dasein to know its own finite relation with the other through Angst and lack, Murdoch uses Eros as the mode through which the self effaces itself for the sake of the other because it is only through the other that goodness can be possible.

REFERENCES

- Adorno Th., *The Jargon of Authenticity*, trans. K. Tarnowski, F. Will, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill. 1973.
- Broackes J., *Iris Murdoch, Philosopher: A Collection of Essays*, Oxford University Press, New York 2012.
- Campbell Ch. A., *In Defense of Free Will*, George Allen & Unwin, London 1967.
- Heidegger M., *Basic Writings, from "Being and Time" to "The Task of Thinking"*, ed. D. F. Krell, Harper & Row, New York 1977.
- Heidegger M., *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie, E. Robinson, Harper & Row, New York 1962.
- Heidegger M., *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. A. Hofstadter, Harper & Row, New York 1971.
- Iris Murdoch*, ed. J. Broackes, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2012.
- Murdoch I., *Re-reading Plato*, in: *Existentialists and Mystics*, ed. P. Conradi, Penguin, New York 1998, 297–496.

³⁹ Ibid.

- Murdoch I., *Heidegger*, unpublished manuscript 1993, Iris Murdoch Archives, Kingston University, London.
- Murdoch I., *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, (1992), Vintage, London 2003.
- Murdoch I., *Sartre – Romantic Rationalist*, Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought, Bowes&Bowes, London 1953.
- Murdoch I., *The Sovereignty of Good*, (1970), Routledge, New York 1971.
- Plato, *The Republic*, trans. F. Macdonald Cornford, Oxford University Press, New York 1968.
- Warnock M., *The Philosophy of Sartre*, Hutchinson & Co, London 1966.

I would like to include a note of thanks to the staff at the Iris Murdoch Archive at the University of Kingston, especially Katie Giles who made the Murdoch manuscript on Heidegger available to me, to Dr. Anne Rowe and Francis White who made me very welcome.