

Understanding Others: Enlarging Iris Murdoch's Idea of Moral Attention

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Do not worry if others do not understand you; seek instead to understand others.

(Lun Yu (sayings of Confucius), 1.16)

Abstract

At the heart of Iris Murdoch's moral theory is the individual. Her concept of "moral attention," that is, the growth of moral consciousness through "a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality," involves one person attempting to understand the true nature of another person. It appears, however, to have limitations. It is explained in terms of visual metaphors and, thus, places no value on dialogue, listening, or "voice." It also insufficiently considers the social location of others and has little application to broader social concerns.

Murdoch's concept can be enlarged in two ways: by utilizing verbal metaphors of listening and speaking, and by seeing the moral task as one of self-creation. These modifications allow moral attention to be expanded to the social and political spheres. Indeed, it is possible to show that some aspects of moral attention are reconcilable to existing explanations of social justice, such as those of Iris Young and her concepts of asymmetric reciprocity, "wonder" and communication as a "gift."

It is rare to achieve stature both as a creative writer and as a philosopher, but Iris Murdoch accomplished this. While her place in the pantheon of English literature is secure, her philosophic works have not achieved the same distinction, and, indeed, appear idiosyncratic and individualistic – more like a commentary on other philosophers than a philosophical system. Yet her influence is often cited by more "mainstream" philosophers: Charles Taylor, Nel Noddings, Sara Ruddick, Lawrence Blum and others.

One idea of Murdoch's which has attracted interest is "moral attention," defined as "a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality."¹ It is an individualistic concept which would seem to limit its applicability to wider spheres. Yet by viewing it in terms of "self-creation," rather than as an example of moral psychology, it can be extended to wider questions of social justice, politics and the social sphere.

Murdoch based this idea on the work of the French mystic Simone Weil, who defined "attention" as the suspension of thought, "leaving it detached, empty and ready to be penetrated by the object."² It is, among other things, a way of "looking": "this way of looking is first of all attentive. The soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive itself into the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all his truth."³

Murdoch takes over this idea wholesale. What is involved in moral attention is "really looking" at another.⁴ One tries to see another not just "accurately" but "to see her justly or lovingly."⁵ This is a continual process, both slow and gradual, a "small piecemeal business, which imperceptibly ... builds up structures of value about us."⁶

Martha Nussbaum expanded on this. She suggests that moral knowledge "... is not simply intellectual grasp of propositions; it is not even simply intellectual grasp of particular facts; it is perception, it is seeing a complex concrete reality in a highly lucid and richly responsive way."⁷

Murdoch gives the clearest picture of her theory in her famous example of a mother-in-law, M, rethinking her view of her daughter-in-law, D. M initially sees D as “pert and familiar, insufficiently ceremonious, brusque, sometimes positively rude, always tirelessly juvenile. M does not like D’s accent or the way she dresses. She feels that her son has married beneath him.”⁸ However, M recognizes that some of this picture may have its origins in her own shortcomings. M thinks: “I am old-fashioned and conventional. I may be prejudiced and narrow-minded. I may be snobbish. I am certainly jealous. Let me look again.” She focuses her attention on D, until her “vision changes.” Eventually she sees D as “not vulgar but refreshingly simple, not undignified but spontaneous, not noisy but gay, not tiresomely juvenile but delightfully young.”⁹

Murdoch ties this into a Platonic search for a transcendent Good, which, to her, is equivalent to a quest for self-perfection. She writes: “as soon as we begin using words such as ‘love’ and ‘justice’ ... we introduce into our whole conceptual picture ... the idea of progress, that is the idea of perfection; and it is just the presence of this idea which demands an analysis of mental concepts.” Our attempt to “see a particular object clearly is essentially something progressive, something perfectible.” This quest, she says, is a “highly personal” activity.¹⁰

Murdoch on the Individual

Murdoch argues that we are human historical individuals who search for the Good. “Apprehension of the good,” she writes “is apprehension of the individual and the real.”¹¹ Thus, “the central concept of morality is ‘the individual’ thought of as knowable by love.”¹² Morality, she argues is a product of individual consciousness, not that of groups or collectivities of any thought. This is because she understands consciousness as an outgrowth of perception with a resulting awareness of detail, and only the individual perceives.

This, she says, is the common understanding of the concept. “The layman lives at peace with ‘consciousness’, ... It is what is most his own.” “The moment-to-moment reality of consciousness ... is, after all, where we live.”¹³

Murdoch disdains those systems that, to her, reduce the individual to some part of a greater whole. What she finds “unacceptable is the way in which they in effect ‘disappear’ what is individual and contingent by equating reality with integration in system ... and by implying that ‘ultimately or ‘really’ there is only one system.”¹⁴ There are two other flaws that Murdoch thinks exists in such systems. First, she argues, they encourage people to avoid taking personal responsibility for their actions. Secondly, they often mask a hidden agenda, for instance, a method by which “experts” in the system can control others. Because of this she rejects most of the major strands of twentieth-century thought: existentialism, structuralism and Marxism.

An interesting additional point is raised by Simone Weil, who is concerned that categorizing individuals into groups makes us less sensitive to individual suffering. She points out that loving attention to others “is a recognition that the sufferer exists, not only as a unit in a collection, or a specimen from a social category labeled ‘unfortunate,’ but as a man, exactly like us, who was one day stamped with a special mark by affliction.”¹⁵

Social and Political

Not surprisingly, Murdoch places less importance on the social and political aspects of morality, suggesting that we live our private and political lives in very different senses.

Public morality is, of course, important, but it is often limited by pragmatic concerns and momentarily popular theories or slogans. Murdoch argues that there is a “rough-and-ready unavoidably clumsy and pragmatic nature to public morality.”¹⁶ What she refers to as “axioms” rule the day (“isolated unsystematic moral insights which arise out of and refer to a general conception of human nature such as civilised societies have gradually generated.”)¹⁷ “Axiomatic statements about right (etc.) are public banners flown for complex reasons which may be partly, even grossly, pragmatic.”¹⁸

Furthermore, she feels that “it is not the fundamental duty of the state to make us good. It is the fundamental task of each person to make himself good.”¹⁹

Limitations

Even many who admire Murdoch judge this perspective as limited. Martha Nussbaum, for instance, points out that it is one thing to focus on each person’s struggle for self-perfection. It is quite another thing to suggest that social justice does not matter or the search for it is superficial. Must we conclude, with Nussbaum, though, that Murdoch’s is a “hopelessly egoistic vision of life?”²⁰

Take, for instance, the M-D example quoted above, where M’s initial position is based on her existing conceptions of class and age. While M does make a sincere attempt to change, a critical thinker might argue that she neither recognizes nor attempts to change any power relations inherent in the different social groups. In fact, one might see M’s response as patronising, smacking of *noblesse oblige*. She accepts some behaviour, so long as it can be re-defined in what she sees as a positive way. Take, for instance, the mention of “common,” a pejorative class categorization. M does not change her conception of “commonness,” but only to exempt D from it.

Even a less extreme criticism might find Murdoch’s analysis lacking. Murdoch’s example seems “homely”: her exemplar, M, is only interested in a narrow range of subjects, which does not include social concerns. Murdoch, with her novelist’s sensibility, it might be argued, looks at ethics chiefly in terms of character flaws.

Finally, it could be argued, as Foucault does, that such struggles for self-perfection are merely a strategy by those in power to keep inquisitive individuals focused on the endless task of personal inventory and re-arrangement and away from closer examination of the structures of power in their society which should be the true object of reform.²¹

Social Aspects

Yet, I feel it would be a mistake to dismiss Murdoch’s social consciousness too easily. Throughout his biography of her, Peter Conradi is at pains to point out her activism and political interests (though her restless intellect was never satisfied with one political group for long). Although there is limited discussion of any kind of action flowing from moral attention, it is, nonetheless, there. For instance, there is some sense of moral agency: “as moral agents we have to try to see justly, to overcome prejudice, to avoid temptation, to control and curb imagination, to direct reflection.” While the goal of attention is the inner process of correct vision, it should be noted that “right action ... and freedom ... are the natural products of attention to the Good.”²²

While the M-D example might be interpreted as “homely,” it might also be seen, as Bowden points out, as stressing the importance of familial relations. Within the context of the situation M does begin to think about the way people are determined by their groups; for instance their age, their income, and their education. She acknowledges the limitation of the perspective of her own social grouping, as well as her

“prejudice.” Similarly she becomes more aware of D’s social grouping and does change her view of what characterizes these groups.

Furthermore, I suspect that it is naïve to think that Murdoch in any way promotes egoism. In fact, it is the retreat from egoism, the “unselfing” of the individual that underlies the effort of moral attention. Moral attention, if it is about anything, is about removing oneself from the moral equation as much as possible. The individual’s relation to what others have called the “concrete other” - a particular individual in particular contexts – becomes important. In this Murdoch is like Buber and Levinas. Murdoch’s philosophy has many points in common with these philosophers. Though she had some concerns with Buber’s philosophy (as explained below) she admired his concept of I-Thou with its corresponding focus on the other. She also approved of his idea of a continually developing consciousness.²³

Perhaps, had Murdoch used Weil’s example, the Biblical parable of the Good Samaritan, the point would have been clearer. Of the passers-by that ignore the injured man, only the Good Samaritan is willing to provide his attention. Weil writes:

The attention is creative ... The man accepts to be diminished by concentrating on an expenditure of energy, which will not extend his own power but will give existence to a being other than himself... To desire the existence of another is to transport himself into him by sympathy, and as a result to have a share in the state of inert matter which is his.²⁴

But even if this is not adequate, there are many ways in which Murdoch can be extended to broader social and political spheres. One can, for instance, argue that improving one’s character inevitably leads to better (and more moral) choices in social and political situations. As Martha Nussbaum writes, we will respond, as Aristotle proposed in his *Ethics*: “at the right time, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people with the right aim, and in the right way.”²⁵ This is echoed in Murdoch’s assertion that “at crucial moments of choice most of the choosing has already been done.”²⁶ Right action, therefore, follows right thought.

Or one can argue that one can simply expand the focus of moral attention, applying it to broader, non-face-to-face social concerns would simply be moral attention ‘writ large.’ This describes, somewhat, the way Nel Noddings expands an ethic of care, which is based partly on the writings of Weil (and to a lesser extent Murdoch). We begin, she says, with “caring for” those we are closest to. But our attempts to be caring individuals lead us to “caring about” others in the broader society, and thus to seek social justice.²⁷

Or one can argue that moral attention, and its subsequent improvement in the content of the individual’s consciousness, is a moral good. Lawrence Blum, who derived an idea of “moral perception” from moral attention said that it had “moral value in its own right.”²⁸ Having concluded that it has moral value would justify the next step: establishing institutions for its promotion, such as education. Such an approach has been suggested, for instance, for care ethics and ethics based on Buber’s philosophy.²⁹

Furthermore, there is no reason to suppose that moral attention could not be directed at other group characteristics of the observed person. Why not, as Moeller has suggested, direct the focus of attention on locations of gender or race, and how this affects our view of others?³⁰ Alternatively, moral attention can be viewed as a method by which one thinks about one’s particular perception of individuals and revises one’s own general concept of that social group. It then becomes a basic method of challenging prejudice and bias.³¹

All these positions have merit, but they do not totally address Murdoch’s preference for the individual perspective. To understand how this perspective can be extended to the larger social context, one should begin with an examination of the key metaphor in her analysis.

The Visual Metaphor

In her discussion of moral attention, Murdoch often argues through metaphor. This is not just stylistic. She writes:

The development of consciousness in human beings is inseparably connected with the use of metaphor. Metaphors are not merely peripheral decorations or even useful models, they are fundamental forms of our awareness of our condition.³²

Vision, looking, seeing – these are central to Murdoch’s philosophy. Although it is a metaphor, not to be taken literally, vision is the fundamental image of her metaphysical and moral system: “the activity and imagery of vision is at the centre of human existence.” While Murdoch admits that “of course morality is action not just looking,” she insists that “for better or worse we look at something, we see something before we act.”³³ She adds: “I can only choose what I can see in the moral sense of ‘see’ which implies that clear vision is a result of moral imagination and moral effort.” “Where virtue is concerned” she writes, “we grow by looking.”³⁴

Not only does Murdoch privilege the visual, she rejects other sensory metaphors. This is seen in her criticism of Buber, a philosopher with whom, as has been pointed out, she has much in common. “Buber,” she writes “dislikes visual metaphysics because he wants to use the language of encounter and dialogue, not contemplation.” She sees his approach as flawed since, “looking is not always dialogue, indeed it is rarely mutual.”³⁵

It should be noted that Weil did not limit attention to looking (though it was certainly the most important element). For instance she wrote that “the effort that brings the soul to salvation is like the effort of looking or listening ... it is an act of attention.”³⁶ However, Murdoch does not embrace this possibility. Why?

Part of this may result from her distrust of language, or at least the privileged place language had come to fill in modern philosophy. As Michael Levenson points out in his study of Murdoch’s novel *The Bell*, Murdoch was uncomfortable with analytical philosophy and “ordinary language” movements which had come to dominate the discussion of ethics in the England of her day. Such approaches, he suggests, merely degenerated into precisely-phrased validations of convention.³⁷

When, partly as a response to this, more abstruse language-based continental philosophers (such as Derrida) gained ascendancy, she was equally dismayed. Murdoch did not see the self as constructed by language, as many of these postmodern philosophers believe. Communication, she suggests, is a private matter, though it can involve some element of common understanding. She writes:

What is left out of the picture ... is that statements are made, propositions are uttered, by individual incarnate persons in particular extra-linguistic situations, and it is in the whole of this larger context that our familiar and essential concepts of truth and truthfulness live and work.³⁸

We learn, she says, when we apply language “in the context of particular acts of attention.” But it is communicable only to others who share the “common objects of attention.”³⁹

More important to Murdoch, though, may be the way seeing implies both distance and receptivity. Any closer connection, she suggests, taints moral reflection. For instance, she writes: “the visual is an image of distance and non-possessing ... by looking at something, by stopping to look at it we do not selfishly appropriate it, we understand it and let it be.”⁴⁰ This seems to discount the value of human interaction in the process of the growth of moral knowledge.

Communication

Murdoch's emphasis on understanding others in a visual way makes sense only if one adopts her Platonic metaphysic – that is if there is only one concrete, fixed, underlying reality. This view is unacceptable to most thinkers, who argue that knowledge can be only partial. One writer who emphasizes this is Iris Young. Though the two writers have the same forename, they would appear to share little else. For Young, the social group is ontologically partly prior to the individual. Society, and social justice, is defined by the relationships between social groups. However, in my opinion, a complete theory of moral education must encompass the ideas of both writers; it must address both an individual and a societal morality.

Young would doubtless criticize the M-D example for the reasons above. She would argue that M is trying to see D in a kind of mirror, a reflection of her own thoughts and values, however well-intentioned the effort might be. In her own mother-daughter example Young points to the essential lack of common ground between two people, even those who are close, on issues which are defined, for instance, by age and generation. In many ways they are “strange to one another.”⁴¹

Murdoch recognizes something like this in an essay that preceded her work on moral attention, *The Sublime and the Good*, in which she presents a different picture. Here she also talked about knowing another through love, but she acknowledged that such knowledge is limited. She writes:

The tragic freedom implied by love is this: that we all have an indefinitely extended capacity to imagine the being of others. Tragic, because there is no prefabricated harmony, and others are, to an extent we never cease discovering, different from ourselves. Nor is there any social totality within which we can come to comprehend differences as placed and reconciled. We have only a segment of the circle. Freedom is exercised in the confrontation by each other, in the context of an infinitely extensible work of imaginative understanding, of two irreducibly dissimilar individuals. Love is the imaginative recognition of, that is, respect for, this otherness.⁴²

This is very close to recent accounts of difference that recognize that our knowledge of others can only be partial. In such a situation the only way to advance knowledge beyond a certain point is to listen to the other. For communication to be effective, according to Young, one must listen to the voices and the stories of others. She is not alone in this; it is common to most feminist thinkers, and many critical thinkers, as well. If one wishes to extend the concept of moral attention to broader concerns it is essential.

Creating the Self

There is another way in which Murdoch's philosophy can be broadened by changing one's perspective on the individual. Instead of viewing moral attention as a process of self-abnegation and self-perfection, one can view it as a process of self-creation. Nothing is lost from Murdoch's characterization of moral attention by taking this view. But if one creates (or re-creates) oneself by learning about others, why stop at contemplation? Surely communicating with others is another way to learn about them?

This is the approach taken by Charles Taylor, a philosopher who was both a student and an admirer of Murdoch. Like Murdoch he saw self-creation as a sort of quest for the “good”, but unlike her he could not accept that everyone is searching for the same good. To Taylor, self-creation involves interaction and communication with others. He insists, “the crucial feature of human life is its fundamentally dialogical character.”⁴³ According to Taylor, “...we become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence of defining an identity, though our acquisition of rich human languages of expression,” but “no one acquires the languages needed for self-definition on their own ... the genesis of the human mind is ... not ‘monological,’ not something each accomplishes on his or her own, but dialogical.”⁴⁴

To an extent Murdoch accepts this. She also understands that the individual's concepts are derived "initially from his surroundings" and are "subject to some public rules." However, she goes on, the individual then "takes it away into his privacy."⁴⁵

Murdoch underwent many changes in her personal politics in her life, but ultimately she has a liberal perspective. She accepts that a person defined as "substantial, impenetrable, individual, indefinable, and valuable is after all the fundamental tenet of Liberalism." At the same time she is wary of the selfishness and self-centredness this might imply. The main moral task is, after all, "the exercise of overcoming oneself." As well, she is searching for "a satisfactory Liberal theory of personality. A theory of man as free and separate and related to a rich and complicated world, from which, as a moral being, he has much to learn."⁴⁶ Thus, she concludes, "we need to return from the self-centred concept of sincerity to the other-centred concept of truth."⁴⁷

So Murdoch did accept, to some extent, that we are defined by our relation to the world and to others. If we take a dialogical view of self-creation it follows that self-creation is at least partly a social phenomenon. John Dewey expressed a sentiment like this when he wrote that men "are men only when in intrinsic relations to one another."⁴⁸ The individual is "achieved not in isolation but with the aid and support of conditions, cultural and physical."⁴⁹ Charles Taylor echoes this in his philosophy when he writes that the community "is not simply an aggregation of individuals," but it is also "constitutive of the individual, in the sense that the self-interpretations which define him are drawn from the interchange which the community carries on."⁵⁰

Iris Young and Social Groups

Once we acknowledge that the individual is defined by others we have to investigate the way this works. Like Taylor, Young agrees that individuals are defined by those with whom they share common characteristics. She writes: "while groups do not exist apart from individuals, they are socially prior to individuals, because people's identities are partly constituted by their group affinities."⁵¹ The way to understand a society is to look at social groups, which are defined as

... a collective of persons differentiated from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices or way of life. Members of a group have a specific affinity with one another because of their similar experience or way of life, which prompts them to associate with one another more than with those not identified with the group, or in a different way.⁵²

Social groups are central to Young's understanding of society. She argues that "groups are an expression of social relations; a group exists only in relation to at least one other group."⁵³ Social injustice arises, she believes, because of relationships of domination and oppression which differences of power between related groups entail. These relationships are reinforced structurally, through a society's institutions. To Young, social justice is confined to transforming these institutional conditions. Social justice, for her, refers "only to institutional conditions, and not to the preferences and ways of life of individuals or groups."⁵⁴

This would seem to give little place, at least where social justice is concerned, for the kind of tasks at which moral attention is aimed. Yet, Young acknowledges that the purpose of social justice is to support "the institutional conditions necessary for the realization" of values related to "the good life." These values are, furthermore, expressed in individual terms; for instance, social justice supports (and injustice inhibits) "developing and exercising one's capacities and expressing one's experience."⁵⁵

What is more, within Young's paradigm of communication is a concept of understanding that focuses on an individual change of consciousness. It answers the question of how moral change occurs with an account of reasoning that has many things in common with moral attention. Young's description of understanding another's "social location" involves what she calls "asymmetrical reciprocity." There is

reciprocity in that “communicating parties mutually recognize one another,” but there is also asymmetry, because “in a stance of moral respect, each party must recognize that others have irreducible points of view and active interests that respectful interaction must consider.”⁵⁶

How then does this process begin? It begins with an individual “opening unto the other person.”⁵⁷ It is a sort of “gift” we make to others, without expecting anything in return. It begins with “wonder,” “... openness to the newness and mystery of the other person.” Young elaborates,

A respectful stance of wonder toward other people is one of openness across, awaiting new insight about their needs, interests, perceptions or values. Wonder also means being able to see one’s position, assumptions, perspectives as strange, because it has been put in relation to others.⁵⁸

This similarity to moral attention is clear. The individual tries to understand the true characteristics of another, in that person’s own terms. Furthermore, this changes the perspective of the individual observer; “confrontation with different perspectives, interests, and cultural meanings teaches me the partiality of my own, reveals to me my own experience as perspectival.” Thus “by internalizing this mediated understanding of plural positions to some extent, participants gain a wider picture of the social process in which their own partial experience is embedded.”⁵⁹

What one tries to understand takes account of “the history each has and the social position they occupy.”⁶⁰ Furthermore, it has an oral (speaking) and aural (listening) element to it. Young writes: “I am open and suspend my assumptions in order to listen.” She also says: “in moral humility one starts from the other person’s perspectives and waits to learn by listening to the other person to what extent they have had similar experiences.” Further, “respectful listening thus involves attentive and interested questioning.”⁶¹ However, I would argue that the interactive and non-visual could be accommodated in an expanded version of moral attention.

Conclusion

The eternal dilemma of moral educators is how to teach students to be moral. Despite thousands of years of theorizing there are few practical “technologies” which allow students to develop their own moral perspectives and to then operate morally in a complex world. Moral attention, to some extent, offers the promise of a method which could prove useful for the individual student, but its value is limited if it is only applicable to personal considerations. An extended version of moral attention, such as has been discussed in this paper, could go some way in providing a more expansive approach.

Notes

¹ Murdoch (1985), *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 33.

² Weil (2001), *Waiting for God*, p. 62.

³ Ibid, p. 65.

⁴ Murdoch (1985), *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 89.

⁵ Ibid, p. 23.

⁶ Ibid, p. 36.

⁷ Nussbaum (1985), *Finely Aware and Richly Responsible: Moral Attention and the Moral Task of Literature*, *The Journal of Philosophy* 82:10, p. 521.

⁸ Murdoch (1985), *The Sovereignty of Good*, pp. 16-17.

⁹ Ibid, p. 17.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 25.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 41.

¹² Ibid, p. 29.

¹³ Ibid, p. 257.

¹⁴ Murdoch (1993), *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, p. 196.

¹⁵ Weil (2001) *Waiting for God*, p. 64.

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- 16 Ibid, p. 381.
17 Ibid, p. 365.
18 Ibid, p. 386.
19 Ibid, p. 363.
20 Nussbaum(1985), When She Was Good, *The New Republic Online* No. 10, (12 31 2001).
<<http://www.tnr.com/doc.mhtml?i=20011231&s=nussbaum123101>>
21 Infinito (2003), Ethical Self-formation: A Look at the Later Foucault, *Educational Theory* 33:2.
22 Murdoch (1985), *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 69.
23 Murdoch (1993), *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, p. 464, p. 469.
24 Weil (2001), *Waiting for God*, p. 90.
25 Nussbaum (1985), Finely Aware and Richly Responsible: Moral Attention and the Moral Task of Literature, *The Journal of Philosophy* 82:10, p. 525.
26 Murdoch (1985), *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 36.
27 Noddings (1984) *Caring, a Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education*
28 Blum (1994), *Moral Perception and Particularit*, p. 54.
29 Noddings (1984), *Caring, a Feminine Approach to Ethics & Moral Education*. See also Gary (2005), Theodore Sizer's Horace, Levinas and Pedagogy for Social Justice, *Philosophy of Education*
30 Moeller (1998), *Moral Attention: Toward a Liberationist Ethics of Everyday Life*
31 Bowden (1998), Ethical Attention: Accumulating Understandings, *European Journal of Philosophy*, 6:1, pp. 59-77.
32 Murdoch (1985), *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 77.
33 Murdoch (1993), *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, p. 461, p. 462.
34 Murdoch (1985), *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 36, p. 40.
35 Murdoch (1993), *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, p. 463.
36 Weil, p. 126.
37 Levenson (2001), Iris Murdoch: The Philosophic Fifties and the Bell, *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 47:3574
38 Murdoch (1993), *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, p. 194.
39 Murdoch (1985), *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 31-32.
40 Murdoch (1993), *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, p. 462.
41 Young (1997), *Intersecting Voices: Dilemmas of Gender, Political Philosophy, and Policy*, p. 47.
42 Murdoch (1997), The Sublime and the Good, in: P. Conradi (ed.), *Existentialists and Mystics: Writing on Philosophy and Literature*, p. 215.
43 Taylor (1992), The Politics of Recognition, in: A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, p. 34.
44 Taylor (1991), *The Malaise of Modernity*, p. 33.
45 Murdoch (1985), *The Sovereignty of Good*, p. 25.
46 Murdoch (1997) On Dryness, in: P. Conradi (ed.), *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*, p. 290.
47 Ibid, p. 293.
48 Dewey (1969-1975), The Ethics of Democracy, in: J. A. Boydston (ed.), *Early Works*, p. 231.
49 Dewey (1981-1990), The Future of Liberalism, in: J. A. Boydston (ed.), *Later Works*, p. 291.
50 Taylor (1985), *Human Agency and Language*, p. 8.
51 Young (1990), *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, p. 8.
52 Ibid, p. 43.
53 Ibid, p. 43.
54 Ibid, p. 46.
55 Ibid, p. 37.
56 Young (1997), *Intersecting Voices: Dilemmas of Gender, Political Philosophy, and Policy*, p. 41.
57 Ibid, p. 50.
58 Ibid, p. 56.
59 Ibid, pp. 68-69.
60 Ibid, p. 41.
61 Ibid, p. 53, p. 56.

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