The Centrality of the Concept of Love

in the Philosophy of Iris Murdoch from 1950 to 1956

by

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Abstract

Iris Murdoch, as a thinker, demonstrates a remarkably sustained interest in various forms of love. Such an interest has been long appreciated and studied in regard to her twenty-six novels, but markedly less so in regard to her philosophy. This is both unfortunate and incongruous, since Murdoch herself clearly regards love as of central importance in her most renowned and successful piece of philosophy, *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970): "Instances of the facts, as I shall boldly call them, which interest me and which seem to have been forgotten of 'theorized away' are the fact that an unexamined life can be virtuous and the fact that love is a central concept in morals." (IP, 1964, 2) In the same work, Murdoch continues to be explicit about the concept of love, in relation to philosophy: "We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central" (OGG, 1969, 45).

I take this last statement to be Murdoch's *raison d'être* as a philosopher, in that she attempts to make the concept of love central to (her own) philosophy. I consider this to be true of Murdoch's philosophy from beginning to end, from her first radio talk, 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950), to her last book, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (1992). If this were true, any substantial reading of Murdoch would require close attention to the concept of love, as possibly a central concept, in relation to Murdoch's other philosophical concerns.

In this thesis, I shall show the above claim to be true only of Murdoch's earlier philosophy (1950-1956), where the word 'love' is, indeed, "rarely mentioned". In making what is perhaps the more difficult case – that Murdoch's earlier philosophy should be understood by her philosophical commitment to make the concept of love central to (her) philosophy – I hope to encourage the extension of such a reading to Murdoch's philosophy as a whole.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations for Murdoch's own writings are given below. In my text I also include the date of publication within the abbreviated reference because a chronological awareness of Murdoch's work is of particular importance to the following thesis.

AD	'Against Dryness' (1961), E&M, 287-95
AIN	'Art as the Imitation of Nature' (1978), E&M, 243-57
BEA	'De Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity*' (1950), E&M, 122-24
DPR	'The Darkness of Practical Reason' (1966), E&M 193-202
E&M	*Existentialists and Mystics* (1997)
EB	'Existentialist Bite' (1957), E&M, 151-53
EH	'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), E&M, 108-15
EM	'Existentialists and Mystics' (1970), E&M, 221-34
EPM	'The Existentialist Political Myth' (1952), E&M 130-45
FTC	*From a Tiny Corner in the House of Fiction: Conversations with Iris Murdoch* (2003)
HMD	'Hegel in Modern Dress' (1957), E&M, 146-50
HT	'A House of Theory' (1958), E&M, 171-86
IM	'The Image of Mind' (1951), E&M, 125-29
IP	'The Idea of Perfection' (1964), SG, 1-44
KV	'Knowing the Void' (1956), E&M, 157-60
ME	'Metaphysics and Ethics' (1957), E&M, 59-76
MGM	*Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (1992)
NM	'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950), E&M, 101-07
NP	'Nostalgia for the Particular' (1952), E&M, 43-58
OGG	'On "God" and "Good"' (1969), SG, 45-74
S&G	'The Sublime and the Good' (1959), E&M, 205-20
SBR	'The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited' (1959), E&M, 261-86
SET	'Sartre's *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*' (1950), E&M, 116-21
SG	*The Sovereignty of Good* (1970)
SGC	'The Sovereignty of Good over other Concepts' (1967), SG, 75-101
SRR	*Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953; 1987)
SW	'Salvation by Words' (1972), E&M, 235-42
TL	'Thanking and Language' (1951), E&M, 33-42
VCM	'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956), E&M, 76-98
WG	'"Waiting on God": A Radio Talk on Simone Weil (1951)', *The Iris Murdoch Review*, vol. 8, (2017), 9-16

Introduction

As a philosopher, in 1950, Murdoch spoke on BBC radio about existentialist thought. She spoke – rather prophetically in regard to her own career – about thinkers who "are in fact doing philosophy as well as writing novels" (NM, 1950, 101). Murdoch continued to explain on BBC radio: "In England the study of meaning has become the province chiefly of linguistic philosophers or of semantics merchants." (NM, 1950, 102) This is the environment in which Murdoch gained her Fellowship in 1948 at St. Anne's College, Oxford, where she then taught philosophy until 1963. Murdoch was clearly a professional philosopher comfortable from the outset about philosophers also expounding their ideas in novels, despite her early philosophical training as a linguistic philosopher.[1]

In 1951 Murdoch presented her first serious philosophical paper, 'Thinking and Language' (1951), at the annual Joint Session of the Mind Association and the Aristotelian Society. She then published her first book of philosophy, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist*, in 1953. In this time Murdoch had already discarded several attempts at her first novel. She published her first novel, *Under the Net*, the following year in 1954. The last of Murdoch's philosophical titles, the large and kaleidoscopic *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* – the material of which she spent at least ten years developing mainly from her Gifford Lectures (delivered in 1982) – was published in 1992. In her final work of philosophy Murdoch alludes to *Under the Net* as a reference for her own previous philosophical discussion: "(See a philosophical discussion of these matters in my first novel, *Under the Net*.)" (MGM, 1992, 187) The matters in question pertain to what Murdoch describes as the Derridean "network of meanings (the infinitely great net of language itself) under which there is nothing" (MGM, 1992, 187). This referral is all the

[1] In 1978 Murdoch reflected: "I was trained as a linguistic philosopher and in many ways I remain one, but for the purposes of moral philosophy I'm a sort of Platonist. I might describe myself as a Wittgensteinian neo-Platonist!" (FTC, 2003, 92)

more remarkable because it is the only time in her philosophy (as far as I am aware) that Murdoch refers her reader to one of her own novels as providing a relevant "philosophical discussion" (MGM, 1992, 187).[2] Murdoch infers that her novels can be read as philosophy in the place that counts (her mature philosophy); and if this is true of her first novel, then it could also be true of the twenty-four others she had written by 1992. The last novel, *Jackson's Dilemma*, was published in 1995. Thereafter Murdoch was still working on philosophy – a book on Heidegger – when her intellectual powers began to desert her, and her career came to a close.

Iris Murdoch's philosophical thought has been presented by her both in fiction and in non-fiction, side by side, for the duration of her forty-five year career (1950-1995). Throughout this period Murdoch maintained and valued with rigorous effort each of these disciplines – the art of the novel and philosophical enquiry – as distinctive, respecting the traditions of each, which shows in the accomplished manner by which she expresses her thoughts in either form. Murdoch did not shirk from the significant amount of work required to properly learn the advantages and limitations of each of these disciplines. The distinctive ways in which Murdoch approached these two forms can also be observed in her rate of production in either field. In the 1960s, for example, Murdoch produced eight novels and only a handful of philosophical articles, three of which would result in a short book of philosophy, *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970). A superficial view of this output could lead to speculation that in this period Murdoch was favouring the novel, or that she had lost interest in philosophy. Such a view could in turn be related – together with her burgeoning success as a novelist at the same time – with the considerable neglect by academic philosophers of her philosophical work. Justin Broackes addresses this problem and, fortunately, has an alternative view:

[2] Murdoch's penchant for mentioning key ideas only once in her philosophical work is something I shall demonstrate in relation to the concept of love, at more than one point, in my thesis below.

> So it is perhaps unsurprising if, by the time *The Sovereignty of Good* appeared in 1970, people thought of it as the work of a novelist who had once been a philosopher, rather than (as I think is true) a work of extreme concentration and energy, the culmination of more than a decade of sustained professional attention, advancing a view of large areas of moral philosophy that was ambitious, independent and quite opposite to the philosophical fashions of the time. (Broackes, 2012b, 8)

Murdoch's mature "view of large areas of moral philosophy" (see above quote) is certainly ambitious, and nonetheless can be clearly seen as a development of her early engagement with existentialism and linguistic philosophy.[3] Murdoch did not actually agree with much existentialism had to say in a philosophical sense, but she was attracted to aspects of its ambition.[4] Existentialism and its thoroughly responsible individual had gained popularity as a philosophy, most notably through Sartre; and its exponents not only permitted but promoted discussion about love (such as Sartre, De Beauvoir, and Camus, whom I discuss in chapter 1; and Marcel, whom I discuss in chapter 2, below). In regard to the linguistic philosophy, one might say that for Murdoch it lacked ambition, in that it failed to address in sufficient depth issues of great common moral significance. For example, how we might deal with aspects of love, wickedness, or bereavement; or, how might we think about God or communism— all of which existentialism was at least willing to discuss. But Murdoch did benefit from linguistic philosophy's rigorous attention to language, and to what language means. Murdoch, dissatisfied with both, criticised and fought against both.

[3] In this respect my view is slightly different to that of Broackes, who maintains: "Murdoch certainly had a reputation from the *Sartre* book (1953) and her radio appearances, but the former was, actually, a rather difficult work, without showing much of what was to be her mature philosophy, and the really distinctive views argued in the radio talks may have passed by all too fast." (Broackes, 2012b, 8)

[4] While rejecting existentialism in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), Murdoch points out: "The great merit of existentialism is that it at least professes and tries to be a philosophy one could live by….A moral philosophy should be inhabited. Existentialism has shown itself capable of becoming a popular philosophy and of getting into the minds of those (e.g. Oxford philosophers) who have not sought it and may even be unconscious of its presence." (OGG, 1969, 46)

The contention of this thesis is that the primary reason for this Murdochian fight is to clear a philosophical space so that love in particular may positively function as a central concept in philosophy. In one sense Murdoch preferred existentialism to linguistic analysis as the lesser of two evils, because at least certain existentialist problems could be seen as congruent with those of everyday life. For this reason Murdoch's relationship to existentialism requires a little more introductory attention.

With what did Murdoch disagree in terms of existentialism's philosophical stance, and what did Murdoch find attractive in terms of its ambition? Murdoch is attracted to the existentialist conviction that the individual must be responsible for their actions, but the use of the concept of freedom for this purpose she found to be unrealistic. Murdoch enjoys the existentialist's attention to various details (especially in the novels), their use of examples from human life, and their respect for phenomena, including mental phenomena; but she finds their resultant human picture narrow and self-obsessed, just like the characters in existentialist novels. At least the existentialist speaks about love, unlike the linguistic philosopher, but there are significant problems in existentialist relationships of love. They are depressingly ego-centric, while trying to be honest (I discuss this most pointedly in chapter 1, § 1.3, below). Importantly, Murdoch considered existentialism an instance – perhaps the only instance in her day – of philosophy capturing a wider public audience than those already seeking philosophical stimulus (SRR, 1953; 1987, 9). The cliché 'existential crisis' could be taken as linguistic evidence of this phenomenon, while also expressing one of existentialism's main moral malfunctions: what Murdoch sees – especially in the novels of Sartre – is "the drama of people who are reacting more or less consciously and in various modes to the predicament of their ethical loneliness and their state of war with other selves" (NM, 1950, 106).

For Murdoch, these are problems worth addressing; and she first turns toward moral philosophy, and thereafter toward Plato, in order to do this. The reason for Murdoch's so-

called ‘turn’ to moral philosophy, beginning with ‘Vision and Choice in Morality (1956), can be found in the mature philosophy of *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970): “Instances of the facts, as I shall boldly call them, which interest me and which seem to have been forgotten of ‘theorized away’ are the fact that an unexamined life can be virtuous and the fact that love is a central concept in morals.” (IP, 1964, 2) In that same work, Murdoch continues to be explicit about the concept of love, in relation to philosophy: “We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central” (OGG, 1969, 45). Murdoch turns to moral philosophy in 1956, and then enlists Plato as “the philosopher under whose banner I am fighting” (SGC, 1967, 76), in order to investigate the possibility of good love; and to do this Murdoch attempts to make the concept of love central to her philosophy.

I take this to be Murdoch’s *raison d’être* as a philosopher, in that she attempts to make the concept of love central to (her own) philosophy. I consider this to be true of Murdoch’s philosophy from beginning to end, from her first radio talk, ‘The Novelist as Metaphysician’ (1950), to her last book, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* (1992):

> To love and be loved is what we all desire, and what we desire as, as we are able to see it, good. Eros may be wilful, but he is also said to be ingenious, and there are many ways in which love between persons can exist and endure. // These matters are often written about in works of literature. (MGM, 1992, 346)

That Murdoch published twenty-six novels from 1954 to 1995 is not surprising, if one considers that love is her central area of interest. Love is probably the most ubiquitous theme in literature – whether in the art of the novel, plays, or poetry – and *ipso facto* may be said to be the central theme of literature. The strong connection between Murdoch’s philosophical interest in love and her enduring devotion to the art of the novel has been long recognised in

the academic field of literature. The literary critic and academic, Harold Bloom, makes the following observation about Murdoch in regard to her first twenty-two novels:

> Murdoch's particular mastery is in representing the maelstrom of falling in love, which is the characteristic activity of nearly all her men and women … Though an academic philosopher earlier in her career, Murdoch's actual philosophical achievement is located where she clearly wishes it to be, in her novels, which demonstrate her to be a major student of Eros… (Bloom, 1986b, 2)

I cannot altogether agree with Bloom that Murdoch "clearly wishes" to locate her philosophical achievement in novels; she did, after all, consistently publish philosophy from 1950 until 1992. However, Bloom does recognise Murdoch's special interest in love, and he is correct to connect this interest to philosophy in terms of achievement.

In this thesis I focus on Murdoch's philosophy, not because I think that her novels are philosophically irrelevant, but because this is where the central importance of love in the development of Murdoch's philosophical thought has been most neglected. Such a focus on Murdoch's attempt to make the concept of love central to philosophy leads to a coherent view of Murdoch's philosophy as whole. I have decided to provide a particular focus on the earlier philosophy of Murdoch, that which is published from 1950 until 1956. It would hardly be ground-breaking to argue, for instance, that love is the central concern of Murdoch's moral philosophy in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), when Murdoch herself says explicitly – though only *once*, at the very centre of that same work: "We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by contemporary philosophers, can once again be made central." (OGG, 1969, 45) It is more than reasonable to think that Murdoch may be attempting, in her own moral philosophy, to rectify this situation.

Murdoch's philosophical "need" (OGG, 1969, 45) is indeed a pressing one – and it appears in light of "the fact that love is a central concept in morals" (IP, 1964, 2). I argue that

Murdoch clearly wishes to reintroduce the concept of love to philosophy in her earlier philosophical work, despite a paucity of explicit references to the word 'love'. I argue that love is of central philosophical interest to Murdoch from the very beginning of her philosophical career, and that such an interest accounts for the particular way in which she develops her philosophical thought. Lastly, I argue that in her earlier philosophy Murdoch steadily and circumspectly lays the groundwork for the philosophical expression of love which, as a central concept, is to be found later in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970).

I have selected five pieces of Murdoch early philosophy for this purpose, and so my discussion is structured across five chapters as follows:

In chapter 1, I discuss the first time Murdoch mentions love in her philosophy. I argue that Murdoch's philosophical interest in love accounts for her first pieces of philosophy, 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) and 'The Existentialist Hero'. I argue that existentialism, as made manifest in the thoughts and actions of existentialist characters (in the novels of Sartre, De Beauvoir, and Camus), provides Murdoch with a ready-made popular philosophy in which problems of love are commonly addressed. I then discuss Murdoch's radio talk on Simone Weil, '"Waiting on God": A Radio Talk on Simone Weil' (1951), and I argue that Murdoch presents aspects of Weil's thought on love positively in order to address the existentialist situation.

In chapter 2, I discuss the first time Murdoch mentions love as a philosophical concept. I argue that Murdoch, in 'The Image of Mind' (1951), suggests that love is a central concept in the philosophy of Marcel, and that as such Marcel is a kind of philosophical ally for Murdoch (in her quest to make the concept of love central to philosophy). I also argue that Murdoch sees in the philosophy of Marcel an important aspect of technique in regard to love, in that Murdoch and Marcel often opt to elicit the concept of love rather than to use the word 'love'. I argue that

Murdoch (like Marcel) uses a 'technique of elicitation' in 'The Image of Mind' (1951) to suggest the concept of love, as a central concept, without mentioning the word 'love'.

In chapter 3, I study the concept of love in relation to Murdoch's first serious philosophical paper, 'Thinking and Language' (1951). Murdoch only uses the word 'love' once in the paper, when it is located in an example (a scene from the French novel *La Chartreuse de Parme*) as part of Murdoch's own philosophical views. However, Murdoch also employs the 'technique of elicitation' which suggests the presence of love at several points in the paper. I argue that Murdoch's treatment of love in this example is designed to provide an image for the situation of love in linguistic philosophy.

In chapter 4, I identify Murdoch's *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953) as the first place Murdoch applies a stronger and more overt critical focus to the concept of love. I study Murdoch's criticisms of Sartre particularly in relation to the concept of love, as those which are derivative from 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). I argue that Sartre provides Murdoch with an ideal target, in that love's failure in existentialist-type love relationships is evidently clear and requires attention.

In chapter 5, I identify Murdoch's four philosophical hints toward a love-centred moral philosophy in 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956). This essay marks Murdoch's turn toward moral philosophy, which I argue is for the purpose of making the concept of love not only central to philosophy, but also good. I argue that each of these four hints display characteristics which later define Murdoch's mature philosophy, where the concept of love is central. These four hints correspond to Murdoch using the word 'love' on four occasions. Murdoch first hints toward the connection between love and knowledge; then humility, and love; the third entertains naming 'love' as an alternative concept; with the fourth introducing the notion that one may 'deepen' one's concept of love without referring to the word 'love'.

I conclude that Murdoch attempts to make the concept of love central to (her own) philosophy, even in her earliest period (1950-56), and that as such no serious reading of Murdoch's philosophy can afford to ignore the concept of love.

Chapter 1

Love's First Appearance: The Three Radio Talks (1950-51)

1.0 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on how love appears in Murdoch's first publicised work, 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) and 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). Both of these radio talks survey existentialist thought, with particular attention given to such thought as made manifest in the literary form of the novel. I shall argue that love occupies a position of central importance for Murdoch, even here in her earliest work. The establishment of this fact will form the first part of the greater argument in this thesis: that Murdoch is consistently concerned with making a central place for love in her philosophy. I shall argue in this chapter that Murdoch's philosophical concern for love is not something that begins with her well-known statements about love in *The Sovereignty of Good* (IP, 1964, 1 - 2, 29; OGG, 1969, 45, 73; SGC, 1967, 99 - 101), nor with her bold pronouncements about love in 'The Sublime and the Good' (S&G, 1959, 215-220), but can be seen right here in her very first work.

To clearly show Murdoch's early interest in love, I shall discuss each time Murdoch alludes to the word 'love' in each of these two radio talks. This will allow my reader to appreciate three things: One, how Murdoch increases her focus on love as she develops her discussion of existentialist thought across both of her radio talks. Two, how these first allusions to love are carefully knit together by Murdoch, and as such serve to raise questions about the capacity of existentialist characters to love one another effectively (well). Three, how Murdoch's early approach to existentialist thought may be seen as embryonic, in the sense that it anticipates her philosophical interest in love as expressed in her later work.

In § 1.1, ‘Murdoch’s first passing allusion to love: The first radio talk’, I shall examine Murdoch’s single passing allusion to love made in the first radio talk, ‘The Novelist as Metaphysician’ (1950), which occurs in her concluding remarks. In the remaining sections of the chapter I shall then discuss a further three allusions to love, which are made in Murdoch’s follow-up piece, ‘The Existentialist Hero’ (1950).

In § 1.2, ‘Increasing the focus on love: The second radio talk’, I discuss Murdoch’s second passing allusion to love in the second radio talk, ‘The Existentialist Hero’ (1950), which is made in relation to politics. In § 1.3, ‘An example of love: Pierre and Françoise’, I discuss Murdoch’s first allusion to ‘love’ in ‘The Existentialist Hero’ (1950), which occurs when Murdoch makes an example of how the existentialist characters, Pierre and Françoise, behave in Simone de Beauvoir’s novel, *L’Invitée*. I also compare this allusion to love with another early passing allusion to love, made by Murdoch in ‘The Existential Political Myth’ (1952). I show (a) that Murdoch is clearly interested in a similar problem involving love in the latter allusion; and (b) that Murdoch uses a similarly allusive technique to register this interest.

In § 1.4, ‘Murdoch’s final passing allusion to love: The character of Rieux’, I show how Murdoch’s final passing allusion to love in the second radio talk is made again through character, the character of Bernard Rieux from Albert Camus’ novel, *La Peste*. I argue that Murdoch presents Rieux as a character capable of loving, in a mode distinct from the other existentialist characters she has examined such as Pierre and Françoise; but then chooses not elaborate upon this observation. Then in § 1.5, ‘Murdoch’s conclusions about love’, I compare the conclusions of each of Murdoch’s two radio talks. I argue that these conclusions taken together indicate the importance of love as an area of philosophical interest for Murdoch.

In §1.6, ‘The love of Simone (Weil): the third radio talk (1951)’, I discuss Murdoch’s third radio talk, ‘Waiting on God”: A Radio Talk on Simone Weil’ (1951; 2017), primarily in relation to Murdoch’s philosophical interest in love. I argue that Murdoch finds Weil’s

expression of love philosophically attractive, yet also in need of significant modification. In this respect, Simone Weil provides Murdoch with the perfect opportunity to take her own philosophical interest in love forward. I also argue that Murdoch presents Simone Weil as a real-life example of an existentialist hero, in that Weil strives to love even in the face her existentialist-type situation. In § 1.7 I then conclude that even in Murdoch's first and earliest work, 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) and 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), one can clearly see that love is of central importance to Murdoch as a philosopher.

1.1 Murdoch's first passing allusion to love: The first radio talk

Murdoch's first passing allusion to love occurs in the conclusion of the first public expression of her ideas, in the first of two radio talks broadcast on the BBC in March 1950. In this talk Murdoch begins by addressing the question of whether 'the phenomenological novel', as represented by the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus, is "really a new kind of novel" (NM, 1950, 101). She concludes:

> I think it is, in the sense that the writer's attention is focused on this unusual point, this point at which our beliefs, our world pictures, our politics, religions, loves and hates are seen to be discontinuous with the selves that may or may not go on affirming them. It is this focusing of the attention, the bringing to light of this aspect of our experience, that gives to the writings of Simone de Beauvoir, Camus and Sartre, their disquieting character. It is for this that they are attacked as immoral. It is this that Maurice Merleau-Ponty celebrates when he says that with Miss de Beauvoir there ends the era of *la littérature morale*, and there begins the era of *la littérature métaphysique*. (NM, 1950, 107)

The novels written by Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Albert Camus, are seen by Murdoch as new because they are distinctly existentialist in 'flavour'.[5] Murdoch's passing allusion to 'love' in the above quotation occurs as part of what is arguably the most affirmative, and certainly the most conclusive, sentence in her talk. Murdoch's writing is typically subtle in terms of tone, emphasis, and what she may describe as 'colour'.[6] In this section I shall argue that, while the first radio talk is ostensibly a discussion about existentialism and its relationship to the novel, Murdoch is particularly concerned to introduce her listeners to 'love' as a problem in existentialist thought. Let us now look at some of the phraseology of the above quotation more closely, to see how Murdoch colours the conclusion she has made about the phenomenological novel.

When one considers that these words are designed for verbal utterance, one can hear clearly – on reading the phrases aloud – what is given the most emphatic voice: "…loves and hates are seen to be discontinuous with the selves that may or may not go on affirming them." (See main quote above) This phrase captures the conceptual crux of Murdoch's conclusion: that Simone de Beauvoir, Camus, and Sartre, have indeed created a "new kind of novel" (NM, 1950, 107), and these novels are especially driven by the loves (and hates) of their existentialist characters. In this phrase, around which the entire final paragraph is constructed, the concept of love (and hate) is there at the centre. Notice also how Murdoch, having just uttered as part of her conclusion what I claim is her central point of interest (love), then returns to 'this' three times in the final three sentences of her talk: "It is this focusing of the attention… It is for this that… It is this that…" (see main quote above) These successive demonstratives reinforce "this

[5] When introducing the idea of 'the phenomenological novel', Murdoch notes that "there is to it a very special flavour which is due to a definite theory held by the novelist" (NM, 1950, 101).

[6] In 1951 Murdoch uses the word 'colour' to describe how one's thought is conveyed in relation to uttered speech: "The meaning-character of uttered speech often demands an awareness of gesture, tone, and so on, as well as of context, for its full understanding. This is clearly so too, *mutatis mutandis*, for inward 'speech'. The thought is not the words (if any) but the words occurring in a certain way with, as it were, a certain force and colour." (TL, 1951, 34)

unusual point" about "our beliefs, our world pictures, our politics, religions, loves and hates", with "loves and hates" given prominence at the end of Murdoch's list. Murdoch deliberately places what is of central importance to her at the centre of her concluding paragraph: "loves and hates" as displayed in existentialist novels are given emphatic voice by Murdoch's phraseology. Murdoch's craft as a writer should not be dismissed as mere rhetoric, but rather considered the product of a philosopher who is at pains to impress a particular point.

Murdoch has positioned the concept of one's loves (and hates) with a special conclusive sense of *gravitas*. As such, "our beliefs, our world pictures, our politics, religions, *loves and hates*" [my italics] may linger in the mind of her listeners, requiring further reflection in the light of existentialist thought. What interests Murdoch most about the so-called phenomenological novels, and their existentialist 'flavour', is that they picture a situation deeply problematic for individuals who love each other, and who want to love each other, continuously. That is, Murdoch presents, in "this focusing of the attention" (NM, 1950, 107), a problem of love. I take this problem, as also mentioned by Murdoch three years later in *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953), to be directly related to the notion that love is "one of the forms under which we pursue stability of being" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129).[7]

The notion that one's "stability of being" might be pursued by a love relationship is in a certain sense straightforward. We readily recognize that love is connected to an ongoing form of support and sustenance for our being by way of particular personal relationships (e.g. those of parents and children, partners, friends, etc.). Love is commonly seen, and even called upon, to keep these often cherished – and difficult – personal relationships going. Love seems especially connected to those long-term relationships from which we ordinarily seek support, and sustenance, for many aspects of our being: our endeavours, aspirations, and our emotional

[7] I discuss how Murdoch's interest in love relates to her first book-length philosophical study, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953), in chapter 4.

state, to name but three of these aspects. Despite the various kinds of personal relationship we may instance (parents and children, partners, friends, etc.) to illustrate this notion that "we pursue stability of being" (*SRR*, 1953, 129) through love, in all cases it would seem that 'stability' is associated with some kind of continuous state. The fact that an ongoing relationship of significant duration is commonly referred to as 'stable' reflects this observation: I am in a 'stable relationship' if my relationship has been continuous for a lengthy duration, and if I can confidently say that it will continue. Love is connected to our pursuit for "stability of being" (a) because those whom we love, and who love us, help to support and to sustain our being; and (b) because the presence of love in a personal relationship appears to strengthen the likelihood that such relationships will continue, and even endure, into the future.[8]

However, if one attempts to achieve this so-called "stability of being" by one's love of a particular individual – or, in more existentialist terms, by one's commitment to loving another person – it is a problem if, at any moment, either person "may *or may not* go on affirming" [my italics] (see main quote above) that love. This problem, as made manifest in the ongoing personal project of a love relationship, is clearly connected to the general pairing 'loves and hates' (see main quote above). We should also note that the importance of "stability of being" (as quoted above) for one's ongoing personal project can be as readily applied to one's commitment to a political party (or to a religion), as it can to one's commitment to a personal relationship (for example, those types mentioned in the preceding paragraph). I have focused primarily on the application of "stability of being" (as quoted above) to "loves and hates" (see main quote above), in line with my view that this pairing's ultimate position in Murdoch's list

[8] Compare Harry Frankfurt, who initially begins to characterize love "as a particular mode of caring" (Frankfurt, 2004, 31) which is related to a person's sense of stability: "It is by caring about things that we infuse the world with importance. This provides us with stable ambitions and concerns; it marks our interests and our goals…A person who cares about something is guided, as his attitudes and his actions are shaped, by his continuing interest in it." (Frankfurt, 2004, 23)

indicates its prominence in relation to the other concepts mentioned therein.[9] The question now becomes: How can one "pursue stability of being" (as quoted above) through the commitment of loving another person, if either person is free to choose at any moment to do otherwise, and as such "may or may not go on affirming" (see main quote above) this love?[10]

We see in the above question a conflict particular to the loves (and hates) of existentialist characters. This conflict, in regard to one's personal projects, involves two aspects: (1) that we want our endeavour to be stable, in the sense that we can be confident it will continue; and (2) that we are always free to choose to do otherwise. On the one hand we seek to pursue our love relationships as a continuous commitment. We want a stable and ongoing relationship with those whom we love. On the other hand we are always free to choose to do otherwise, to walk away. We cannot guarantee that our relationship will last, that we shall be continually loved by our partner, or even that we shall not fall out of love ourselves. Our freedom to choose to do otherwise at any moment seems to preclude the stability of our enterprise as a continuous endeavour. Can one really commit to years of love and devotion with somebody, and at the same time be free to choose not to do this?[11] Such a position would seem self-contradictory. These are the kind of problems existentialist characters face because they are absolutely free. Existentialist characters know that at any time one or the other may choose to leave their relationship, yet at the same time they want to love each other continuously (They may even want to build a house together.). In the existentialist novel

[9] I shall discuss the rest of Murdoch's list – "our beliefs, our world pictures, our politics, religions" (see main quote) – shortly, and also in § 1.2, below.

[10] One might compare the so-called 'relationship theory' of Niko Kolodny, who says that love is more about valuing relationships than persons: "…love consists (a) in seeing a relationship in which one is involved as a reason for valuing both one's relationship and the person with whom one has that relationship, and (b) in valuing that relationship and person accordingly." (Kolodny, 2003, 150) I do not think, however, that valuing relationships of love (instead or ahead of the beloved) make the existentialist's situation any more stable. Kolodny's view is distinct from that of Velleman, who prefers the idea that in love one values the person as an end, but without an aim (Velleman, 1999, 355-60). I am not sure either view helps the existentialist here; and Murdoch, it seems to me, is merely posing the problem tentatively as one of love, before she treats it more directly as such in 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), and not yet suggesting a solution.

[11] Murdoch, in her second radio talk, perhaps observes this possibility in the character of Rieux, from Albert Camus' *La Peste*, which I discuss below in § 1.4, below.

common forms of commitment, which might otherwise be seen to denote stability (like building a house), can take on a "disquieting character" (see main quote above).

I have shown above how love has been made central to the conclusion of 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) primarily through analysis of Murdoch's craft as a writer. However, several concepts are also employed to add colour to the central feature which (in Murdoch's view) distinguishes these 'phenomenological' novels from other types of novel. Murdoch colours her conclusion by offsetting "loves and hates" (NM, 1950, 107) against other concepts associated with overt public discussion and argument: "our beliefs, our world pictures, our politics, religions" (NM, 1950, 107). These concepts, listed together in Murdoch's conclusion, serve to promote further access to the problem of love (as discussed above) which Murdoch has characterised as uniquely existentialist.

What has been identified as a problem of love between individual persons, who are "the selves that may or may not go on affirming" (NM, 1950, 107), extends vicariously to what are arguably other forms of love. If one does not wish to refer to "our beliefs, our world pictures, our politics, religions" as 'forms of love', then one may at least grant that these are forms of comparable emotional intensity and conviction. Expressions which include the word 'love', such as 'love of God' or 'love for the Communist party' – or a corresponding 'belief' in either the Communist party, or God – do not seem out of place, when discussing such deeply rooted passions and convictions.[12] This group of concepts, associated by Murdoch with "loves and hates" (NM, 1950, p. 107), provides access by several alternative routes to a comparable problem area. Murdoch's list at the conclusion of her talk supplies her listeners with several more overtly public points of access to the otherwise remarkably private problems involved in loving particular people. If one does not feel comfortable, or able, to discuss a particular

[12] Murdoch mentions that the "conflicts which Sartre describes are the ones which go to the root" (NM, 1950, 106). These conflicts involve "our beliefs, our world pictures, our politics, religions, loves and hates" (NM, 1950, 107).

problem of one's love-life, in public or philosophical *fora*, then one might talk instead about something else, such as politics or religion.[13] Or the novelist, perhaps even as the philosopher or phenomenologist, may feel more comfortable discussing these matters as fiction.[14]

When Murdoch makes this first passing allusion to love in her philosophical nonfiction she downplays its personal aspect: that particular kind of emotional bond which is ordinarily associated with the love of people for other people. In this first radio talk love is not regarded in an overtly personal way, nor is it applied to an individual person. Murdoch's passing allusion to "loves" (NM, 1950, 107), although central to her conclusion, remains general, plural, and abstract. However I maintain that it is very much the love of people for other particular people, those who are "the selves that may or may not go on affirming" (NM, 1950, 107), which Murdoch is at pains to explore.[15]

I have made the argument above that Murdoch constructs her conclusion to 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) around the key phrase: "loves and hates are seen to be discontinuous with the selves that may or may not go on affirming them." (see main quote above) Although the terms 'loves and hates', along with 'selves', are general and abstract, I

[13] Compare Murdoch on politics: "And can we really describe (I would emphasise *describe*) what moral disagreements are like without on the one hand making some concessions to the notion a substantial self, and on the other using the real concepts which are causing the real trouble? Political concepts, for instance." (NM, 1950, 106)

[14] Murdoch, of course, expresses her *raison d'être* as a novelist primarily through the loves and hates of her main characters. In her twenty-six novels (published from 1954 – 1995), there are also numerous characters drawn by religious or political convictions and/or crises. Murdoch's career as a novelist can be accurately regarded as an extended investigation of "our beliefs, our world pictures, our politics, religions, loves and hates" (NM, 1950, 107). As such, one can see Murdoch's central and abiding area of interest already clearly articulated in 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950).

[15] Interestingly, more recent philosophy of love (for example, Jollimore and Kolodny) has tended to narrow its focus to the love of people for other particular people, or human love relationships. Jollimore asserts that "it is the love for and between *persons* that people tend to care about most, and that is the love that will concern us in this book" (Jollimore, 2011, xii). Jollimore continues to narrow his account of love down: "This book will be more concerned with the sort of love that tends to obtain between (previously) unrelated adult human beings—in particular, the love that occurs between romantic lovers and, to an only slightly lesser degree, between friends—than with the sort that typically obtains between parents and children, siblings, or other persons related by blood." (Jollimore, 2011, xv) Kolodny, in his view of love as primarily about the relationship, focuses on "friendship, romantic relationships, and family relationships as paradigm cases" (Kolodny, 2003, 148). Although human love relationships between particular people certainly pertains to Murdoch's central area of interest, she does not exclude other forms of love (as we shall observe, in regard to one's love of a political movement, at the beginning of §1.2 below). Indeed, we may arguably understand more about love by surveying and reflecting upon its many manifestations.

have shown how they can nonetheless refer to individual characters in love. I have also argued above that Murdoch is chiefly interested in this existentialist problem as being one involving love: That P is in a relationship with F, and F with P, *because of their love* for each other does not *ipso facto* entail any stability for their relationship or for either of them. However both P and F still seek to "pursue stability of being" (as quoted above) primarily through their love for one another, and perhaps even go to great lengths to achieve this. In this first radio talk Murdoch prepares the ground in general abstract terms for her treatment of the same problem, made more concrete by her focus on specific existentialist characters, in the second radio talk, 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). I shall discuss this problem of love in relation to Murdoch's strong focus on existentialist characters below in § 1.3, 'An Example of love: Pierre and Françoise', and also in § 1.4, 'Murdoch's final passing allusion to love: The character of Rieux'. But for now, my claim is: Murdoch may only allude to love in passing, and once, in her first public utterance, but she does so in the most telling and conclusive manner.

Although Murdoch's passing allusion to "loves" in the first radio talk is general, and her "selves" are seemingly abstract, the point of Murdoch's conclusion is sharp and focused. Her conclusion is designed to point her audience toward problems which can be seen – and maybe *should* be seen – as problems of love. In the remaining sections of this chapter I shall argue that Murdoch uses her discussion and observations about existentialist characters, and the so-called 'existentialist hero', to develop her first philosophical probe into love. It will then become clear that what begun ostensibly as a talk about 'the phenomenological novel', in 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950), is also an introduction to further discussion about problems of love as they appear in her subsequent talk, 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). In this regard 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) prepares the ground for a more direct treatment of Murdoch's central area of interest, an enquiry into the problem of love for the individual person.

1.2 Increasing the focus on love: The second radio talk

In the remainder of this chapter I shall concentrate on how Murdoch increases her focus on love in her second radio talk, 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). There are three allusions to love in the second radio talk, and I argue that each one is designed to develop thought about the concept of love from a distinctive point of view. These allusions to love feature different characteristics, which may be summarised in order of their appearance, as follows: The first allusion to love involves the failure of a love relationship, and it occurs at the very beginning of her talk. This is presented by Murdoch as an example of existentialist thought driven by fictional characters, taken from Simone de Beauvoir's novel *L'Invitée*, and will be discussed in section §1.3. The second passing allusion to love occurs mid-way through the talk and connects love to one's political endeavour, which I discuss immediately below in § 1.2. The third and final passing allusion to love appears in Murdoch's description of the character of Bernard Rieux, from Albert Camus' *La Peste*, and this will be discussed in § 1.4.

In light of the discussion in the previous section about the expression of one's private life, one's love-life, in public, I turn now to the second of Murdoch's well-placed allusions to love in 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). Here love is connected to an intense private conviction, albeit mixed with a very conventionally public form of expression, that of political ideology. Murdoch refers in passing to a crisis for the Marxist: "Love and brotherhood may initially have pointed out the goal. But if the *way* is hatred and oppression, it may be that the goal will be altered or lost sight of." (EH, 1950, 113) Love is presented as part of the aspiration of a political figure. The problem, as pictured here in the middle of her second radio talk, can again be seen as one involving love and the continuity of a project with which it is associated. Murdoch, by connecting our "loves and hates" (NM, 1950, 107) to politics, instances what she

sees as a problem of love in what might be seen (for example, by her philosophical peers) as a more acceptable public form than that of discussing one's private life.[17] Politics is public by definition. Love may initially motivate a person toward one's goal, but if the process undertaken for that purpose lacks love or is inimical to the expression, action, or embodiment, of love, then "such men may lose their sense of direction" (EH, 1950, 113). This situation puts into question the precarious nature of one's goal, particularly if that goal is derived from love.

Whether the individual's goal is the political objective of the Marxist, or "stability of being" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129) in a personal relationship (as discussed in the previous section), in either case there does not seem to be stability in one's project. The Marxist's initial optimism and clarity of direction becomes muddled and confused, and the loving couple fail to maintain their lustre (which I shall discuss in detail in the next section). Yet in both cases Murdoch presents love as the motivational force, that prompter to action in the first place. Love does not just point out the goal, but also formulates the goal and the action by which that goal is made achievable.

For example, a young university student might carry strong socialist convictions. These convictions are rooted in a deep love and regard for the wellbeing of others, which generates an egalitarian 'world picture', and prompts the student to action. The student eventually becomes Vice President of the Socialist Party, having worked very hard for the cause: To make a world in which people are not excluded from social opportunity and wellbeing on account of their economic class. However, over the years, this student meets many people along the way

[17] Problems of love, as made manifest in existentialist characters, may concern Murdoch more as a philosopher than those of politics. However, the general problem area (which I have been discussing, and will discuss further, in this chapter) can be accessed through the existentialist character's aspirations either in love or politics. For further evidence of this Murdochian approach, compare Murdoch's passing allusion to love and politics in her later work, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953): "The hero of *Le Sang des Autres* painfully discovers his moral involvement with other people; his lightest move, his very existence, bruises another, in love and politics alike." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 108). Again, love and politics are taken together in their association with the plight of the existentialist hero. For my discussion of the influence Murdoch's philosophical peers may have had on her subtle highly allusive treatment of love in her earliest work, and for how this style relates to her development of a philosophical technique by which to access the concept of love, see chapter 3, especially § 3.1 and § 3.3, below.

who seem to despise the rich. They hate the rich, and the businesses that make individuals rich. The student also begins to hate the rich, and by this stage has become the President. Hatred of the rich elite has become a focus for the President, in contrast to that deep love and regard for the wellbeing of others, previously felt as such a strong conviction. One day, another student walks in and asks to join the Socialist Party. This new student is from a rich family (both the father and the mother are well-paid judges) and they live in the most affluent suburb, which happens to be close to the University. The President simply tells the student: "We are not for you. Go away."

In the above example we see clearly how love "may initially have pointed out the goal" (EH, 1950, 113); and that "if the *way* is hatred and oppression, it may be that the goal will be altered or lost sight of" (EH, 1950, 113). We also see how "such men may lose their sense of direction" (EH, 1950, 113). The student president in the above example has the goal of not excluding individuals from social opportunity and wellbeing on account of their economic class. Deep love and regard for the wellbeing of others initially points out this goal, and motivates the student to action. However, the president, after becoming consumed by hatred for the rich, excludes another student from the Socialist Party on account of their economic class. Love seems somehow indispensable to the furthering of the original project. In this way Murdoch sees the problems of the Marxist individual as a problem of love. The private problem of love becomes the public problem of how to sustain one's political convictions. Murdoch designs this problem of love for public access, while picturing that which "most of us can recognise in the crises of our own lives, and which some novelists have already been at pains to display" (NM, 1950, 104).

Murdoch is attempting to display in this second radio talk – like the existentialist writers she is discussing – problems and conflicts born of our deepest convictions. These are commonly known to be problems of love: The break-up of a love relationship, the death or

misfortune of someone who is close to us, what losing one's job means for one's family, etc. These are indeed the "crises of our own lives" (as quoted above). Such crises often involve "stability of being" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129) and what we refer to as 'love'. Existentialist thought, especially as it is displayed in novels, provides Murdoch with a philosophical point of access to these "crises of our own lives" (NM, 1950, 104). The novel concerns itself with the representation of individual characters. One can much more readily imagine – or see – individual characters loving each other in the form of the novel, than one can see love in the more abstract setting of a philosophical theory. Indeed, Murdoch commends the part of Sartre's approach where the French philosopher "wishes to go on and to display in detail the adventures of the beings who are in this situation of having no guarantee" (NM, 1950, 106).[18] Novels set out the way people behave in relation to one another, in a concrete fashion, which retains the ambiguities of the characters' situation.

At the beginning of the second radio talk, Murdoch refers to "the fact that in an existentialist novel the interest is focused upon the ambiguity of the characters' situation, and upon how the characters choose to resolve this" (EH, 1950, 108).[19] This existentialist "fact" (quoted above) appears in more abstract terms at the conclusion of Murdoch's first radio talk, where the general diagnosis is offered: "loves and hates are seen to be discontinuous with the selves that may or may not go on affirming them" (NM, 1950, 107). My main claim throughout this chapter is that what interests Murdoch most about 'the phenomenological novel' – and its

[18] I have discussed "this situation of having no guarantee" (NM, 1950, 106) as a problem of love in relation to existentialist thought in § 1.1 above. Murdoch, after alluding to love as an existentialist problem for the Marxist, then refers us to characters in Sartre's *Les Chemins de la Liberté* (EH, 1950, 113): "Brunet, the Communist; a sympathetic character" (EH, 1950, 113); and also Mathieu: "Mathieu is no doubt what the Marxist feels everyone would tend to become under existentialist influence: a drifting intellectual, full of doubts and scruples; politically useless, and, because he is both over-sensitive and inconsistent, a menace even to his friends." (EH, 1950, 113)

[19] I have already mentioned how Murdoch, in describing the 'phenomenological novel', introduces her first talk by referring to its "very special flavour which is due to a definite theory held by the novelist" (NM, p. 101). Later, in the discussion, she continues: "To get the full flavour of this drama I think the keyword is 'ambiguity'…" (NM, 1950, 104). Murdoch picks this "keyword" up again when introducing the second talk, as she develops her focus. I suggest that the first and second radio talks are intimately connected, and not just by the word 'ambiguity'; but should be taken together as a single work which develops an increasing focus on love.

status as a new kind of novel – amounts to a problem of love. Or more precisely: the problem of how particular individuals might love other individuals continuously. I have argued in this section that Murdoch seeks to provide a wider frame of reference for this problem of love, when she alludes in passing to 'love' as a political aspiration. I have also touched on how Murdoch seems especially interested in the existentialist novel as a philosophical form, which offers a concrete picture of the individual characters who encounter these problems of love. I shall now provide further support for my main claim in the next section by a brief discussion of Murdoch's chief example, located at the beginning of her second radio talk, which is intended to demonstrate how existentialist characters relate to one another in personal love relationships.

1.3 An example of love: Pierre and Françoise

In the second radio talk Murdoch immediately begins to discuss what I argue is her central philosophical point of interest, how particular individuals may love each other in an ongoing relationship, by way of an example.[20] This is the example to which Murdoch gives the most text (18 lines), and it is also positioned in a prominent and central position, especially when both radio talks are considered as a single work.[21] Murdoch's chief example in the first public expression of her philosophical interests is indeed an example of love. This example is designed to show how existentialist characters relate to one another in a love relationship, and

[20] Murdoch consistently features love in many of her examples, even when the philosophical issue exemplified does not necessarily entail the concept of love. I discuss this further in § 3.2, below. I shall argue in chapter 3 that these examples of love are an early Murdochian technique to make the concept of love central to her own philosophy. Such a technique is comparable to that of referring to love in passing allusions (for instance: when Murdoch refers the perspective of the Marxist, as discussed in the previous section). I shall argue in § 3.3 that both techniques serve to bring love to our attention, without exposing the concept of love itself to direct philosophical scrutiny or attack.

[21] For the consideration that both radio talks should be taken as a single work, where Murdoch introduces and then increases her focus on existential problems involving love, see § 1.1 (especially the conclusion) and § 1.2 (the first paragraph) above.

as such entails problems of love seen by Murdoch as particular to existentialist thought.[22] In this section I shall discuss this example of love, and examine those problems which Murdoch singles out as especially manifest in the thinking and conduct of existentialist characters. I shall also briefly discuss another early passing allusion to love made by Murdoch in 'The Existential Political Myth' (1952), in order to further elucidate this discussion as a whole.

Murdoch's example, taken from Simone de Beauvoir's novel *L'Invitée,* introduces Pierre and Françoise, who are in a love relationship and "aged about thirty" (EH, 1950, 108). They "are *des amoureux fort rationels*[23] used to sharing all secrets and discussing frankly their relations with other people" (EH, 1950, 108), but they encounter a problem. Pierre "develops a serious attachment" (EH, 1950, 108) for a younger woman, Xavière, with whom they have jointly become friends. Xavière is described as "far from rational" (EH, 1950, 108), in stark contrast to Pierre and Françoise. The character of Xavière embodies a problem of love for *des amoureux fort rationels*. The strongly rational lovers attempt to find "a solution *à trois*" (EH, 1950, 108); this does not work: "For the first time Françoise finds that there is something in Pierre's life which she cannot share." (EH, 1950, 108) Françoise then has a "love affair with a young man called Gerbert in whom Xavière also has an interest" (EH, 1950, 108); but this does not help anybody either.

Murdoch's focus in this example is on (a) the failure – rather than the potential success – of a love relationship, and (b) how the characters involved attempt to continue their relationship by rational and frank behaviour. Murdoch, in her commentary upon the example, immediately makes clear how the existentialist lovers experience this type of problem:

> Françoise discovers that rationality is not enough. The world of perfect communication which she had established with Pierre is destroyed … There is

[22] It is surprising that Murdochian scholarship in philosophy has not directly connected Murdoch's early interest in existentialism and the novel to her philosophical interest in the concept of love.
[23] The French phrase "*des amoureux fort rationels*" can be translated: 'strongly rational lovers' (my translation).

> no safety in rationality and frankness. Sooner or later there come experiences which cannot be communicated. Perfect love and understanding cannot be maintained. Ultimately one is alone. (EH, 1950, 109)

The experiences of Pierre and Françoise highlight (for Murdoch) how certain modes of being fail to deal with problems of love adequately. An adequate treatment of the problem might mean that their relationship could continue in an acceptable form. Or it might mean the cessation of the relationship (in an acceptable form), even despite what the characters want. The modes of being, which Murdoch brings into focus, are the abilities to be rational and frank. These are the tools by which Pierre and Françoise, as existentialist characters, exclusively (in Murdoch's example) seek to sustain their love in relationship to one another. Murdoch's example of love isolates the concepts of rationality and frankness, perhaps in an effort to picture clearly their failure in regard to sustaining a love relationship. Interestingly both concepts, rationality and frankness, tend to produce an expectation of clarity. One would expect frank rational deliberation to provide the recipient with a clear position, from where a relatively clear choice could be made, in regard to how one might proceed in their relationship of love.

In a straightforward sense, the relationship between Françoise and Pierre breaks down because Pierre's attachment to Xavière is an experience he cannot communicate to Françoise. If the experience cannot be communicated, then rationality and frankness cannot be applied to the problem of how to continue their relationship. This is an experience which cannot be shared by Pierre and Françoise; although they do try: "Attempts to find a solution *à trois* break down." (EH, 1950, 108) The rational and frank relations which Pierre and Françoise have hitherto enjoyed involve "sharing all secrets and discussing frankly their relations with other people" (EH, 1950, 108). However Xavière is in simple conflict with Françoise for the attention of Pierre, and frank discussions between Pierre and Françoise about Xavière ultimately lead back to this conflict. To avoid such conflict they attempt together to make Xavière a shared

experience. This strongly rational response, intended to maintain the relationship as it was before, nonetheless fails. For Françoise, attempted communication from Pierre about his attachment to Xavière either offers a frank conflict for the attention of Pierre, or a rational solitude (the solution *à trois* having already failed) in which Françoise cannot imagine being part of the experience Pierre has with Xavière. Murdoch's example shows us clearly that no amount of open and honest deliberation (frankness) between the lovers, even with a strong rational will in common, can resolve the conflict occasioned by the "far from rational" (EH, 1950, 108) Xavière.

In addition to this straightforward account for why rationality and frankness utterly fail Pierre and Françoise, Murdoch provides us with another reason why these two modes of being fail to help the existentialist lovers. This involves conflictual vision in the characters who are thinking about what they may or may not do. If a situation is deeply ambiguous, a person may not have clear or accurate vision available to them.[24] Murdoch, in her commentary upon the example, pointedly notes that the love affair of Françoise with Gerbert "is seen by Françoise as something simple and sincere, but of course is regarded by Xavière as revenge" (EH, 1950, 109). Who is correct? There may be some truth in the position of each, with varying emotions and intentions: Françoise may experience an oscillation between simple affections and fleeting revengeful thoughts.[25] Of course Françoise or Xavière could also be merely delusional in the

[24] Let us remember that Murdoch introduces this example of love (and *ipso facto* her second radio talk) by emphasising that existentialist writers focus "upon the ambiguity of the characters' situation, and upon how the characters choose to resolve this" (EH, 1950, 108). Murdoch introduces her first radio talk by referring to a "very special flavour which is due to a definite theory held by the novelist" (NM, 1950, 101). Murdoch then picks up the word 'flavour' and connects it to 'ambiguity': "To get the full *flavour* of this drama I think the keyword is 'ambiguity'…" [Italics mine]" (NM, 1950, 104). The use of 'keywords' which resonate on important ideas is typical of Murdoch's style. Although such an allusive writing style is not traditionally associated with philosophical argument, it would be wilfully neglectful to ignore how such keywords inform an understanding of Murdoch's thought. If nothing else, Murdoch's 'keywords' indicate just how carefully knit together these two radio talks are, by a thinker who is self-consciously producing her first philosophical comments. Indeed, one might expect such comments to accurately reflect what the philosopher, at the beginning of her career, finds most interesting (and concerning): what happens to love when subjected to the then-popular existentialist mode of being and thought.

[25] Murdoch: "Was Françoise's conduct guided throughout simply by unacknowledged jealousy?" (EH, 1950, 109) Murdoch observes that Simone de Baeuvoir "leaves nevertheless a certain ambiguity in the matter" (EH, 1950, 109).

way that they see the affair. If the rational thought or the frank admission is itself a delusion, then the sought-after clarity (the expectation of rationality and frankness) must surely be called into question. This instance of conflictual vision allows Murdoch to enquire: "What is the meaning of an action? What we see or what others see?" (EH, 1950, 109) Murdoch is calling into question whether a strictly rational and frank approach to decision making, in love relationships, really is an acceptable way forward.

For Françoise, "rationality is not enough" (see main quote above) to sustain her relationship with Pierre. This is partly because Françoise feels hurt in a very ordinary way by Pierre's relationship with Xavière. However, this is also the case because rationality is limited by one's vision of the particulars in an already ambiguous situation. Xavière, who views the affair as 'revenge', sees a different picture (and different aspects of Gerbert) than Françoise. Frankness is limited in a similar way: one may well be frank about what is undoubtedly (simplistically) discernible and accurate; but to what end does frankness lead if one is merely fostering a delusion? Murdoch isolates the concepts of rationality and frankness, both to accentuate their deficiency *apropos* of sustaining love relationships, and in order to produce clarity in her example. This isolation of concepts also comprises part of the problem, for rationality and frankness might yield a more positive picture if supplemented by other concepts. However Murdoch does not yet speak of other such concepts which might adhere to the peculiar rationality and frankness of these lovers; concepts such as compassion, forgiveness, or even self-doubt. Murdoch's intention is primarily to make an example of the existentialist character, who fails to love. The focus of her example is exclusively on the failure of rationality and frankness to achieve their ends, and the relative failure of a love relationship.

There is another feature of Murdoch's commentary upon her example of love which stands out, and which I highlight in italics below by presenting the main quote again:

> Françoise discovers that rationality is not enough. The world of *perfect communication* which she had established with Pierre is destroyed … There is no safety in rationality and frankness. Sooner or later there come experiences which cannot be communicated. *Perfect love and understanding* cannot be maintained. Ultimately one is alone. (EH, 1950, 109) [Italics mine]

The adjective 'perfect' is repeated twice by Murdoch, attached first to the concept of "communication" (see main quote above) and thereafter to the concepts of "love and understanding" (see main quote above). I note this briefly for the following reason: That Murdoch connects the idea of perfection to a situation of love clearly anticipates her mature philosophy in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970).[26] This is pivotal to my thesis that Murdoch's particular interest in love provides one with her *raison d'être* as a philosopher. The fact that the idea of perfection is connected to love in this earliest work, albeit in a less developed form, is solid evidence for the above thesis. That communication, love, or understanding, can be 'perfect' – and that this is the expectation of Simone de Beauvoir's characters – is questionable, especially given how individuals are shown to be ordinarily limited by conflictual vision (as discussed in this section above). There may be a tension here between what Murdoch herself already associates with love (the idea of perfection) and the expectations of Simone de Beauvoir's characters.[27] Does Murdoch exaggerate the expectations of the existentialist lover, for reasons similar to why she isolates rationality and frankness in her discussion (as discussed in this section above)? That is, to picture as clearly as possible (a) the failure of an existentialist love relationship; and (b) how the deployment of rationality and frankness cannot meet the

[26] See especially 'The Idea of Perfection' (1964), where Murdoch introduces her philosophical interest in "the fact that love is a central concept in morals" (IP, 1964, 2), before "suggesting that the central concept of morality is 'the individual' thought of as knowable by love, thought of in the light of the command, 'Be ye therefore perfect'…" (IP, 1964, 29).

[27] Later in 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), Murdoch again associates the idea of perfection with love, through her description of Albert Camus' character, Bernard Rieux, who "is perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (EH, 1950, 114). I shall discuss this in § 1.4, 'Murdoch's final passing allusion to love: The character of Rieux', below.

expectations of Pierre and Françoise. Whether this main example of love itself has a valid claim to being realistic is certainly something that can and should be called into question.[28]

However this may be, if one removes the word 'perfect' from Murdoch's commentary (see main quote above), one can easily see that the same kind of problem is still present for Simone de Beauvoir's characters: "communication" is still "destroyed"; "love and understanding cannot be maintained" (see main quote above). These problems involve the maintenance of love and understanding, and the wish to continue in a relationship of love. Murdoch identifies "that rationality is not enough" (EH, 1950, 109), even when coupled with a frank and willing form of sincerity, to sustain this love relationship.

I shall now compare another of Murdoch's early passing allusions to love with the main quote as discussed above, in order to make a final observation in this section about how Murdoch regards these existentialist characters. In 'The Existentialist Political Myth' (1952) Murdoch refers to the word 'love' only once and in passing. The concept of love is again put subtly into the mind of her reader, even if just as a momentary reminder. Murdoch's allusive writing style is again visible. Murdoch makes the following passing allusion to love comparable to that quoted above by (a) again drawing on the fiction of Simone de Beauvoir, and (b) again making an example of an existentialist character who fails to love:

> Meaning is egocentric. Yet, as I am infinitely free, I am also infinitely responsible. Simone de Beauvoir depicts this sense of infinite responsibility in her novel *Le Sang des autres* … One cannot but do harm to the innocent – whether it be the girl one fails to love, or the hostages who are shot because one resists tyranny. (EPM, 1952, 139)

[28] The idea (in Murdoch's commentary upon her example of love) that communication, love, or understanding, might be 'perfect' is comparable, in its absolute mood, to the rational lovers of her example, who are "used to sharing *all* secrets" [my italics] (EH, 1950, 108); not some, but 'all' secrets. The mood of both Murdoch's example and commentary is consistently absolute, which suggests that we should take Murdoch's use of the adjective 'perfect' to mean what it says. If 'perfect' is taken seriously (to mean what it says), 'perfect' communication, love, or understanding, offers no room for improvement; just as the sharing of 'all' secrets offers no room for the possibility of even one secret between the lovers.

The reader who is following Murdoch's initial philosophical output attentively may well wonder: 'It is interesting how existentialist characters are so consistently pictured by Murdoch as failing to love'. Once Françoise has lost "perfect love and understanding" (EH, 1950, 109), along with "perfect communication" (EH, 1950, 109), Murdoch sums up her situation as follows: "Ultimately one is alone" (EH, 1950, 109). For Françoise, the aspiration to share most if not all experiences in the intimacy of love,[29] those experiences which have been sought through frank and rational behaviour between two willing participants, ends up as painful loneliness (for Françoise). We have also seen (as discussed above) how the concepts of rationality and frankness themselves appear in that same purposeful isolation which characterises the ultimate situation of Françoise. This is because for the existentialist character, in the view of Murdoch, "Meaning is egocentric" (see main quote above).

The kind of rationality which fails to sustain the love relationship for Pierre and Françoise is that of an excessively egocentric strain, coupled with a forceful frankness about one's own desires. What does this kind of rationality allow, and what does it frankly justify? It allows Pierre to develop his attachment to Xavière, despite the distress of Françoise. It allows for an attempt to find "a solution *à trois*" (EH, 1950, p. 108). It does not allow Pierre to manage his feelings for Xavière as an expression of love for Françoise. For example, Pierre might decide to sacrifice his own desires by choosing not to pursue Xavière as a love interest at all. When two desires come into conflict, the denial of one for the other does not appear as a justifiable option for the existentialist: "One cannot but do harm to the innocent" (see main quote above). Pierre must, it seems, pursue (frankly) both his feelings for attachment to Xavière and his relationship to Françoise. For Murdoch, the reason rationality and frankness fail to

[29] In Murdoch's example, when their relationship seems stable, Pierre and Françoise ""are *des amoureux fort rationels* used to sharing all secrets and discussing frankly their relations with other people" (EH, 1950, 108).

sustain the love relationship of Pierre and Françoise is because – as she notes close to her single passing allusion to love in 'The Existential Political Myth' (1952) – meaning is exclusively egocentric. Where meaning is egocentric (where what X means is what X means for me, or in relation to me): "Ultimately one is alone" (EH, 1950, 109). This outcome of existentialist thought is presented by Murdoch as a failure in love: both in her 18 line example which pictures the love relationship which cannot continue between Françoise, Pierre, and Xavière (as discussed in this section above), and also in her passing allusion to "the girl one fails to love" (see main quote above).[30]

In the second radio talk Murdoch immediately focuses, by the presentation of her example of existentialist characters in love, on what is of central interest to her: the problem of how particular individuals might love each other in a sustainable relationship. The failure to love (effectively, well, sustainably), as made manifest in existentialist characters, is at the heart of Murdoch's initial interest in existentialist thought. Murdoch shows us how Pierre and Françoise fail to love each other in a sustainable way, and how their application of rationality and frankness to each other does not help them to continue in their relationship. In 'The Existential Political Myth' (1952) we find another passing allusion by Murdoch to a lover who "fails to love" (EPM, 1952, 139), coupled with the idea that for the existentialist character "meaning is egocentric" (EPM, 1952, 139). Such an egocentric view of meaning lies at the heart of the existentialist character's failure to love another continuously, or well. It lies at the heart of the irresolvable conflicts of existentialist lovers, irresolvable because they must be free and as such cannot compromise (their own desires/actions). Now it remains to be seen whether

[30] I shall discuss further Murdoch's development of the idea that Existentialist thought exhibits an egocentric view of meaning, which results in the failure of individuals to love each other well, in chapter 4, § 4.4, below. For now, compare Murdoch in *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953): "Once again, the dramatic colour of his [Sartre's] theory comes from the easily grasped examples of personal conflict. // Yet it is just here that Sartre's solipsistic view of meaning raises difficulties of another kind … He isolates the self so that it treats others, not as objects of knowledge certainly, but as objects to be feared, manipulated, and imagined about. Sartre's is not a rational but an imaginative solipsism … We can never sufficiently respect the liberty of the other: we cannot co-operate wholly in his freedom, or *make* him free … This failure is the root cause of feelings of guilt and sin. Sartre analyses love as a particular case of this frustration." [Murdoch's Italics] (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129)

Murdoch grants the existentialist character any form of love in a more positive light, in either of these two radio talk, and this will be what I discuss in §1.4, below.

1.4 Murdoch's final passing allusion to love: The character of Rieux

Murdoch's final passing allusion to love in the second radio talk bears striking resemblances to those preceding. Again love is mentioned in connection with a particular character, who appears in a work of fiction, and whom Murdoch presents as an example. This character is Bernard Rieux, from Albert Camus' *La Peste* (EH, 1950, 114):

> Rieux is perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero. He is a person with no illusions and no certainties. He does his job and he loves his fellows and serves them as far as he can... Rieux, we feel, is one who is forever conscious of the possibility of the absurd, but who does not relax his grip nevertheless. (EH, 1950, 114)

Murdoch makes the emphatic claim that Rieux is "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (see main quote above), and as such her final passing allusion to love in the second radio talk is explicitly connected to her title: 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). This emphatic statement about the character of Rieux certainly invites closer scrutiny. What are the characteristics of Rieux, which mark him out as "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (see main quote above), and which so distinguish him from those other less 'perfect' characters already presented by Murdoch (such as Pierre, Françoise, and Xavière, to name those I have already discussed in § 1.3 above)? Murdoch's presentation of Rieux provides us (briefly) with a bright contrast to every other existentialist character, scene, or thought, hitherto discussed in either of her two radio talks. At the heart of this contrast is the fact that

Murdoch affords Rieux an ability to love, put simply: "…he [Rieux] loves his fellows..." (See main quote above).[31]

In this section I shall argue that it is because of Rieux's capacity to love that Murdoch singles him out as "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (see main quote above). I shall discuss how Murdoch again associates the idea of perfection with love, through the character of Rieux;[32] but how this time, through her presentation of the character of Rieux, Murdoch's passing allusion to love strikes a positive note. I shall first compare Rieux to the character of Schneider, whom Murdoch presents as an antecedent to Rieux, in order to accentuate those features of Rieux's character which relate to his (given) ability to love. Thereafter, in the latter part of this section, I shall compare Murdoch's more commendatory treatment of Rieux, as a character capable of loving others, with her pessimistic treatment of those existentialist characters, especially Pierre and Françoise, who fail in their attempts to love each other.

Murdoch sets the scene for the introduction of Rieux by her description of another existentialist character, Schneider. Schneider is a character from Sartre's *La Mort dans l'ame*, who merely has "the makings of the existentialist hero" (EH, 1950, 114). An important contrast is thereby made with the character of Rieux, who is fully developed as "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (see main quote above). Schneider has the potential to be an existentialist hero, but falls short (for reasons I shall discuss in the following paragraphs). However, Rieux already "has, full scale, all the qualities which are shown in this [Murdoch's] sketch of Schneider" (EH, 1950, 114). Murdoch is careful to refer us specifically to her own

[31] Raimond Gaita connects mystery and the mysterious not only with an individual's capacity to love, but also with "the preciousness of each individual human being" (Gaita, 1999, 38).David Velleman, by contrast, places (Kantian) respect for others (for themselves, as an end; not as a means) at the centre of his account of love: "Love, like respect, is the heart's response to the realization that it is not alone." (Velleman, 1999, 366)

[32] For my discussion of how Murdoch associates he idea of perfection with love, in relation to those existentialist characters (Pierre and Françoise) she has examined earlier in 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), see § 1.3 above.

sketch of Schneider, rather than to some vaguer notion of Schneider as found in Sartre's novel. This is because Murdoch, in the latter part of this second radio talk, seeks to suggest her own preferred conception of what kind of character 'the existentialist hero' might be. The contrast between Schneider and Rieux serves to elucidate precisely those character traits which Murdoch seeks to accentuate in her vision of the existentialist hero. Murdoch employs the character of Schneider to build – or to suggest how to build – an existentialist character such as Rieux, who "loves his fellows" (see main quote above). Murdoch is chiefly interested in the possibility of an existentialist hero (in this case, the character of Rieux) with those particular qualities which may be connected to a capacity to love.

There are two such qualities which Murdoch assigns to Schneider, and which are of special importance (a) in relation to Schneider's potential to become an existentialist hero, and (b) in relation to Rieux's ability to love: (1) Schneider is described by Murdoch as 'mysterious'; and (2) Schneider is given the ability to respect others. Both of these qualities, which Murdoch emphasises in her description of the character of Schneider, may be seen as precursors to one's capacity to love. The 'mysterious', perhaps seen as a starting point, offers a description of that which could be loved; whereas having the ability to respect others offers (possibly also as a starting point) a description of the kind of capacity a character may require in order to love. Murdoch offers a starting point regarding a single characteristic of love's object (the mysterious), as that which might elicit love; and she also offers a starting point regarding a single characteristic of love's agent (respecting others), as that which might carry love. I shall now briefly discuss why firstly the 'mysterious', and thereafter respecting others, are presented by Murdoch as precursors not only to her description of the character of Rieux, but to Rieux's ability to love.

The adjective 'mysterious' provides us with our very first impression of Schneider, when Murdoch identifies Schneider as "a mysterious character" (EH, 1950, 115). This is the

first time Murdoch has mentioned the 'mysterious' aspect of any character, in either of her two radio talks. The 'mysterious' is one of those qualities which Murdoch consistently connects to love in her mature philosophy (for example: OGG, 1969, 52, 61; SGC, 1967, 84, 96-96).[33] Whether one's mystery is understood as (a) the 'mysterious' character of the individual (that is, of the object), or (b) seeing another person as 'mysterious' (that is, of one's vision of the object), in either case it may be connected to love. The 'mysterious' quality of an individual is often attractive, and such attraction can naturally be a precursor to love. One notices the mysterious individual, for example, on the far side of the room, and wants to know more about that person.[34] Likewise, the ability to see another individual as 'mysterious', with a corresponding desire to know more or to see more of that person, can also be seen as a precursor to loving them (although Murdoch's description of Schneider does not explicitly focus on this aspect). The acknowledgement of the 'mysterious' – part of Schneider – invites more scrutiny, more reflection, more of the effort involved in the discovery of a person; and renders superficial judgement – what is sometimes called 'the boxing of a person' – less likely to occur. The desire to know or to see more of a person, as elicited by "a mysterious character" (EH, 1950, 114), might not yet be developed as love for that person; but may lead to love in the future. [35]

However, we may know generally that individuals are 'mysterious' to us (their personal histories, particular emotions and thoughts, etc.), but simply not care to see them that way. It perhaps requires less effort (a) to make for oneself a quick picture of another individual,

[33] I shall discuss further Murdoch's early connection of the concept of mystery, or the 'mysterious', with that of love, in relation to her review of the philosophy of the French existentialist philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, in chapter 2, § 2.3, below.

[34] Later, toward the conclusion of 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), Murdoch refers to "the enticing mystery of the unknown" (EH, 1950, 115), by which she distinguishes the writer Alain-Fournier from those existentialist writers she has been discussing. This distinction appears as part of her criticism that "these [existentialist] characters and the universes which they inhabit are made excessively transparent" (EH, 1950, 114). Murdoch continues: "We can see a little too precisely what is being done. These people are appealing, but they are never enchanting…" (EH, 1950, 114-115) People, like Existentialist writers, may diminish the mysterious quality of an individual in order to render them manageable, or effective, in promoting a particular view.

[35] Murdoch also makes this kind of suggestion in 'The Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited' (1959), by referring to the remark of Henry James, "that Balzac did not love these people because he knew them, he knew them because he loved them" (SBR, 1959, 285).

deliberately simplified (like drawing a caricature); (b) to make a general statement about their character; or (c) to simply ignore them (not to see them at all); and thus stay unloving toward a person (nor wanting to see them at all). It perhaps requires less effort and therefore less love (especially if love is seen as a motivational force, or as energy) to regard a person as acquired knowledge, than to see them as mysterious, interesting, and perhaps worth knowing— that is, worth the continual effort to know them. Not caring – or not continuing – to look at a person as somewhat mysterious (as someone to be known better) can result in an absence of love. For example, a long-married couple who are no longer interested in each other (or mysterious to each other), thinking nonetheless that they thoroughly know each other, might consequently experience a lack of love. We may not walk around thinking everybody is 'mysterious', or even think that our loved ones are mysterious; but for Murdoch, the 'mysterious' promotes one's desire to know another by looking in such a way that is connected to love, and to a person's (Rieux's) ability to love.[36]

In addition to being mysterious, Schneider is one "who respects his fellows" (EH, 1950. 114). Murdoch explicitly connects this phrase to the character of Rieux by like phraseology, when she indicates that Rieux "loves his fellows" (EH, 1950, 114). Murdoch not only makes the broad contrast between Schneider and Rieux – that between the potential existentialist hero and the actual existentialist hero (as mentioned above) – but provides us with this additional contrast between their corresponding character traits. Murdoch does this in order to sharpen her focus on Rieux's ability to love. Schneider "respects his fellows" (EH, 1950, 114), whereas Rieux "loves his fellows" (EH, 1950, 114). Schneider is merely be given (by Murdoch) the ability to respect "his fellows" (EH, 1950, 114), but this clearly anticipates Rieux's ability to love "his fellows" (EH, 1950, 114). Respecting others entails the effort to see another

[36] Compare Murdoch in her later philosophy: "In particular situations 'reality' as that which is revealed to the patient eye of love is an idea entirely comprehensible to the ordinary person." (IP, 1964, 39). The 'patient eye of love' is later described as "making those little peering efforts of imagination which have such important cumulative results" (IP, 1964, 42).

individual for who they are, whereby an attempt is also made to understand or at least to tolerate them as such. For Murdoch, respecting others also means having the desire to see or to understand others for what they really are; and the ability to do so may be seen as a precursor to loving them.

The 'mysterious' promotes an ability to love is because it elicits a special kind of interest, which directs (or helps) one to focus on another person; whereas being able to respect others appears as a skill which enables one to focus on another person less aided by an external source. The other – person, quality, or idea – might not be attractive, but still require respect. One may have to respect unattractive qualities, which are not necessarily bad qualities, to facilitate the continued loving of another person (respect in this sense does not mean 'approve'). In each case, whether one is mysterious or respecting others, either character trait – by the realisation of an other-centred focus – can be seen as a precursor to love in action.[37]

Schneider has the potential to be a love interest because he is mysterious, and he has the potential to love others because he can respect others. Murdoch shows us, through the character of Schneider, these two precursors to love: one in the love object (the 'mysterious'), and the other in the lover himself (respecting others). Just as Schneider is not given the ability to love, but the potential to love (respecting others) and to be loved (being mysterious); neither is he given the status of existentialist hero, but the potential to become an existentialist hero. Rieux, on the other hand, has the ability to love and is afforded the full status of an existentialist hero. Murdoch is interested in showing us that an existentialist character, as a hero, can indeed

[37] In her later philosophy Murdoch mentions that "one aspect of respecting something is being interested enough in it to try to understand it" (SBR, 1959, 275). In the 'Sublime and the Beautiful Revisited' (1959), Murdoch develops this idea of 'being interested' into the endless task of understanding others, as a precursor to love: "…the man that I have in mind, faced by the manifold of humanity…will suffer that undramatic, because un-self-centred, agnosticism which goes with tolerance. To understand other people is a task which does not come to an end. This man will possess 'spirit' in the sense intended by Pascal when he said: 'The more spirit one has the more original men one discovers. Ordinary people do not notice differences between men.' And a better name for spirit here is not reason, not tolerance even, but love." (SBR, 1959, 283) The resemblances between Murdoch's later philosophy and what she offers us in her discussion about 'the existentialist hero' are striking. Let us not forget the role that the 'mysterious' plays in creating this kind of interest, which is an aspect of respecting someone or something, as a precursor to love.

love others, despite being part of the existentialist situation of having no guarantees (I shall discuss further this existentialist situation toward the end of this section). Schneider himself may not be portrayed explicitly as beloved (love object) in Sartre's novel, but Murdoch – in presenting the mysterious as an individual character trait – presents (a) the kind of character and (b) the kind of vision a person or character could exhibit, which is congenial to love. Such love has the potential, in action, to drive the existentialist plot line of a novel by its hero, and might even help to sustain love relationships in the action of 'real life'.[38]

So why exactly does Murdoch present the character of Rieux through the lesser character of Schneider, who merely has "the makings of the existentialist hero" (EH, 1950, 114)? Firstly, as I have discussed above, Murdoch seeks to isolate two character traits (being mysterious and respecting others) as precursors to Rieux's ability to love.[39] Secondly, Murdoch seeks to suggest that having the ability to love entails having the ability to act. Schneider falls short of being 'the existentialist hero' because he merely "prepares himself for action" (while being mysterious and respecting others) (EH, 1950, 114); whereas Rieux is a man of action (I shall discuss precisely the types of action, which Murdoch assigns to Rieux, below). Thirdly, Murdoch seeks to interlock what for her are the two most important characteristics of her existentialist hero – the ability to love and the ability to act – by their comparable absence in Schneider. Thereby Murdoch clarifies by contrast – by the building of Rieux's character through that of Schneider – that her conception of 'the existentialist hero' is an existentialist who has the capacity to love. Schneider's potential to be an existentialist hero (like Rieux) is of a piece with his potential to love (like Rieux), as an ability to act (like Rieux).

[38] This is what Murdoch would like to see both in life (as philosopher) and art (as novelist); my claim is that Murdoch's unstinting efforts both in philosophy and the novel – from the outset – are directly related to her vision of love as continuously central to moral life. Christine Swanton points out that it is the vision of love that makes the concept of love central for Murdoch: "Love is a way of seeing the world, and if you do not see it with a loving eye, virtue is impossible. On the other hand, if you do see the world with a loving eye, respect will follow." (Swanton, 2003, 110) Swanton follows Kant's distinction, where "love in general involves 'coming close whereas respect in general involves 'keeping one's distance". (Swanton, 2003, 104)

[39] Murdoch is similarly careful to isolate the character traits (rationality and frankness) by which Pierre and Françoise attempt to love each other, but fail (see my discussion in § 1.3, below).

Love is not mentioned at all in relation to Schneider, and nor is the adjective 'perfect'. No other existentialist character in either of the two radio talks carries the appellation 'hero'. Rieux is singled out by Murdoch as the one remarkable instance, "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (see main quote above). Murdoch sees merit in Schneider as one "who is uncertain about the shape of the future and the meaning of the present, and who nevertheless prepares himself for action" (EH, 1950, 114), as she sees merit in Rieux as "a person with no illusions and no certainties" (see main quote above). These characters typify the existentialist's outlook, and situation, as being one without guarantees. However, Murdoch's existentialist hero must be capable in action, not just in preparation for action. The title of the second radio talk, 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), does not refer to Schneider; nor to Françoise, or to any of the other existentialist characters hitherto mentioned by Murdoch; nor is it only a generic appellation. Murdoch's title, 'The Existentialist Hero', appearing in the masculine singular, singles out the character of Rieux.[40]

There are two compelling reasons for why Rieux is so emphatically cast as "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (see main quote above), and these reasons also point to him receiving particular prominence in Murdoch's title, 'The Existentialist Hero'

[40] Compare Murdoch on how Simone de Beauvoir singles out T. E. Lawrence for positive treatment as an existentialist hero, in '*De Beauvoir's* The Ethics of Ambiguity' (1950): "It is worth noting that almost the only contemporary individual mentioned with approval in her book is T. E. Lawrence. Lawrence is an existentialist hero because he was a man of action who kept his doubts alive. (Compare Rieux in Camus's *La Peste*.) Should he be taken as the model of the 'good man' for this age? This question too is worth reflecting on." (BEA, 1950, 123-124) Murdoch provides important clues, often in the form of passing allusions, which are as integral to her philosophical method as they are to her philosophy (for my further discussion of Murdoch's allusive philosophical method, see § 3.3, below. Such clues, which generate and elicit interest, encourage her readers or listeners to reflect more industriously on a given situation than otherwise may be the case. This aspect of Murdoch's craft should not be ignored as 'non-philosophical', when it offers genuine clarity about the thought of the philosopher. Murdoch frequently employs this allusive technique, in order to suggest – what to her are – important ideas, across her own philosophical works. Such a method is conventional in the world of literature and unconventional in academic philosophy. In this case, Murdoch clearly singles out Rieux as the model for an existentialist hero, who nonetheless has the capacity to love others, in 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). Then, in '*De Beauvoir's* The Ethics of Ambiguity' (1950), Murdoch alludes to Rieux as worthy of comparison with T. E. Lawrence, as an existentialist hero who "is able to act in spite of his doubts" (BEA, 1950, 124). Murdoch's full allusive suggestion is: It is worth reflecting on whether this kind of existentialist hero (a man of action despite his doubts) with a capacity to love others (as Rieux) should "be taken as the model of the 'good man' for this age" (BEA, 1950, 124).

(1950). The first relates to the instancing of love as central to what the character of Rieux does. The second, which supplements the first, lies in the fact that Rieux is that kind of character "who is forever conscious of the possibility of the absurd, but who does not relax his grip nevertheless" (EH, 1950, p. 114). I shall discuss the first of these, then the second, before I show how such a gripping response to the absurd also relates the character of Rieux (with his ability to love) to the conclusion of Murdoch's second radio talk.

Despite Murdoch's elaborate preparation for the introduction of Rieux, the actions which make Rieux (as a Murdochian development of the character of Schneider) an existentialist hero are ordinary and simple: "He does his job and he loves his fellows and serves them as far as he can." (EH, 1950, 114) The simplicity and brevity of Murdoch's description is remarkable (a single sentence), and Rieux's ability to love and to serve others is not called into question. Murdoch only mentions Rieux's ability to love in passing and does not elaborate upon its manifestations. This makes a striking contrast with her willingness to elaborate upon the failed efforts of Pierre, Françoise, and Xavière, who are unable to love each other well (see my previous discussion in § 1.3 above). Rieux's ability to love, though mentioned only in passing, forms the central feature of Murdoch's description of his character.

Three actions are directly ascribed to Rieux (in addition to those derived from Schneider) – working, loving, serving – in an order which places the verb 'love' as central to the description. Murdoch is not merely describing what Rieux does, but providing us with the kind of actions one might well associate with a character who has the capacity to love others. Just as Murdoch provides us with those character traits which give Schneider the potential to love (being mysterious and respecting others; as discussed above); so Murdoch provides us with certain activities which may be associated with Rieux's ability to love. Rieux simply does his job and he has the ability to love and even to serve another, whereas Pierre and Françoise are found wanting in these areas. Notice how doing one's job and serving others, as ordinary

and everyday activities, requires a certain amount of humility. The rationality and frankness of Pierre and Françoise, even in their attempts to serve one another (such as in the solution *à trois*, as discussed in § 1.3 above), seems ultimately connected to an egocentric view of others, a view lacking in humility.

Murdoch is interested in a sustainable form of love as made manifest in personal relations, and it is "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (see main quote above) who points the way in this regard. Murdoch again associates love with the adjective 'perfect', just as in her example of the love relationship between Pierre and Françoise (as discussed above in § 1.3). However this time the adjective 'perfect' is applied positively to the kind of character who can love, rather than negatively to a failed love relationship where "perfect communication…is destroyed" (EH, 1950, 108), or where: "Perfect love and understanding cannot be maintained." (EH, 1950, 108)

That Rieux is singled out as "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (see main quote above) implies that there are important differences between Rieux and the other characters discussed by Murdoch. Schneider has respect for others and confronts his uncertain situation, but then only prepares for action; whereas Rieux "is a person with no illusions and no certainties" who takes action. Françoise has illusions and certainties which Rieux does not, such as the idea that she ever had "perfect communication" (EH, 1950, 108) with Pierre (as discussed in § 1.3 above). The Marxist alters or loses sight of their goal "if the way is hatred or oppression" (EH, 1950, 113) (as discussed in § 1.2 above), whereas Rieux simply loves his fellows; and it is important to note again that he serves them as well. In regard to Rieux, nothing is said about an egocentric view of meaning, which might preclude such service. Rieux has a comparable problematic existentialist situation, a comparable *ethos* in which to act, as the other characters mentioned; but Murdoch presents him as reacting to this situation very differently. Rieux continues to act with love. Murdoch does not offer detailed description of how Rieux

achieves this, nor does she associate any kind of folly with Rieux, in her very brief description of him. The example of the folly of Pierre and Françoise is given several lengthy paragraphs, whereas the instancing of Rieux is given one paragraph half the size of those.

The noteworthy absence of any form of the pejorative, in association to the character of Rieux, perhaps begs the question: Does Rieux display a capacity to love because he does not share the folly of the other existentialist characters discussed by Murdoch, or does he not share their folly because of his capacity to love? Even if one could make an equally convincing argument for either case, one should note: Murdoch is careful to build up a notion of character, most explicitly through providing the characteristics of Schneider to Rieux, before associating the latter with an ability to love. This technique perhaps implies that the ability to love follows from the presentation of particular characteristics or abilities, rather than vice versa; or at least that Murdoch favours such an approach. Compare Murdoch on the folly of Françoise: "She has fallen back into the normal human condition where each one is lonely and every other one is a menace – the Hegelian battlefield, where one denies one's being-for-others at one's peril." (EH, 1950, 108). Françoise, in contrast to Rieux, does not continue to serve her fellows, nor love them. Murdoch associates Rieux with perfection (a) positively, because of his capacity to love, and (b) negatively, because of the lack of any pejorative form in relation to his character.

Rieux appears as a bright ray of hope and love in the otherwise deeply fraught and problematic atmosphere on the existentialist novel. Murdoch directly relates this picture of Rieux as "the existentialist hero" to the conclusion of her talk. She does this by connecting Rieux's response to "the possibility of the absurd", which is set forth in terms of action (as discussed above), to the last sentence of her talk: "We are not yet resigned to absurdity – and our only salvation lies in not becoming resigned." (EH, 1950, 115). What is important here is not only that action is taken, but the nature of the action taken. The central feature of such action is Rieux's ability to love, and I have already suggested how this ability to action love to

the humble activities of doing one's job and serving others. For Murdoch, such humble activities preclude the predominantly egocentric view of meaning as found, for example, in the characters of Pierre and Françoise (who are not heroes). Rieux has "no illusions and no certainties" (see main quote above), which includes not only those of the egocentric type so rigidly displayed, in frank form, by the rational exploits of Pierre and Françoise; but also those of a comparably rigid and frank form as expressed by the irrational Xavière.

That Rieux is "forever conscious of the possibility of the absurd" (see main quote above), explicitly ties his character, as an example, to the conclusion of Murdoch's second radio talk— where "our only salvation lies in not becoming resigned" (EH, 1950, 115) to absurdity. Rieux appears to lack any concern for stability of being either for himself or for those he loves and serves. Of all the characters discussed by Murdoch in the second talk, it is only Rieux who has the ability to love in his existentialist situation, a world presented by Murdoch in her conclusion as "a world which is becoming as absurd as Kafka's world" (EH, 1950, p. 115). Murdoch's starting point – her presentation of Schneider as antecedent to the character of Rieux – for how existentialist characters might sustain love for one another (and for her own philosophy, to which love is central, found right here in her earliest work) might be summarised as a moral imperative: respect the mystery in other individuals in your attempt to know them. To this imperative may be added, through Murdoch's presentation of Rieux: and love them as far as you can (in action). Perhaps Rieux is "the perfect instance of the existentialist hero"; and perhaps his capacity to love – for Murdoch – makes him so.

1.5 Murdoch's conclusions about love (1950)

In this short section I shall discuss and compare how Murdoch emphasises love in each of the conclusions of both 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) and 'The Existentialist

Hero' (1950). The ways in which she does this are distinctive; however, both types of emphasis are designed to promote further reflection upon love.

Murdoch waits until the conclusion of 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) before mentioning love: Love is mentioned only in passing, but in a central and prominent position. In this way 'love' may linger in the mind of her listener (at the end of her first radio talk) in relation to certain problems raised by existentialist thought (see my discussion in § 1.1). Such a move clearly anticipates the way in which Murdoch increases her focus on love in her second radio talk. In 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), Murdoch discusses love in relation to several existentialist characters (see my discussion in § 1.2, §1.3, and § 1.4), before she eschews explicit talk of 'love' in her conclusion.

In her conclusion to 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950) Murdoch claims that "the existentialist hero does present an interesting and touching symbol of the plight of modern man" (EH, 1950, 115). I have shown (above in § 1.2, §1.3, and § 1.4) how Murdoch sees that problems involving love and existentialist characters are central to this plight. The presentation of these problems as failures in love, together with Rieux's albeit unexplained ability to love others (see my § 1.4 above), indicates that all is not lost. Murdoch concludes in her final sentence: "We are not yet resigned to absurdity – and our only salvation lies in not becoming resigned (EH, 1950, 115). It is Rieux, who "loves his fellows and serves them as far as he can" (EH, 1950, 114), who despite his apprehension of the absurd "does not relax his grip" (EH, 1950, 114), and who might offer us a way. It is Rieux, with his ability to hold on tight and to love others as an existentialist hero, who brings philosophical hope to Murdoch's conclusion: where "our only salvation lies in not becoming resigned" to absurdity.

In her conclusion to 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) love is presented in abstract and general terms; whereas in the conclusion of 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950) love is associated with a type of character (that is, Rieux, as explained in the preceding paragraph).

Love is brought into focus as the central feature of each conclusion, in each of these two radio talks. In the first radio talk Murdoch offers a general and abstract diagnosis of the existential situation, which she then supports in the second radio talk by her analysis of fictional characters. This culminates in her presentation of Rieux as "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (EH, 1950, 114). In the second radio talk Murdoch gives particular and personal bite to those general "loves and hates" (NM, 1950, 107), mentioned at the conclusion of her first radio talk, in her discussion of the love relationship involving Pierre and Françoise (see § 1.3 above). Murdoch then engages with a problem of love in regard to political aspirations of the Marxist (see § 1.2 above), before showing us that it is nonetheless possible to love other people through the example of Rieux (see § 1.4 above). Love, though not yet required to do any philosophical lifting, is nonetheless at the centre of her philosophical interest.

Murdoch promotes further reflection upon love at the conclusion of both 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950 and 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), and thereby shows us what lies at the heart of her philosophical interest and quest: That love may have a central role to play in order to ameliorate "the plight of modern man" (EH, 1950, 115). Love and the ability to love (as seen in the character of Rieux) may well be the reason we "are not yet resigned to absurdity" (EH, 1950, 115), where "our only salvation lies in not becoming resigned" (EH, 1950, 115). It is for this reason that Murdoch offers and emphasises love, in each of her two conclusions, as a central point of reflection.

1.6 The love of Simone (Weil): The third radio talk (1951)

In this section, I discuss Murdoch's third radio talk, '"Waiting on God": A Radio Talk on Simone Weil' (1951; 2017), primarily in relation to Murdoch's philosophical interest in

love. I first discuss what Murdoch finds philosophically attractive about Weil on love, while providing an overview of what Murdoch presents as the most significant features of Weil's views of love. I then examine three of Murdoch's criticisms of Weil's thought, and show how these concerns are connected not only to Murdoch's interest in love, but to the philosophical direction Murdoch is investigating—which involves making the concept of love central to her own philosophy. My claims will be (a) that Murdoch finds Weil's expression of love philosophically attractive (for reasons I shall discuss below), yet also in need of significant modification; and (b) that in this respect Simone Weil provides Murdoch with the perfect opportunity to take her own philosophical interest in love forward. I shall show how Murdoch promotes further reflection on important features of Weil's views of love, and that Murdoch hints toward a possibility of a love-centred philosophy – keeping certain features of Weilian love central to our reflections – albeit in a slightly different direction (toward human relationships of love).

I also discuss Murdoch's sustained interest in the possibility of an existentialist-type character who has the capacity to love well (a continuation of my discussion in § 1.4 above), and who *ipso facto* may be seen as an existentialist hero (that is, on account of their endeavour to love). I argue that Simone Weil provides Murdoch with a real-life example of precisely this type of character, a person who continues to love despite her existentialist-type situation; and that in this respect Murdoch's third radio talk can be seen as a special development from her second radio talk, 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950).

I do not intend to claim that Weil is an existentialist thinker, or that Murdoch sees her strictly as such. But I will show how Murdoch explicitly connects Simone Weil to existentialist thought, and thereby implicitly to the existentialist characters she has already examined in 'The

Existentialist Hero' (1950), in relation to love.[41] My claims will be (a) that Murdoch sees in the expression of Weil's thought a real-life example of a character – as distinct from characters taken from fiction – grappling with an existentialist-type situation;[42] (b) that Murdoch is chiefly interested in Weil's expression of love as a deeply personal (and philosophical) response to such a predicament; and (c) that certain aspects – but not all aspects – of Weil's account of 'love' (and character) are attractive to Murdoch, in regard to how love may function to ameliorate the existentialist's situation.

'Waiting on God": A Radio Talk on Simone Weil' (1951; 2017) was broadcast in October 1951. The first English translation of any of Weil's work, *Waiting on God* (Weil, 1951a), had only just appeared, providing the occasion for Murdoch's talk. Murdoch uses this talk as an opportunity to introduce her audience to what she finds most interesting about Simone Weil, which is of a piece with her early philosophical interest in love.[43] Specifically, Murdoch is interested in a distinctive form of love, which is that love of Simone Weil. Let us now examine the main features of Weilian love, as presented by Murdoch in her talk, which are integral to Murdoch's early philosophical interest in love.

After Murdoch spends considerable time introducing certain particulars of Weil's biography (for reasons which I shall discuss in the second half of this section, and which pertain to the notion of the existentialist hero as one who has a certain capacity to love), Murdoch immediately hones her focus on 'love' as understood by Weil. Murdoch points out that Simone

[41] I have discussed Murdoch's particular focus on love in relation to existentialist characters in § 1.2, § 1.3, and § 1.4 of this chapter above.
[42] I have already outlined the main characteristics of this 'existentialist-type situation' – or at least those characteristics emphasised and presented by Murdoch – in the previous sections of this chapter.
[43] Murdoch finds similar opportunities to promote philosophical reflection on love, (a) when introducing a wider English-speaking public to Gabriel Marcel's Gifford Lectures, *The Mystery of Being*, vol. I, *Reflection and Mystery* (Marcel, 1950), through her review, 'The Image of Mind' (1951), which I discuss in Chapter 2 below; and also (b) when writing for that same wider public audience (that is, Murdoch's audience) the first book-length study on Sartre in English, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953), which I discuss in Chapter 4 below. Both 'The Image of Mind' (1951) and *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953) involve, at least in part, a Murdochian focus on love in the context of existentialist thought.

Weil "was a Jewish teacher of philosophy" (WG, 1951, 10),[44] and it is the subject of love which first appears in the reflections of Simone Weil's own voice (in Murdoch's first quotations of Weil). These first reflections (quotations) of Weil, as given their first audible English voice by Murdoch in 1951, point to precisely what I argue is a sustained point of central philosophical interest for Murdoch (love):

> Her parents were Jewish but she says of herself: 'I was born, I grew up, and I always remained within the Christian inspiration.' Yet she was never baptized. She explains her reasons for this in a series of letters to a priest whom she knew, called Father Perrin. This forms the beginning of *Attente de Dieu*, *Waiting on God*, which is the first of her works to appear in English. In this book the writer says, 'The love of those things which are outside visible Christianity keeps me outside the Church.' (WG, 1951, 10)

Murdoch immediately presents love as an entry-point to the thought of Simone Weil, and as such love is given a corresponding importance to Weil's thought – as it is seen by Murdoch – as philosophy (see main quote above). Simone Weil is a philosopher who takes the subject of love seriously, and Murdoch is keen to present her as such. Murdoch and Weil share love as a similar philosophical interest, in that both take love seriously in the course of their philosophical reflections. Murdoch makes particular note of "the impression of an exceptional degree of seriousness" (WG, 1951, 10) as that which characterizes Weil's thought. In this way Murdoch sets the stage for her introduction of love (see main quote above) as an important subject – indeed the first main subject – through which we are to understand Weil's (serious) philosophical reflections (see main quote above).

This serious philosophical mood attached to love can be observed in the "reasons" (see main quote above) identified by Murdoch for why Weil was never baptized, which involve Weil 'staying true' (one might say) to what she loves, to "those things which are outside visible

[44] The first 'fact' we learn about Simone Weil is that she was "a Jewish teacher of philosophy" (WG, 1951, 10), who takes the extent of her love seriously enough so as to prevent her becoming part of the Catholic Church, despite her unequivocal personal assertion that she "always remained in the Christian inspiration" (WG, 1951,10).

Christianity" (see main quote above).[45] Murdoch is impressed by Weil's ability to hold on strongly and continuously to her sense of love – "outside visible Christianity" (see main quote above) – despite the latter's inclinations toward "the Christian inspiration" (see main quote above). Such inclinations take Weil close to the Church and no doubt occasion her letters to Fr. Perrin. But Murdoch is impressed that Weil does not give up what she loves, in order to belong to the Church.

Murdoch also tells us that Weil "feared the Church as a social structure; she feared both its authoritarian character, and what one might call its 'cosiness'" (WG, 1951, 10-11). We are then provided with a vivid example of this so-called 'fear of cosiness', albeit embedded in Weil's criticisms of Fr. Perrin: "She [Weil] charges even Father Perrin with attaching himself to the Church as to an earthly country. She says to him accusingly: 'You live there in an atmosphere of human warmth.'" (WG, 1951, 11) Weil's capacity to hold on to those things which she loves is connected by Murdoch with this fear of cosiness, as made manifest in the harsh accusations made toward Fr. Perrin. Murdoch is perhaps less impressed by Weil's antagonistic assertions about Fr Perrin's lifestyle, than she is by Weil's capacity to stay with her love of those things outside the Church. However, such a vivid example suggests that Murdoch might also share Weil's fear of 'cosiness' (Murdoch's word), as being well founded, in relation to a philosophical interest in love.

[45] Murdoch's quote from Weil, which serves to indicate clearly at the outset of her radio talk that the 'love' of Simone Weil exists "outside the Church" (WG,1951, 10), can be found in Weil's 'Letter VI' (Weil, 1951b, 48). Elsewhere, in 'Letter IV', Weil is more specific about what such love entails: "Christianity should contain all vocations without exception since it is catholic. In consequence the Church should also. But in my eyes Christianity is catholic by right and not in fact. So many things are outside it, so many things that I love and do not want to give up, so many things that God loves, otherwise they would not be in existence. All the immense stretches of past centuries, except the last twenty, are among them; all the countries inhabited by coloured races; all secular life in the white peoples' countries; in the history of these countries, all the traditions banned as heretical, those of the Manicheans and Albigenses for instance; all those things resulting from the Renaissance, too often degraded but not quite without value." (Weil, 1951b, 31-2) In her radio talk on Weil Murdoch summarises Weil's "love of those things which are outside visible Christianity" (WG, 1951, 10) in the following way: "These were in part intellectual things: Eastern religion, Greek philosophy and certain Christian heresies." (WG, 1951, 10)

It is not only interesting but very important that Murdoch's first reference to 'love' in discussing Simone Weil is not to the love of God, but to "those things which are outside visible Christianity" (see main quote above). This is interesting because Murdoch, in her radio talk, (a) first establishes a particular image of Christ on the cross as the central and abiding image by which to understand the thought of Simone Weil; and then (b) presents Weilian love as understandable primarily through that same image of Christ (that is, through Weil's 'Christian inspiration').[46] It is important that this first Murdochian reference to 'love' (see main quote above) is not to Weil's love of God, because it shows us that Weil's expression of love, perhaps even first and foremost, may be applicable to situations which do not necessarily entail one's entry to the Church, nor even Christians (see footnote 41 above). Murdoch is interested in an expression of love, comparable to Weil's love of God; but that can be understood in a broader context than deliberations about entering the Church, where love is not necessarily adherent to God.[47]

We see Murdoch also present Weil's so-called "main fact of human life" (WG, 1951, 11) in a very similar manner to how she presents her first reference to Weilian love (as discussed in the preceding paragraph), in that such thought – about "the main fact of human life" (WG, 1951, 11) – is shown to stand independently from its Christian context. Murdoch first provides us with a sentence without any mention of Christianity or God, so that we may first encounter "the main fact of human life" (WG, 1951, 11), as a 'fact' which does not necessarily entail Christian belief:

[46] I shall discuss these points, (a) and (b), in more detail, below.

[47] In her letters to Fr Perrin, Weil tends to attach her thoughts about love to God, for instance: "But in my eyes Christianity is catholic by right and not in fact. So many things are outside it, so many things that I love and do not want to give up, so many things that God loves, otherwise they would not be in existence." (Weil, 1951b, 32) It is difficult to ascertain whether this is merely part of an attempt communicate effectively with Fr Perrin (as for Fr Perrin all love would have to be love of God); or whether Weil thinks that love is necessarily adherent to God. We have an analogous problem in relation to the figure of Christ: Is it possible to understand Christ, as an example of how one might love in the face of extreme suffering, without the love of God being necessarily present? I shall discuss love in relation to the image of Christ, be that an imagined historical human Christ or Christ as God, below.

> For Simone Weil the main fact of human life, and the fact we must not flinch from if we are to find out any truth about it, is the fact of affliction. *Le Malheur*. For her the centre of Christianity is the passion and the central moment of the passion is the cry of dereliction. (WG, 1951, 11)

Murdoch's presentation of what she takes to be, for Weil, "the centre of Christianity" (see main quote above) is clearly of a piece (for Weil) with "the main fact of human life" (see main quote above): "the fact of affliction" (see main quote above) may be understood through the image – or through the historical fact – of Christ suffering on the cross. It is not my purpose to interpret Psalm 22, which narrates the so-called "cry of dereliction" (see main quote above). What is important (for Murdoch and for Weil) is to really see Christ suffering on that cross. This is why Murdoch identifies "the central moment of the passion" (see main quote above), the abandoned suffering Christ. For in just the same way we must look at the (often extreme) suffering experienced by ourselves – alone as Christ on the cross – as "the fact we must not flinch from" (see main quote above).

This focus on an unflinching regard for the suffering individual may be applied to existentialist characters, whose situation is typified by the experience of extreme suffering, alone (as discussed, for instance, in §1.1, §1.3, and §1.4, above). Murdoch is moved by "the way she [Weil] has taken the impact upon herself of the particular extremities of the present time: the age of the factory worker, the D. P. [Displaced Person], the concentration camp" (WG, 1951, 16).[48] Murdoch suggests that one need not necessarily hold a Christian belief in God, in order to properly reflect upon "the fact of affliction" (see main quote above) as something of central significance in the life of the human individual (and also in Weil's thought). This is where love comes in; after "the fact of affliction" (see main quote above), after what Murdoch describes later in her radio talk as the "moment of complete blackness"

[48] Murdoch quotes Weil as saying that "'nothing gives me more pain than the idea of separating myself from the immense and unfortunate multitude of unbelievers'" (WG, 1951, 10), before suggesting that Weil "had a vocation to remain *outside* [Murdoch's italics] with the riff-raff of spiritual displaced persons" (WG, 1951, 10).

(WG, 1951, 15).[49] Let us see how Murdoch connects love to "the main fact of human life" (see main quote above), through the thought of Simone Weil, as that which is prompted by this situation of "affliction" (see main quote above):

> …she [Weil] says '…The experience of suffering is the experience of reality. For our suffering is not something which we invent. It is true. That is why it must be cherished. All the rest is imaginary.' It is the sharp touch of necessity that releases us from the life of the imagination – the unreal life of soothing expectation, in which are to be included the so-called 'consolations of religion'. What is required of us at this point is to accept the reign of necessity obediently, as being itself a manifestation of obedience to God, and attempt to love God even here. (WG, 1951, 11)

This expression of Weilian love, which Murdoch finds so philosophically attractive, involves the love of God (see main quote above). Christ on the cross provides us with an example of how attention to the reality of human suffering leads to love. The capacity to experience and to look upon one's suffering with a clear eye, accepting the reality of one's affliction, may prompt love. The love of Christ, God's love – which follows that which Murdoch puts forward as "the centre of Christianity" (WG, 1951, 11) for Simone Weil – is occasioned by the fact that Christ accepts the (violent and almost unbearable) reality of his individual affliction. That is, acknowledgement and acceptance of one's reality occasions love. Murdoch emphasises "the very act of our loving acceptance" (WG, 1951, 11), which "requires an exercise of *attention*" (WG, 1951, 11; Murdoch's italics) to what is real (be that a person, or an external event, by whom or which we suffer); and then later in her radio talk Murdoch quotes Weil as saying: "'the only organ of contact with existence is acceptance, love'" (WG, 1951, 15) Christ attended to the reality of his affliction, and with his acceptance of this came the expression of love. This is "the Christian inspiration" (WG, 1951, 10) within which Weil

[49] The importance Murdoch places on the individual's capacity to see clearly and to endure their state of affliction (without imaginative falsification/consolation), in relation to the thought of Simone Weil, can also be seen in the title of Murdoch's review of *The Notebooks of Simone Weil* (Weil, 1956): 'Knowing the Void' (KV, 1956, 157) When the abandoned Christ cries out on the cross, he is 'knowing the void'; and then what follows is the exercise of love (as we shall presently discuss).

was willing and able to remain, throughout her life, without entering the Church. To suffer, like Christ on the cross, without guarantees (abandoned), and to love all the same.

Murdoch is philosophically attracted to Weilian love, albeit expressed as the love of God, because it is associated with what is real— through the individual's ability first to see and then to accept the reality of their affliction. To see such reality also means – and must mean – that one's suffering is real; as opposed to fake suffering which is created (imagined) as a form of personal consolation, or which can be seen, for instance, in the self-centred aims of what we call 'attention-seeking'. One might think of the difference between someone playing the victim, as opposed to being the victim. One plays the victim for a reason, on purpose; whereas the true victim merely exists, in the state of affliction, suffering (without the idea of purpose). When we experience the world's "utter lack of purpose, then we are afflicted" (WG, 1951, 11), and it is from this position that we might first see, and then love, that person or situation which is external to us. Let us note again that fear of 'cosiness' (as mentioned above) in "the unreal life of *soothing* expectation" (see main quote above; italics mine), Murdoch's paraphrase for Weil's notion of the "imaginary" (see main quote above). Love is not associated with such 'cosiness', but rather with the acceptance of that reality which one – at times painfully and violently – suffers, one's personal state of affliction (Christ nailed onto the cross).

Murdoch is impressed by Weil's expression of the immense effort – the great difficulty involved in the continual attempt – to apprehend what is real, in the midst of suffering: "If we stand fast, quietly enduring the violence of necessity and refusing the balms of the imagination, we are in a high degree experiencing something real" (WG, 1951, 11).[50] For Murdoch, this is directly related to Weil's capacity to hold on to what she loves, as has been discussed above. Murdoch, as a philosopher, is attracted to the way in which love is connected to this effort, and

[50] The word 'necessity' in this quote is related to the natural world, in that the "realm of natural necessity is purposeless; things have causes but not ends" (WG, 1951, 11): "When the necessity of the world cuts across our path, when we experience both its violence and its utter lack of purpose, then we are afflicted." (WG, 1951, 11)

to the reality of that which exists independently of ourselves (as has also been discussed above). Weil's love is directed outwardly, away from herself, toward God and the world. However, Murdoch also makes three criticisms of Weil's thought, which I take to be connected to her philosophical interest in love: (1) that Weil neglects "the particular person" (WG, 1951, 14) and consequently neglects "the particular human bond" (WG, 1951, 14); (2) that Weil neglects "the details of our lives – the details of work and love and politics." (WG, 1951, 15); and (3) that Weil "simply cannot say that the realm of imagination is the realm of delusion" (WG, 1951, 14).

These three Murdochian criticisms of Weil's thought, when viewed – together with that to which Murdoch is attracted (as discussed above) – in relation to a philosophical interest in love, provide us with an indication of where Murdoch seeks to take the concept of love in her own philosophy. Murdoch is primarily interested in how love might function, both practically and philosophically, to ameliorate the life of the individual (as discussed, both in regard to existentialist thought and to existentialist characters, in the preceding sections of this chapter, above). Murdoch is concerned that "Simone Weil seems to offer a picture which is austere to the point of deleting the particular person altogether" (WG, 1951, 14). This of course includes the neglect of "the particular human bond" (WG, 1951, 14). In this respect, Murdoch seeks to promote Weil's unflinching individual attention to external reality, as that which still prompts love; but she would prefer to apply this to "the particular human bond" (WG, 1951, 14), that is, to particular human relationships of love.

This leads us on to the second criticism (as mentioned above), where Murdoch again appreciates the thought of Weil (as has been discussed above), and then criticises it: "That it [Weil's thought] is a source of truth for us is certain. What is uncertain is how this truth works in the details of our lives – the details of work and love and politics. Of these difficulties Simone

seems to me to be negligent." (WG, 1951, 15).[51] Weil's so-called 'negligence' is precisely in that area which Murdoch finds most philosophically interesting, and important, in relation both to love and to the existentialist character (see my discussion in §1.3 and §1.4). Weilian attention may be applied to the same difficulties involving one's own sense of love, or to one's state of affliction (how to suffer pain); just as our apprehension of what is real, as that which exists independently of ourselves, might also be examined in relation to "the particular human bond" (WG, 1951, 14). These important features of Weilian love are not necessarily related to God, insofar as Murdoch considers their philosophical reach and potential. Love, as Weil understands it, is directed outwardly, away from herself, toward God, in an effort to see what is real; whereas Murdoch is philosophically interested in one's love being directed outwardly, away from oneself, toward other particular individuals, in an effort to see what is real. Both criticisms (1) and (2) are related to Murdoch's own philosophical interest in love, and to the direction in which she would like to take this interest. Murdoch is interested in taking this other-centred (as opposed to self-centred) way of thinking (and loving) to the situation of the human individual. Further, Murdoch is especially concerned that we may find an application of this great moral effort – to see the reality of others – in "the particular human bond" (WG, 1951, 14).[52]

It is not surprising to see Murdoch object strongly to Weil's representation of the imagination (the 'third' Murdochian criticism of Weil's thought, as mentioned above).

[51] I shall discuss Murdoch's repeated references to 'Simone' shortly. I shall argue that Murdoch refers to Simone Weil on first-name basis as part of her presentation of Simone – as a character, as a particular person – as a real-life example of an existentialist hero.

[52] Compare Murdoch in her mature philosophy: "I have spoken of efforts of attention directed upon individuals and of obedience to reality as an exercise of love…" (IP, 1964, 41) Murdoch is here referring to her example of 'M and D' (IP, 1964, 16-17), and to her subsequent commentary upon it (IP, 1964, 17-39). Murdoch choses for her example a "particular human bond" (WG, 1951, 14), that between a mother (M) and her daughter-in-law (D); and such an example in a sense may be regarded as fiction (imaginary). Murdoch notes: "When M is just and loving she sees D as she really is." (IP, 1964, 17-36); and thereafter she concludes her commentary: "In particular situations 'reality' as that which is revealed to the patient eye of love is an idea entirely comprehensible to the ordinary person. M knows what she is doing when she tries to be just to D, and we know what she is doing too." (IP, 1964, 39)

Murdoch says: “One simply cannot say that the realm of imagination is the realm of delusion.” (WG, 1951, 14) We have already discussed Murdoch’s philosophical interest in love in relation to the existentialist novel, and in relation to particular existentialist characters (in the previous sections of this chapter). Murdoch, herself a novelist, might think that the novel is a good place to explore certain philosophical problems, such as those which involve love and “the particular human bond” (WG, 1951, 14), or “the details of work and love and politics” (WG, 1951, 15). Novelists, in their attempt to invent convincing characters, must imagine what the reality of those characters might be like. In just the same way, we might imagine in more detail the reality of another person whom we love. We might not only understand (or see) more of who they are, but express our love for them in a better way – in that it touches more of their reality – as a consequence of this imaginative effort (to see more of their reality).

If imaginative thought is delusional, then novels, viewed as products of the imagination, could not contain any truth, and neither could Murdoch’s famous philosophical example about ‘M and D’ (IP, 1964, 16-17). Murdoch points out: “No novel is ever mentioned among the things she [Weil] loved” (WG, 1951, 13) Weil instead prefers the Greek plays, *King Lear*, the *Iliad* over the *Odyssey*, poetry rather than fiction (WG, 1951, 13, 16). Murdoch understands that such preferences are for “those works of art which present the purest and most naked picture of human affliction” (WG, 1951, 13). However, Murdoch is more philosophically interested (than Weil) in the presentation of “the details of our lives – the details of work and love and politics.” (WG, 1951, 15), and this at least in part accounts for Murdoch’s philosophical interest in the novel.

I have already shown how Murdoch is interested in love, particularly as it is expressed by existentialist characters, made manifest in the form of the novel (see the preceding sections of this chapter, above). I have shown how Murdoch is also interested in the idea of ‘the existentialist hero’ as one who has the capacity to love, in the face of their existentialist

situation (see §1.4 above). I will now suggest that Murdoch presents Simone Weil as an existentialist-type character who has the capacity to love well (a continuation of my discussion in § 1.4 above), and who *ipso facto* may be seen as a real-life example for an existentialist hero (that is, on account of her endeavour to love). If Simone Weil is to be seen as some kind of real-life example of 'the existentialist hero', then she must be given (by Murdoch) an existentialist-type situation. In her radio talk, Murdoch explicitly connects Simone Weil to existentialist thought in the following way:

> No existentialist could excel her in picturing the pointlessness of the natural world – and yet, how she has transformed this idea! She makes of it a picture of obedience, a form of beauty, something which can command our love. (WG, 1951, 13)

Murdoch not only sees Simone Weil as sharing the situation of existentialist characters who exist in "the pointlessness of the natural world" (see main quote above), but also sees that Simone Weil attaches love to this situation. Love is attached to the reality of the individual's affliction (this has been discussed in relation to the image of Christ on the cross, in this section, above). Simone Weil's characteristic striving – "where love burns in the heart of affliction" (WG, 1951, 16) – is a sustained response to extreme existentialist-type suffering. Murdoch claims that Simone "moves us precisely because of the way she has taken the impact upon herself of the particular extremities of the present time: the age of the factory worker, the D. P. [Displaced Person], the concentration camp" (WG, 1951, 16). That Simone continues to love – even when "picturing the pointlessness of the natural world" (WG, 1951, 13) – makes her (for Murdoch) a candidate for being an existentialist hero.[53]

[53] Murdoch again connects the thought of Weil to existentialism five years later in her review of *The Notebooks of Simone Weil* (Weil, 1956): "The *Notebooks* present us with her thoughts in an unsystematic and fragmentary form which, however, makes clear the passionate way in which she strove to relate philosophy to her own personal experience. The quality of this striving, together with at least one of her doctrines, might justify the title 'existentialist' – although the sources of her thought, in ancient and oriental philosophy, are far from the customary origins of existentialism." (KV, 1956, 157)

This presentation of Simone Weil may be seen as part of Murdoch's interest in character building, in relation to her philosophical interest in love.[54] Murdoch's repeated references to 'Simone' on first-name basis, which initially strikes one as a little strange, nonetheless has impact and is part of Murdoch's presentation of a person, or a character, who could be seen as an existentialist hero.[55] The effect is one of making her audience feel closer to Simone, perhaps as to an intimate friend. Such an effect, combined with Murdoch's introduction of many personal details from Weil's biography, throughout the radio talk, serves to create a character (perhaps a hero) who will not be quickly forgotten, and who carries the message that one must continue to love even in one's affliction. (This is not unlike how a novelist would go about her work, in building their characters for a novel.) Simone is seen to make an immense effort to stay true to what she loves (as discussed in this section above), and Murdoch connects the "quality of this striving" (KV, 1956, 157) to the existentialist situation. Murdoch presents Simone as a character (as if from a novel); and this is a direct development of Murdoch's philosophical interest in love which is already present in 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) and 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950) (as discussed in the preceding sections of this chapter, above).

Simone Weil makes the claim to Fr Perrin that her so-called 'spiritual autobiography' is written to provide "a concrete and certain example of implicit faith" (Weil, 1951b, 47).[56] That is, she makes an example of herself. Murdoch, it seems to me, also views Simone as an example; but of a different type. Murdoch presents Simone as a real-life example of a person who continues to love and to hold onto what she loves as far as she can; in this important

[54] I have also discussed Murdoch's character building in relation to the fictional existentialist characters Schneider and Rieux, in §1.4, above. There, as here, I discussed Murdoch's interest in building an existentialist hero in relation to her philosophical interest in love.
[55] Murdoch talks of 'Simone' on no less than ten occasions through her short radio talk (WG, 1951, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16).
[56] Weil says: "When I let you have a written sketch of my spiritual autobiography, I had a reason. I wanted to make it possible for you to see for yourself a concrete and certain example of implicit faith. Certain, for I knew that you know that I am not lying." (Weil, 1951b, 47)

respect she (Simone) exemplifies Murdoch's conception of the existentialist hero.[57] As Murdoch says, five years later in her review of *The Notebooks of Simone Weil* (1956): "She [Weil] is one who…does not simply convey information, but is most properly to be understood as an example" (KV, 1956, 160). Further evidence of this kind of thinking (the notion of presenting a real-life example of an existentialist hero) can also be found in Murdoch's repeated allusions to T. E. Lawrence (EH, 1950, 112; BEA, 1950, 124; KV, 1956, 160).[58] T. E. Lawrence is not necessarily Murdoch's own idea of the existentialist hero, which I claim involves having the capacity to love others well in action; Lawrence is merely a man of action with the capacity to have doubts:

> We [Existentialists] must both engage in some consistent course of action, and keep on remembering that nothing guarantees that we are right. The temper required here is heroic. Such a man as T. E. Lawrence, for instance, is an existentialist model because he was a world-changer who never lost his capacity to doubt. (EH, 1950, 112)

Murdoch is interested in the possibility of an existentialist hero who has the capacity to love others as a "consistent course of action" (see main quote above), yet lives with no guarantees (as discussed in §1.4 above). Simone Weil continues to love ardently while facing her doubts (about the Church, et cetera; as discussed above); yet Murdoch feels "uneasy" (WG, 1951, 14) about Weil's thought in regard to "individual action" (WG, 1951, 14). T. E. Lawrence has the capacity to act while facing his doubts, but his capacity to love is not mentioned. Lawrence certainly is not famed for his love of others, nor for his prowess in human love

[57] Compare Murdoch on the existentialist character of Bernard Rieux (as discussed in §1.4 above): "Rieux is perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero. He is a person with no illusions and no certainties. He does his job and he loves his fellows and he serves them as far as he can." (EH, 1950, 114) In §1.4, above, I argued that Murdoch refers to Rieux as "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (EH, 1950, 114) primarily on account of his capacity to love others in action. I shall account for the fact that the character of Simone Weil differs from that of Rieux, in regard to having 'certainties', shortly.

[58] The complex historical figure of Thomas Edward Lawrence (16 August 1888 – 19 May 1935) does not concern us here. Let it suffice to say that T. E. Lawrence was the British serviceman and writer, most famous for his work in Arabia, which led to him becoming popularly known as 'Lawrence of Arabia'. What concerns us is how T. E. Lawrence is presented by Murdoch in relation to the idea of an existentialist hero.

relationships; but for his solo exploits in wartime situations. But Murdoch notes in parenthesis, when discussing *The Notebooks of Simone Weil* (Weil, 1956): "(A figure which obsesses her [Weil] is T. E. Lawrence.)" (KV, 1956, 160) This tells us something about Simone Weil (that she was very interested in T. E. Lawrence); and perhaps Murdoch's allusions to T. E. Lawrence tell us something too about the existentialist sensibility. Here is T. E. Lawrence, mentioned again by Murdoch, but in relation to Simone de Beauvoir:

> It is worth noting that almost the only contemporary individual mentioned with approval in her book is T. E. Lawrence. Lawrence is an existentialist hero because he was a man of action who kept his doubts alive. (Compare Rieux in Camus's *La Peste*) Should he be taken as the model of the 'good man' for this age? This question too is worth reflecting on. (BEA, 1950, 124)

When we compare Rieux to T. E. Lawrence (following Murdoch's suggestion in parenthesis) we find "a man of action who kept his doubts alive" (see main quote above), but one who also has the capacity to love others (as discussed in §1.4, above). Evidently, T. E. Lawrence was popular among existentialists; or at least Simone Weil and Simone de Beauvoir seem to have found him attractive. However, as I mentioned above, Lawrence is not famed for his capacity to love; and perhaps this is why Murdoch points us to Bernard Rieux (see main quote above). Murdoch says that Rieux is "perhaps the perfect instance of the existentialist hero" (EH, 1950, 114); a character who has the capacity to love in action while facing his doubts. Perhaps one, at Murdoch's suggestion, might reflect upon the question: should T. E. Lawrence or Bernard Rieux "be taken as the model of the 'good man' for this age [Murdoch's age]" (see main quote above)? Murdoch's philosophical character building seems to indicate the following: that the existentialist hero is someone who has the capacity to love the world and other people in action, even while facing extreme individual affliction, despite having plenty of doubts and no guarantees. This is the kind of existentialist hero who, for Murdoch, could be good.

But where does this leave Simone Weil? Can Murdoch still see Simone as a real-life example of an existentialist hero? I would answer, 'Yes, she can.' Murdoch presents (as we have seen) many characters who display different individual strengths and weaknesses, in relation to her notion of the existentialist hero. Like Rieux, Simone loves in the face of suffering. Unlike Rieux, Weil has a few too many certainties (although she has her doubts too, as mentioned above). In the following quote I count four 'certainties' in two sentences (in each case I put the number after each particular certainty): "I wanted to make it possible for you to see for yourself a concrete and certain example [1] of implicit faith. Certain, for I knew [2] that you know [3] that I am not lying [4]." (Weil, 1951b, 47) Like Rieux, Lawrence is a man of action, with the capacity to doubt. Unlike Rieux, Lawrence's capacity to love other individuals is not a significant feature of his character. My point is that Murdoch's existentialist hero might be seen (as Murdoch surely intends us to see, through her repeated allusions to T. E. Lawrence and to Bernard Rieux) as an amalgam of these characters, real-life and fictional. Murdoch's presentation of Simone Weil is vitally important to her idea of 'the existentialist hero' precisely because of Simone's account of love.

Of course, Murdoch is introducing *Waiting on God* (Weil, 1951a) – the first of Weil's work to be translated into English – to an English speaking audience for the first time. This could explain why Murdoch devotes more space to the biographical details of Weil, than if her audience had already been acquainted with her person (thought). But this does not explain why Murdoch refers to 'Simone' on first-name basis; nor does it explain why quite so many personal facts are revealed to us about Simone Weil's life. In order to understand Weil's thought, which Murdoch presents primarily as being about love and the reality of individual affliction, do we really need to know about "her experiences in the Renault factory in Paris where she worked for a year" (WG, 1951, 15)? Murdoch may well say 'yes, it helps us to know this'.

Murdoch's inclusion of personal details from Simone's life (such as the year Weil spent at the Renault factory) is consistent with Murdoch's criticism that Simone neglects "the details of our lives – the details of work and love and politics" (WG, 1951, 15) (the 'second criticism', as discussed above). The fact that Simone Weil worked in a factory may be as relevant to "the heart of her thought – the sense of affliction" (WG, 1951, 15) as the fact that she "was a Jewish teacher of philosophy" (WG, 1951, 10). Any extra comprehension of another's individual reality may not merely help one to understand that person (or their thought), but also help one to love them. Murdoch's very first sentence – "Who was Simone Weil?" (WG, 1951, 10) – invites the kind of scrutiny which is of a piece with that loving form of attention (that which involves an effort to see who a person really is), and indicates the direction in which Murdoch seeks to take her philosophy—where the concept of love is as central to "the details of our lives" (WG, 1951, 15) as it is to "the particular human bond" (WG, 1951, 14), as it is, therefore, to her philosophy.

I conclude that Murdoch's third radio talk on Simone Weil may be properly seen to supplement her two previous radio talks, 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) and 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), particularly in relation to Murdoch's philosophical interest in love. In the 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) Murdoch introduces her audience to the individual's existentialist situation (through the existentialist novel), and also to the problem of how to love others well in that situation. Murdoch then increases her focus on love and relationships of love, in 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), through her discussion of several existentialist characters: she explores the notion that one might be an 'existentialist hero' on account of their capacity to love others well, despite their existentialist situation (of having no guarantees).

Then, in '"Waiting on God": A Radio Talk on Simone Weil' (1951), Murdoch presents love not only as central to the philosophical reflections of Simone Weil, but also presents

Simone Weil as a real-life example of 'the existentialist hero' on account of her love, and how she strives to love. That is, Simone (as Murdoch refers to her, on first-name basis) strives to love that which is seen by her to be independent of herself, in a direction away from herself, and as such provides a kind of love which may ameliorate the more self-centred existentialist's situation. This is a core component of Murdoch's love-centred philosophy: the idea that if accurate vision of one's external reality can be achieved, if one really does see who someone really is, or how some event or situation really is, even in the face of one's personal affliction, love could then have a prominent role to play in the amelioration of the life of the individual (both practically and philosophically).

1.7 Conclusion

I conclude that Murdoch is already primarily interested in love in her first philosophical work, 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) and 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950) taken together as a single piece of philosophy. Murdoch continues to develop her main philosophical interest in love in '"Waiting on God": A Radio Talk on Simone Weil' (1951), in which Simone Weil is presented as a real-life example of an 'existentialist hero' on account of how she strives to love, while facing her existentialist situation. Murdoch selects existentialist thought, especially as made manifest in the characters of the existentialist novel, as part of her first effort to discuss love in a philosophical context. Murdoch sees "the existentialist hero" as "an interesting and touching symbol of the plight of modern man" (EH, 1950, p. 115), in that problems of love encountered by existentialist characters are indicative of the same in popular culture.

We have seen through Murdoch that love is a problem for existentialist thought. We have also seen how Murdoch is nonetheless attracted to the willingness of existentialist thinkers

to philosophically treat such problems of love in novels. Novels provide a concreteness and a conduit for details, perhaps necessary in a satisfactory account of love, which a more abstract philosophical approach might lack. In my next chapter, 'Love's First Appearance as a Philosophical Concept', we shall see how Murdoch selects another existentialist philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, in which to further develop her early philosophical interest in love. Indeed I shall argue that in her short review of Marcel's work, 'The Image of Mind' (1951), that Murdoch, for the first time, expresses her interest in love as a central concept to philosophy.

Chapter 2

Love's First Appearance as a Philosophical Concept

2.0 Introduction

Murdoch published eight pieces of philosophical non-fiction (four reviews, two radio talks, and two philosophical papers) prior her first major philosophical work, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953).[59] In this body of work Murdoch only refers to the word 'love' either in what might be described as 'passing allusions' or in examples. Murdoch does not subject the concept of love to direct philosophical scrutiny, nor is there an attempt made to describe what love is. One might say there are precious few of these passing allusions and examples in this earliest period of Murdoch's philosophical activity (1950 – 1953). The word 'love' is only mentioned eight times across this body of work.[60] I would certainly not wish to make an argument that love is already of central importance to Murdoch on any kind of quantitative account of the concept, as Murdoch makes her first definitive steps in her philosophical career.

Are these early passing allusions to 'love' merely throw-away lines which warrant the minimum of attention, if any at all? Or are they pointed references precisely designed to make one think about love, and relationships of love, in the context of philosophy? I have made (in chapter 1) and shall make (in chapter 2 and 3) an argument in the affirmative to this latter question. I think that Murdoch is critically aware (a) of the fact that she mentions 'love' when

[59] These pieces are (with abbreviations in brackets): 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (NM, 1950), 'The Existentialist Hero' (EH, 1950), 'Sartre's *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*' (SET, 1950), 'De Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity*' (BEA, 1950), 'The Image of Mind' (IM, 1951), 'Thinking and Language' (TL, 1951), 'The Existentialist Political Myth' (EPM, 1952), and 'Nostalgia for the Particular' (NP, 1952).

[60] Of the eight references to the word 'love' prior to *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953): five occur simply as passing allusions (NM, 1950, 107; EH, 1950, 113; EH, 1950, 114; IM, 1951, 129; EPM, 1952, 139); two occur as part of Murdoch's main example at the beginning of 'The Existentialist Hero' (EH, 1950, 108, 109); and the other occurs in an example from 'Thinking and Language' (TL, 1951, 35).

and where she does, and (b) of the method by which she does this (that is, intentionally, in passing allusions and examples). The fact that there are so few allusions to the word 'love' in Murdoch's philosophical non-fiction, prior to her book on Sartre in 1953, means that I can be exhaustive in my treatment of them. In this way I am constructing the argument, in the first three chapters of this thesis, that love is central to Murdoch's philosophical enterprise from its inception.[61]

In chapter one I discussed six of these eight allusions to the word 'love', five of which occur in her very first philosophical work, 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) and 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). I brought attention to the fact that Murdoch's first passing allusion to love occurs in the conclusion of her very first philosophical discussion, 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950). I argued that the allocation of such a prominent position for her first mention of 'love' reflects the importance of love to Murdoch even at this earliest stage of her philosophical career. I strengthened this argument by highlighting how Murdoch then increases her focus on love in her follow-up piece, 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). I discussed how Murdoch alludes to love in three different existentialist writers (De Beauvoir, Sartre, and Camus), whereby her discussion of existentialist characters as displayed in novels serve to exemplify situations of love which warrant philosophical attention. I argued that Murdoch's first philosophical discussions indicate the primacy love has in the earliest publication of her thought, and that Murdoch choses to develop a focus on love between people, as characters, as a serious philosophical response to what she sees as contemporary existentialist-type problems.

In chapters two and three I shall discuss the remaining two allusions to the word 'love' made in Murdoch's philosophical non-fiction prior to *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953). Each of these is distinctive, both in relation to the six allusions to love already discussed in

[61] Murdoch's first explicit philosophical approach to love occurs in *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (SRR, 1953, 129 - 131), which I shall discuss in chapter 4, below.

chapter one and also in relation to one another. The previous six allusions to love all occur in the context of Murdoch's discussion of literary works by so-called existentialist writers. However, the two allusions to love which it remains for me to examine are placed in a more direct philosophical context. The first (discussed in this chapter) is a passing allusion to love as the concept of the philosopher, Gabriel Marcel. The second (discussed in chapter three) occurs in an example, which features a situation of love between characters portrayed in a novel, and which Murdoch employs to characterise aspects of language in relation to thought.[62] In the former case we have Murdoch's first allusion to love as a philosophical concept. In the latter case we have the first time Murdoch mentions love as part of her own philosophical views (not as a description of somebody else's thought). The first allusion marks out love as having philosophical status for another philosopher, and the second shows Murdoch's preparedness to mention love as part of a serious discussion with her philosophical peers.

My argument in this chapter and also in the next chapter is that both of these passing allusions to love are of seminal significance, in that Murdoch's interest is to develop a mode of philosophical expression "in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central" (OGG, 1969, 45). In this chapter I shall therefore provide discussion on Murdoch's passing allusion to 'love' in her review of Marcel, 'The Image of Mind' (1951); and in chapter three I shall discuss how 'love' appears in her first serious philosophical paper, 'Thinking and Language' (1951). I shall show how both her review of Marcel's philosophy and her paper on thinking and language are comparable investigations of philosophical technique, which reflect the preliminary concerns of a philosopher already thinking that the concept of love requires philosophical attention.

[62] I shall discuss this example in chapter three, especially in § 3.1, 'Murdoch's mention of 'love' in 'Thinking and Language' (1951)', below.

In this chapter I shall not only discuss how Murdoch approaches love in her review of Marcel's philosophy, but I shall argue that she has identified Marcel precisely for this purpose (of making a philosophical approach to the concept of love). Gabriel Marcel is another French existentialist philosopher; and he is also a renowned Christian existentialist. Murdoch has marked Marcel out already as a "rival existentialist" (EH, 1950, 115) to De Beauvoir, Sartre, and Camus, at the conclusion of 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). This review marks an important departure for Murdoch as a philosopher chiefly interested in love. Murdoch has hitherto only alluded to love as displayed in novels, albeit fiction written by other philosophers (De Beauvoir, Sartre, Camus). In 'The Image of Mind' (1951) Murdoch only makes a single passing allusion to 'love', but it is to love in philosophy (not in fiction). In this chapter I shall discuss not only how Murdoch not only refers to 'love' as a philosophical concept for the first time, but also how Murdoch, for the first time, expresses her own interest in love as a central concept for philosophy.

In § 2.1, 'Murdoch's mention of 'love' in 'The Image of Mind' (1951)', I provide an overview of Murdoch's only passing allusion to 'love' in 'The Image of Mind' (1951), upon which I shall elaborate in the subsequent sections of this chapter. In § 2.2, 'The presence of love elsewhere in 'The Image of Mind' (1951)', I discuss the presence of love elsewhere in Murdoch's review, where I argue that Murdoch elicits the concept of love without directly referring to the word 'love'. Then in § 2.3, 'Mystery, love, and 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950)', I examine Murdoch's focus on the concept of mystery, in her review of Marcel, particularly in connection to love. I argue that Murdoch can see in the philosophy of Marcel the possibility of an alliance between the concepts of mystery and love; and I also show how Murdoch anticipates this point of interest in 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950).

In § 2.4, 'Love as 'the central idea' in the philosophy of Marcel', I draw attention to Murdoch's search for "the central idea" (IM, 1951, 125) in the philosophy of Marcel; and I

argue that Murdoch suggests indirectly that the concept of love could be taken as the central idea of Marcel's philosophy. In § 2.5, 'Love, mystery, and the problem of technique', I then return to Murdoch's single mention of 'love'. I revisit the idea that Murdoch identifies an alliance between the concepts of mystery and love (as discussed in § 2.3); and I discuss this alliance in relation the problem of philosophical technique. I argue that Murdoch, in 'The Image of Mind' (1951), investigates the problem of finding an appropriate philosophical technique by which to treat love as a central concept, and that the alliance between the concepts of mystery and love is a step forward in this direction. Then in § 2.6 I conclude that Murdoch's own interest in the concept of love, possibly even as a concept which can (and should) be made central to philosophy, accounts for the greater part of her interest in the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, as expressed in 'The Image of Mind' (1951).

2.1 Murdoch's mention of 'love' in 'The Image of Mind' (1951)

In this section I shall discuss the first time Murdoch mentions 'love' as a philosophical concept. I shall first briefly explain what I mean by making the distinction between (a) 'love' and (b) 'the concept of love', in my reading of the philosophy of Murdoch. Then I shall discuss how the concept of 'love' is introduced to Murdoch's reader, in the latter part of 'The Image of Mind' (1951), as an important feature of the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel. Thereafter I shall show how Murdoch prepares her reader for this introduction to 'love' (that is: 'love' as an important philosophical concept), when she makes certain comments about the philosophy of Marcel at the beginning of her review. In this way we shall begin to see a picture of Murdoch, both as philosopher and reviewer, as someone who is primarily interested in the concept of love in the context of philosophy.

This first mention of 'love' as a philosophical concept in her review of the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, 'The Image of Mind' (1951) (IM, 1951, 129). Murdoch has of course previously mentioned 'love' in her philosophical work, but only in the context of the existentialist novel (NM, 1950, 107; EH, 1950, 108, 109, 113, 114).[63] Now Murdoch mentions the 'love' of an existentialist philosopher, who is doing philosophy in an overt manner: Marcel delivered the Gifford Lectures from 1949-1950, and the material upon which Murdoch bases her review is the first volume of these Gifford Lectures, *The Mystery of Being*, vol. I, *Reflection and Mystery* (Marcel, 1950).[64] Murdoch only alludes to the word 'love' once in 'The Image of Mind' (1951), and she does this toward the end of the review. In a comparable way, the first time Murdoch mentions 'love' at all in her philosophy, she alludes to it once and toward the conclusion of 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) (NM, 1950, 107).[65] I draw the same inference in each of these cases: 'Love' may only be mentioned once and in passing, but its prominent position in the text indicates the importance of love to Murdoch as a philosopher.

I distinguish 'the concept of love' from 'love' when reading Murdoch's philosophy in the following way: When I refer to 'love', its meaning is taken for granted in its common everyday sense. However, when I refer to 'the concept of love' it is assumed (a) that there are philosophical ramifications in general, and (b) that the 'concept of love' may be expressed, philosophically or otherwise, without necessarily entailing the use of the word 'love'. It is important to keep in mind this latter idea that Murdoch may be working with the concept of love, in the formulation of her own philosophy, without necessarily mentioning the word 'love'. Murdoch herself alerts us to this possibility, in a footnote to her 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956): "When we deepen our concept of 'love' or 'courage' we may or may not want to retain the same word." (VCM, 1956, 95) An awareness of this distinction between

[63] See my discussion in chapter one, 'Love's First Appearance: The Two Radio Talks (1950)'.
[64] All references to the Gifford Lectures are to this first volume (Marcel, 1950).
[65] For my discussion of Murdoch's first passing allusion to 'love', which occurs in 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950), see my chapter 1, § 1.1, above.

'love' and 'the concept of love' can be helpful, especially in Murdoch's earlier philosophy (where the word 'love' is seldom mentioned), in our attempt to understand her philosophical *raison d'être*: "We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central." (OGG, 1969, 45)

Murdoch sets out to make the concept of love central to her own philosophy, and as such seeks to provide an engagement with the kind of philosophy she thinks that we need. 'The Image of Mind' (1951) is an early expression of her interest in this type of philosophy (where love might be seen as a central concept).[66] Murdoch's first allusion to 'love' as a philosophical concept occurs as part of a dualism, which she ascribes to the philosophy of Marcel, and which she emphasises as "important" (see main quote below) to that philosopher:

> The dualism which Marcel does recognise is that between love and technique (mystery and problem). In this aspect of his thought (and it is an important one) Marcel seems to me to be guilty of that sort of insensitivity to the complex character of the situation of which he so readily (and often rightly) accuses others. (IM, 1951, 129)

Let us first look at the concepts involved in the dualism which Murdoch ascribes to Marcel; before we move on, toward the end of this section, to see how Murdoch makes this particular dualism (quoted above) exceptional to the philosophy of Marcel. Also, let us be clear that we are examining a dualism set up by Murdoch, as a philosopher and reviewer, who is keen to emphasise particular aspects of the philosophy of Marcel about which she herself has an interest. There is little doubt that Marcel's philosophy accommodates a dualism, which approximates to Murdoch's representation of it, as that "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (see main quote above). I shall shortly quote both from Marcel's Gifford Lectures and also from his earlier philosophy to attest to this claim. However, the emphasis on

[66] I shall discuss this in further detail in § 2.4, below.

the concepts of "love and technique" (see main quote above), with "(mystery and problem)" (see main quote above) being relegated to explanatory parenthesis, gives to this dualism a significant Murdochian flavour. Let us look at the concepts of the dualism itself (that is, the dualism as it is presented by Murdoch), and then at how this dualism relates to some of the relevant passages in Marcel (including the text Murdoch is reviewing), in order to appreciate its Murdochian flavour.

The dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (see main quote above) might be considered first in each of its two halves. We have the suggestion from Murdoch that the concepts of love and mystery belong together, and on the other side of this dualism we find technique and problem. 'Love and mystery' lie beyond the limits of that reasonably objective type of knowledge which is sought, for example, by the scientist; whereas 'technique and problem' present challenges which might be clearly defined, or even overcome, by the application of such knowledge. We may loosely qualify 'reasonably objective knowledge' as that which is, while possibly being founded by scientific methodological principles which privilege neutrality, established by certain facts. In the one case (technique, problem) the enquiry is limited by what we already know, and in the other case (love and mystery) it is not.

The mystery involved with being part of and relating to the world is seen by Marcel as reduced or corrupted by quasi scientific modes of enquiry or description. In her review Murdoch mentions how Marcel has "a mistrust of technical, scientific, rationalistic modes of thought" (IM, 1951, 129), but how he "values respect for…mysterious and fruitful links with *being*" [Murdoch's italics] (IM, 1951, 129). Although for Marcel the mystery of being is inseparable from that of God (and *ergo* love, as God's love), love of people for other people also provides us with a major instance of its human expression. Murdoch points out: "Personal relations, particularly family relations, provide the key idea of Marcel's philosophy" (IM, 1951,

125). Being in love with another particular person, which may result in a love relationship between people (or even a family), may seem reduced or corrupted by a certain scientific explanation of the facts. For example, the love between two individuals might be explained by the presence of certain chemicals in the brain, related in function to the propagation of the human species. This scientific explanation, which reduces the state of being in love to chemicals which are operative in human reproductive function, fails to acknowledge that any kind of mystery is present in the experience of being in love.

The dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (see main quote above) is designed to keep the technical scientific world of objective fact separate from the mysterious world, where (to stay with the above example) we may experience love. For Marcel, to view the world exclusively as problematic (that is, as something to be solved or overcome), or as a matter for technique, reduces or corrupts its mystery. Mystery, for Marcel, is an essential part of our being in the world, which cannot be separated from that which we apprehend in the attempt to understand aspects of this world. Even the fact that mathematical formulae exist – and may lead us on reliably to further knowledge – would be conceived of by Marcel as mysterious, rather than as part of an argument for a certain technique to discover X objectively. Marcel's dualistic thinking separates "love and technique (mystery and problem)" (see main quote above) in an effort to preserve that world in which we love and have family relations for the rigour of philosophical enquiry.

Although Murdoch is sympathetic to this position, it is not surprising to see her quickly accuse Marcel of "insensitivity to the complex character of the situation" (see main quote above) in regard to this dualism. As a philosopher, Murdoch calls the dualism into question. Murdoch may wonder: Why can't love be seen as problematic, where one's concept of love is not limited or necessarily corrupted by such a view? Indeed, could love not be seen as a problem for the individual, as a challenge to be taken by them? And for this might there not even be

particular techniques which lead one to greater success or understanding in love (for example, the technique of imagining oneself in the situation of beloved)? I argued in chapter 1 (above) that Murdoch sees love precisely in this way, as a problem, for existentialist characters and their existentialist thoughts.[67] That Murdoch sees the love relationships experienced by existentialist characters in fiction as problematic, and *ipso facto* worthy of philosophical attention, need not necessarily deprive love of its mystery, nor corrupt either concept (love or mystery). Murdoch, though, is nonetheless sympathetic to Marcel's position: that a too scientifically-styled philosophical enquiry, conducted in terms of 'technique' and 'problem', could lead to concepts such as 'love' and 'mystery' being either diminished, corrupted, or ignored.

I have just provided an overview of the dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (see main quote above) in order to appreciate the concepts involved, when Murdoch mentions 'love' as a philosophical concept for the first time. However, when we turn to what Marcel actually says, in that part of his Gifford Lectures most directly concerned with this dualism, the word 'love' does not appear to be in evidence:

> So far, however, we have merely been approximating, through concrete examples, to the definition we are looking for: but we must now try to determine, with as much precision as possible, just where the opposition between the two notions of *the problem* and *the mystery* lies. I shall confine myself here to reproducing the most important passage on this topic from my book *Being and Having*. I am quoting from the English translation of the book.
>
> > 'A problem is something which I meet, which I find complete before 'me, but which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce. But a mystery is 'something in which I am myself involved, and it can therefore only be 'thought of as "a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and 'what is before me loses its meaning and its initial validity". A genuine 'problem is subject to an appropriate technique by the exercise of which 'it is defined; whereas a mystery, by definition, transcends every 'conceivable technique. [Marcel's italics] (Marcel, 1950, 211).

[67] See especially my chapter 1, § 1.2, above.

The word ‘love’ is not mentioned. Indeed, in the whole of ‘Chapter X: Presence as a Mystery’ (Marcel, 1950, 197-219), that body of text in Marcel’s Gifford Lectures which most persistently concerns the dualism “between love and technique (mystery and problem)” (IM, 1951, 129), love is only mentioned three times (Marcel, 1950, 202, 205, and 219). Love is not made to do the heavy philosophical lifting; rather it is the concept of mystery which is employed by Marcel on one side of this dualism (as seen in the above quote). Marcel’s enquiry searches for “where the opposition between the two notions of *the problem* and *the mystery* lies” [Marcel’s italics] (see main quote above). The idea of technique is used to separate the concepts of problem and mystery, in that techniques may be applicable in a satisfactory way to the former but not to the latter concept. As mentioned above, Marcel is worried about the encroachment of scientific or mathematical methods on philosophical investigation; as he is concerned that philosophy access what he sees as the mystery of our being.

This is not to suggest that the concept of love does not feature prominently in Marcel’s Gifford Lectures. Marcel would view love (and God) as omnipresent in his enterprise – this would also be a correct critical understanding of Marcel as a thinker – “animated by the love of truth alone” (Marcel, 1950, 219). However, let us supplement the material quoted above from Marcel’s Gifford Lectures with a quote from his earlier philosophy, in order to better understand how Murdoch ascribes the dualism “between love and technique (mystery and problem)” (IM, 1951, 129) to the philosophy of Marcel. In Marcel’s earlier philosophy (see main quote below), we not only find a very liberal use of the word ‘love’ (unlike in the Gifford

Lectures),[68] but Marcel makes love explicitly present as part of a dualism (unlike in the Gifford Lectures):

> … the dualism of love and of the principle of justification can only subsist in the finite order, that is, where reflection fails to negate itself completely—for God this dualism is suppressed, for God's love does not meet with any truth that it is powerless to recognise … We know full well that genuine love, even when directed towards human beings, does not allow itself to stop at knowledge; it affirms the value of its object beyond the merely relative and contingent order of merit and demerit—for love has partaken of divine meditation. (Marcel, [1927] 1952, 63)

This "dualism of love and of the principle of justification" (see main quote above) is a different but comparable version of the dualism represented by Murdoch as that "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129). In this case love is set apart from "the principle of justification" (see main quote above) because the latter involves limits, like Marcel's concepts of problem and technique (as discussed above), relative to our knowledge. Knowledge, both in regard to its acquisition and its application, should not limit the scope of one's investigation, nor the subject of that investigation. In Marcel's Gifford Lectures, the philosophical enquiry into the mystery of being (which involves the concept of love) is not reduced by such limits (see my discussion above); and in a similar way earlier in his philosophy "genuine love, even when directed towards human beings, does not allow itself to stop at knowledge" (see main quote above). The dualism, represented by Murdoch in her review as that "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129), may be seen as true

[68] To begin the concluding paragraph of her review, Murdoch notes: "Those acquainted with Marcel's earlier work will find little that is new in this book." (IM, 1951, 129) This comment points her reader to the earlier work of Marcel, where we find an abundant use of the word 'love'; and as such makes more sense of Murdoch's emphasis on love and technique, as applied to the thought of Marcel (not just the Marcel of the Gifford Lectures). I discuss in further detail this liberal use of the word 'love' in Marcel's earlier philosophy in § 2.3, below.

to the philosophy of Marcel as a whole, while emphasising Murdoch's interest in the relationship between the concept of love and that of technique.

I mentioned above that the dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129) has a 'Murdochian flavour', even though it is ascribed to the thought of Marcel. This 'Murdochian flavour' lies in the fact that Murdoch emphasises love and technique, whereas in his Gifford Lectures Marcel is far more overtly concerned with mystery and problem. The explanatory parenthesis, where "(mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129) are set aside, remain true in terms to the philosophy of Marcel's Gifford Lectures (see my discussion in this section above); but Murdoch's own interest in the dualism might be seen more as a consideration of "love and technique" (IM, 1951, 129).[69] Murdoch singles out the importance of the dualism she has recognised in the philosophy of Marcel, and *ipso facto* the concept of love within that dualism.[70] Murdoch's emphasis on "love and technique" – that part of the dualism not relegated to explanatory parenthesis – is of a piece with her own philosophical interest in the concept of love, and gives to this dualism its Murdochian flavour.

Murdoch is careful to set up this single passing allusion to 'love' at the beginning of her review, in order to maximise its impact upon her reader. In her introductory comments Murdoch makes her first point of focus that of Marcel's distrust of dualisms. When Murdoch introduces Marcel's philosophy, which she also calls "descriptive analysis" (IM, 1951, 125), she suggests that Marcel's "description aims at two things, one negative and one positive" (IM, 1950, 125).[71] The negative aim of Marcel's philosophy, according to Murdoch, is "to dissuade us from conceiving human experience in terms of certain crude dualisms" (IM, 1951, 125).

[69] I shall discuss Murdoch's interest in the development of a philosophical technique for the treatment of the concept of love, and how this relates to her interest in the philosophy of Marcel, in § 2.5, below.
[70] Murdoch singles out the importance of the dualism immediately after she mentions it: "The dualism which Marcel does recognise is that between love and technique (mystery and problem). In this aspect of his thought (and it is an important one) Marcel seems to me…" (IM, 1951, 129)
[71] I shall discuss what Murdoch sees as the positive aim of Marcel's philosophy in § 2.2, below (see especially my discussion of extract two and my conclusion).

Murdoch provides us with examples in parenthesis of these so-called 'crude dualisms': "(necessary or contingent, empirical or noumenal, subjective or generalised, abstract or successive, inner or outer, immanent or transcendent)" (IM, 1951, 125).[72] Although Marcel is seen by Murdoch as generally antagonistic toward dualistic thinking, as shown by her examples of these aforementioned "crude dualisms" (IM, 1951, 125), Marcel (as seen by Murdoch) is particularly concerned to transcend any form of that dualism between human consciousness and incarnate being (a form of the mind/body dualism). Murdoch mentions this in the middle of her review: "One might say that it is Marcel's desire to analyse our persistent concern about *truth* (in the non-scientific sense) which inspires him to transcend the mind-body dualism rather than to resolve it into its 'lower' half." [Murdoch's italics] (IM, 1951, 128)

Murdoch presents Marcel as a kind of philosophical crusader against dualisms, and as such "the dualism which Marcel does recognise" (IM, 1951, 129) captures one's attention all the more. The one dualism which Murdoch ascribes to the thought of Marcel entails the concept of love, and has an exceptional status as such. It stands out in Murdoch's review as that single dualism, among others, with which Marcel is prepared to work. The special status Murdoch singles out for the dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129) is the product of a skilful reviewer and of a philosopher seeking to prompt thought about love. Marcel's general antagonism toward dualistic thinking, made evident by Murdoch's introductory comments, renders that particular dualism which he "does recognise" – and which entails love – (IM, 1951, 129) all the more interesting, exceptional, and thought provoking (for Murdoch's reader).

Murdoch identifies Marcel as a philosopher who takes love seriously. The philosophy of Marcel provides Murdoch with an opportunity to mention love as a philosophical concept

[72] Although it is not our concern to discuss these dualisms *per se*, it is worth noting the less conventional variants of commonplace dualisms: "subjective or generalised", instead of 'subjective/objective'; "abstract or successive", instead of abstract/concrete. That dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" which Murdoch ascribes to Marcel is similarly unconventional.

for the first time. This occurs when Murdoch gives a special status to the dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129): that is, this particular dualism occurs in the thought of a philosopher who is usually against dualistic approaches to philosophy. This promotes further philosophical reflection as to why Marcel would make such an exception—my discussion in this present section is an instance of such further reflection. My claim is that Murdoch creates a special emphasis on this dualism, and on the concept of love within this dualism, in order to provoke further philosophical reflection about the concept of love (1) as it occurs in the philosophy of Marcel; and (2) more specifically, as it occurs in the dualism itself (that is, especially in relation to technique). 'The Image of Mind' (1951) shows Murdoch, as a philosopher, who is primarily interested in love and in a philosophical approach to love.

2.2 The presence of love elsewhere in 'The Image of Mind' (1951)

In this section I shall discuss how Murdoch elicits thought about love, without resorting to the use of the word 'love', by examining three extracts from 'The Image of Mind' (1951). I shall show how Murdoch does this at the outset of her review (extracts one and two); and then in close proximity (extract three) to introducing 'love' as part of the dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129). I shall argue that Murdoch elicits thought about love in each of these three extracts as a precursor to her own first mention of 'love' as a philosophical concept (that of Gabriel Marcel). I shall then conclude that although Murdoch only mentions the word 'love' once, the concept of love can nonetheless be seen as exceptionally important to understanding Murdoch's review of the philosophy of Marcel.

In §2.1 (above) I showed how Murdoch carefully sets up her single reference to the word 'love' in 'The Image of Mind' (1951): That she does this (at the beginning of her review)

by introducing Marcel's general dislike of "certain crude dualisms" (IM, 1951, 125); then (in the middle of her review) by her specific focus on his philosophy in relation to the "the mind-body dualism" (IM, 1951, 128), so that (by the end of her review) "the dualism Marcel does recognise" (IM, 1951, 129), which entails 'love', has maximum impact upon her reader as exceptional to the philosophy of Marcel. In a similar way, Murdoch also carefully prepares her reader for this reference to 'love', earlier in her review, by providing (without using the word 'love') other conceptual material which may be associated with love. The provision of this conceptual material (extracts one, two, and three, which I shall discuss immediately below) sets a philosophical scene, where the concept of love can be considered as quite naturally present. For example, in extract two (which I shall discuss below), where "family relations" (IM, 1951, 125) are emphasised as being important to the philosophy of Marcel, thoughts about love do not seem out of place. Consequently, by the time Murdoch's reader encounters the word 'love', as one of four concepts in the dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129), it is conceptually familiar and has a corresponding impact upon her reader. Murdoch's careful preparation of her reader, in both of these cases, functions to promote further reflection on love specifically in relation to philosophy.

Let us now examine how Murdoch sets the scene for this first appearance of 'love' as a philosophical concept, in her own philosophical work, by eliciting thought about love elsewhere in her review. The first place where the concept of love seems to be present, without the use of the word 'love', occurs in the opening paragraph of Murdoch's review (extract one):

> What does M. Marcel think that philosophy is? He uses various phrases to describe it in his first volume of Gifford lectures. It is a reflective quest inspired by a metaphysical uneasiness. It is the reinstating of a proper description of experience. *It examines that in the life of the individual which claims an absolute worth and which seems to resist other kinds of classification.* It is concerned with the relation of living to truth. [Italics mine] (IM, 1951, 125)

My claim is that Murdoch elicits love in the thought of her reader by that sentence which I have put into italics in the above quotation. Notice how much more pointed (and concrete) this sentence appears, provoking thought about "that in the life of the individual", when compared to the vague, general, abstract language with which it is surrounded. This linguistic contrast – where a pointed concrete sentence is placed among several phrases which are more abstract and general – forms part of Murdoch's technique, whereby she seeks to elicit the concept of love. Of course, other entities and concepts could also be elicited by such a suggestive sentence. However, if one were to ask Murdoch the question (in regard to the italicised sentence in the above quotation): 'What in the life of the individual claims an absolute worth and seems to resist other kinds of classification?' The following response, in regard both to Marcel's philosophy and to her own philosophy in general, is plausible: Love is "that in the life of the individual which claims an absolute worth and which seems to resist other kinds of classification."

Let us continue, as though this response were at the least plausible, to clarify that Murdoch would then be suggesting that Marcel's philosophy examines the concept of love. I shall now provide four very different examples of what might be considered of absolute worth in the life of the individual, in order to show how in each instance the concept of love may be present. The four examples are arbitrary, in that they could easily be substituted for others. My suggestion is that (1) God, (2) football, (3) money, and (4) family, might all be considered of absolute worth in the life of an individual (that is, by the individual concerned). However, I also suggest that this could only be the case with love present: for instance, in one's devotion to (or regard of) God, football, money, or family.

(1) For some individuals (including Marcel as a Christian existentialist philosopher) only God could claim an "absolute worth". The believer loves God, and is loved by God, despite greater and lesser moments of awareness in regard to such love. In the example of God,

as that which claims an absolute worth for the individual, the concept of love might be said to be present in an uncontroversial sense.[73] (2) Now think of a football player, eighteen years of age, who is desperate to become a professional footballer. He does not love God, and thinks little of his family. Nothing else really matters for him: he has simply loved football since he can remember; and no sacrifice is too great, if to further himself in his football endeavour. One might say that (at the present time) football claims an absolute worth in the life of this individual, or that the individual's *love of football* claims an absolute worth for him. (3) We find a similar situation in the example of a person who values making money as the most important thing, which *ipso facto* claims an absolute worth for them. All sacrifices are made to that end (making money): none are too great, and all are justifiable. For the person who *loves* to make money, making money claims an absolute worth. (4) For another individual, one's family may be that which claims an absolute worth for them. When this individual is asked: 'Why does your family claim an absolute worth in your life?' They simply respond: "Because I love them."

In the above four examples (God, football, money, and family), I have suggested how the concept of love is plausibly connected to "that in the life of the individual which claims an absolute worth", whatever that may be for the individual concerned. Moral judgements about whether X should claim an absolute worth in the life of the individual are not our concern (in these examples). Indeed, it is not difficult to imagine an individual for whom football (at the age of eighteen), family (at the age of forty), and God (at the age of eighty), all for some period of time claim an absolute worth "in the life of the individual" (IM, 1951, 125); and that they

[73] It is not difficult even for the non-believer to understand that God claims an absolute worth in the life of the believer, and that this is connected to the concept of love. In 'On "God" and "Good"' (1969), Murdoch understands prayer as "simply an attention to God which is a form of love" (OGG, 1969, 53-54), and then moves on to say: "I shall suggest that God was (or is) a *single perfect transcendent non-representable and necessarily real object of attention*; and I shall go on to suggest that moral philosophy should attempt to retain a central concept which has all these characteristics." [Murdoch's italics] (OGG, 1969, 54) Murdoch later acknowledges that God as "an object of love which uniquely excludes doubt and relativism…would of course receive little sympathy from analytical philosophers" (OGG, 1969, 62). The presence of love seems integral to certain claims of absolute worth, whether the individual is a believer (like Marcel) or not.

(football, family, God) are loved as such. God may be worth very little to the footballer, and football worth very little to the believer: the footballer may not love God, nor the priest love football. When Murdoch introduces her reader to "that in the life of the individual which claims an absolute worth", the concept of love becomes present, perhaps even in a way worlds apart from the philosophy of Marcel. When Murdoch states that the philosophy of Marcel "examines that in the life of the individual which claims an absolute worth and which seems to resist other kinds of classification", she elicits the concept of love (and not necessarily just the love of God) as a point of philosophical reflection.[74]

After her opening paragraph of 'the Image of Mind' (1951) (which I have quoted above as extract one), Murdoch elicits the concept of love – making its presence far stronger – in the very next paragraph (extract two):

> One might say that the description [Marcel's philosophy] aims at two things, one negative and one positive: to dissuade us from conceiving human experience in terms of certain crude dualisms … and to reveal to us (conceptualise for us) how *what we value most is felt as a mysterious bond which links what we are with something which belongs to us and yet lies beyond us. Personal relations, particularly family relations, provide the key idea of Marcel's philosophy.* [Italics mine] (IM, 1951, 125)

One can feel the presence of love in the italicised phrases of the above quotation, which is what Murdoch refers to as the "positive" aim of Marcel's philosophy.[75] "What we value most" (see main quote above) is clearly a development of "that in the life of the individual which claims an absolute worth" (from extract one, discussed above). Love is suggested partly

[74] Marcel's belief in God is inseparable from his concepts of being, mystery, and love. However, Murdoch plays down this aspect of Marcel's philosophy in her review.

[75] I have already discussed the "negative" aim of Marcel's philosophy (his antagonism toward dualistic thinking in philosophical enquiry) in § 2.1, above. In § 2.1 I argued that Murdoch draws attention to Marcel's dislike of dualisms in general, in order to contextualize and emphasize her allusion to 'love' in that particular dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129). As such, both the "negative" and the "positive" aim of Marcel's philosophy is connected to Murdoch's introduction of 'love' as a philosophical concept which warrants further reflection.

because we tend to ascribe value in accordance with how and what we love, and partly because love is perceived to be specific to personal relations, especially those of family. The concept of love is suggested without mentioning the word 'love'. I discussed above how love is related to what we value in relation to four examples (God, football, money, and family): The believer who loves God; the footballer who loves football; the money-grabber who loves money; and the individual who values their family more than anything else, and loves them as such. In each case, the concept of love is elicited by provoking thought about what a particular individual might value most. When we think about what we value most, or about what we value in an absolute way, the concept of love (and of what we love) naturally enters into our thinking.

"What we value most" elicits love, especially when "felt as a mysterious bond which links what we are with something which belongs to us and yet lies beyond us". This precise and suggestive way which Murdoch choses to describe that which "we value most" elicits thought about love in a stronger form (than if she had left us merely to ponder what "we value most" without further qualification and detail). Murdoch guides us to the concept of love, and then she makes the presence of love even stronger and more concrete in the next sentence: "Personal relations, particularly family relations, provide the key idea of Marcel's philosophy." (See extract two above) When one thinks about "family relations", one can readily associate those people most valued with those people most loved. One might also argue (in the other direction) that some kind of failure to love a family member, or merely the lack of love's presence in a particular personal relationship, may result in estranged family relations being less valued than those we love. Or, one could consider that the person most valued or loved by an individual may be someone quite unrelated to that individual by blood or by law (*ergo* not family at all)

However, let us stay with the "positive" aim of Marcel's philosophy which, according to Murdoch, examines "how what we value most is felt as a mysterious bond", where "family

relations" are particularly relevant. What we love "belongs to us" in the sense that it has a unique relationship to our own personal individual being. At the same time such love "lies beyond us" because what or who we love exists independently of our being. Children, for example, still led by Murdoch's suggestion that "particularly family relations, provide the key idea of Marcel's philosophy" (see extract two above), provide a good example of how something "belongs to us", yet very definitely has life "beyond us". The recognition of both these elements in the love for one's children (the child being uniquely possessed by one, and at the same time independent, and living far from that one's possession) could be something easily understood in the loving thoughts of any parent.

In extract two Murdoch's use of the more personal 'we' implies togetherness and common ground, which is of a piece with how Murdoch elicits the presence of love in a stronger form than in extract one (where the indefinite article 'it' provides an impersonal subject). If we are convinced that Murdoch elicits the concept of love in the idea of what "we value most", and *a fortiori* when this "is felt as a mysterious bond", then the concept of love (for Murdoch) may be said to provide the key to Marcel's philosophy. "Personal relations, particularly family relations" are not only those relations with which we readily associate love, but also those which we commonly value most. The more one loves X, the more value one might ascribe to X, even to the point of X claiming "an absolute worth" (IM, 1951, 125) for a particular person. Murdoch concentrates her reader's attention on what may be valued most by the individual, in this open-ended and concrete manner, in order to elicit thought about love in the context of philosophy.

In extract three, where Murdoch again elicits the concept of love (this time immediately before her single use of the word 'love' in the review), the "mysterious" (see quote below) is again mentioned in close proximity to a notion of human bonding (like in extract two). Murdoch develops this notion of what is "felt as a mysterious bond" (see extract two above),

which I have already suggested elicits the concept of love in association with what we value most, when she refers both to "intimate bonds" and to "natural bonds" (see extract three below). This time Murdoch elicits the concept of love in a comparison made between Marcel and Jean-Paul Sartre:

> Sartre lives in a café and eschews intimate bonds … Marcel on the other hand values intimacy and family relations; his favourite images are of continuity, participation, merging. He values respect for natural bonds, for the inherited, for the mysterious and fruitful links with *being*, which our deracinate civilisation seems to threaten. [Murdoch's italics] (IM, 1951, 129)

The presence of love, previously elicited where "what we value most is felt as a mysterious bond" (see my discussion of extract two above), can again be strongly felt in the above comparison between two existentialist philosophers (Sartre and Marcel). The emphasis placed on Marcel's philosophical esteem for "intimacy and family relations" of course suggests a correlate value for relationships of love. Murdoch uses the notion of intimacy to elicit the concept of love as the very point on which this comparison (between Sartre and Marcel) hinges: Sartre "eschews intimate bonds" and prefers the public life and talk of the café; whereas "Marcel on the other hand values intimacy and family relations".[76] Intimate relations, whether they be family relations, or other personal relations, tend to be those characterised by the presence of love. The deeply personal and almost unquestionable nature of the bond between "family relations" (such as those with children) is commonly associated with love, which allows the philosopher (Marcel, and Murdoch) to access love as a concept aided by common sense and convention.

[76] Whether Murdoch's representation of Sartre is accurate is not our present concern. Murdoch's picturesque comparison of Sartre, who was known to spend much of his time in the public environment of the café, serves to bring out by contrast the intimate kind of philosophical enquiries Marcel himself favours. I shall discuss Murdoch on Sartre in chapter 4, below.

The point of the above comparison between Sartre and Marcel is two-fold: (1) It serves to place the concept of love, as it appears in the philosophy of Marcel, into a specific philosophical context;[77] and (2) it serves to re-familiarize her reader with Marcel's serious philosophical treatment of concept of love (as already elicited in extracts one and two), before the word 'love' is introduced to her own philosophical discussion of Marcel's philosophy. This of course occurs in that dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)." (IM, 1951, 129) which Murdoch presents as exceptional to Marcel's philosophy: as a particular kind of dualistic thinking seen by Marcel as beneficial to his philosophical enterprise (for reasons discussed in §2.1 above). What Murdoch's representation of this dualism makes clear is that a sense of mystery (the correlate of love in this dualism), when attached to (a) intimacy with another (extract three), (b) forms of personal bonding (extract two), or (c) what we value most (extracts one and two), may indicate the presence of love.

In this section I have shown how Murdoch elicits the concept of love in her review of Marcel's Gifford Lectures, in three different places (see extracts one, two, and three above), before she mentions the word 'love' as a key concept in regard to the philosophy of Marcel. Murdoch elicits the concept of love (a) to prepare her reader for her first use of the word 'love' to describe an important aspect of Marcel's philosophy, and (b) to provoke further reflection about the concept of love in relation to philosophy. What Murdoch sees in the philosophy of Marcel is a philosopher's sustained attempt "to describe aspects of our experience which we will agree with him in finding important" (IM, 1951, 129). In this regard, the positive aim of Marcel's philosophy (IM, 1951, 125) is seen by Murdoch as a sustained effort to integrate the

[77] In order "to come nearer home" (IM, 1951,129) – that is, in order to introduce more familiar philosophical context in regard to the dualism "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" – Murdoch also compares Marcel to the English philosopher, Michael Oakeshott, "who uses the word 'technique' in the same pejorative sense as Marcel" (IM, 1951, 129): "In both Marcel and Oakeshott hatred of Marxism, and even of socialism, is one with a mistrust of technical, scientific, rationalistic modes of thought." (IM, 1951, 129) Oakeshott, a philosophical peer of Murdoch while the 'The Image of Mind' (1951) was being written and published, taught at Nuffield College, Oxford, from 1949-1951. Murdoch and Oakeshott also shared intimate relations, as lovers, in 1950 (Horner and Rowe, 96, 126-127).

concept of love into (his) philosophy; and in this way Marcel's philosophical aspiration matches Murdoch's own (to make the concept of love central to philosophy). Murdoch's careful regard of the concept of love, which is elicited as integral to several salient features of Marcel's philosophical work (as discussed in this section above), allows Murdoch to make the concept of love central to her review of Marcel's philosophy without resorting to a frequent use of the word 'love'.

2.3 Mystery, love, and 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950)

In this section, I shall examine how Murdoch connects the concept of 'mystery' to the concept of love in 'The Image of Mind' (1951). I shall suggest that Murdoch is interested in how the concept of mystery might function as a philosophical ally to that of love (both in her own philosophy, and in that of Marcel). I shall show how Murdoch recognises the possibility of a philosophical alliance between mystery and love through her reading of the philosophy of Marcel, and in so doing I shall briefly compare Marcel's Gifford Lectures to his earlier philosophy. I shall argue that Murdoch seeks to facilitate philosophical expression about love by associating the concept of love with the word 'mystery', or 'mysterious'— in that (a) 'mystery' (or 'mysterious') might be seen as a less controversial or problematic word for philosophy than 'love'; and (b) the concept of mystery elicits love in a mode which Murdoch finds philosophically attractive. I shall then show how Murdoch offers a hint toward her interest in this kind of alliance (between mystery and love) by revisiting her earlier work, 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). I shall conclude that Murdoch's early focus on the concept of mystery (and the mysterious) is directly related to her interest in the concept of love, both in regard to her own philosophical enterprise and to that of Marcel.

Murdoch makes the connection between love and mystery explicit in her representation of the dualism which she ascribes to the philosophy of Marcel: "The dualism which Marcel does recognise is that between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129) This connection is especially significant because (a) it is the first time Murdoch mentions 'love' as a philosophical concept (that is, the concept of love as part of the philosophy of Marcel) in her own philosophical work; and (b) it is the only time Murdoch mentions the word 'love' in 'The Image of Mind' (1950). This is where we most clearly see 'love' and 'mystery' together on the same side (allied), with 'technique' and 'problem' on the opposing side, in her review of the philosophy of Marcel. Murdoch makes this philosophical alliance between mystery and love most explicit at precisely that point where she mentions the word 'love' (for reasons I shall now discuss below).

I have already shown (above in § 2.1) that "love and technique" (the principal part of the above-mentioned dualism, as represented by Murdoch) reflects Murdoch's own philosophical interest in Marcel, whereas "(mystery and problem)" (that part of the dualism which Murdoch places in explanatory parenthesis) more accurately represents Marcel's terminology for this dualism as expressed in his Gifford Lectures. I explained how the dualism ascribed to Marcel "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951 129) has a Murdochian flavour precisely because "love and technique" forms this principal part, yet remains true to Marcel's philosophy as a whole (as discussed in §2.1 above).[78] I have also established that when Murdoch elicits the concept of love in 'The Image of Mind' (1950), she often employs some notion of 'the mysterious' (see §2.2 above, especially my discussion of extracts two and three). These observations take on a more pointed significance in the light of

[78] I shall discuss further (in § 2.5, below) how Murdoch's main interest, which is to develop a philosophical technique by which the concept of love can be made central to her own philosophy, (a) accounts for her representation of this dualism, as it is ascribed to Marcel; (b) accounts for her general interest in Marcel's philosophy as a whole; and (c) explains why her review is sympathetic to Marcel's philosophy, but not uncritical in regard to his philosophical technique.

the following three claims: (1) that Murdoch is interested in the concept of mystery as a philosophical ally to the concept of love; (2) that Murdoch identifies the possibility of such an alliance (between mystery and love) in Marcel's Gifford Lectures; and (3) that Murdoch points forward to the potential of this philosophical alliance between the concepts of mystery and love, in her conclusion to 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), when she refers in passing to Gabriel Marcel. I shall first discuss claim one, before discussing claims two and three respectively.

Murdoch's interest in 'mystery' as a philosophical ally to the concept of love might be regarded from two distinctive points of view: (1) the concept of mystery, or the view of X as mysterious, may help to generate love in the interested observer; and (2) the use of word 'mystery' or 'mysterious' allows the philosopher to suppress the word 'love' – yet elicits the concept of love in their philosophy – and *ipso facto* the concept of love itself remains less prone to direct philosophical attack (I shall refer below to each of these points of view as 'the first point of view' and 'the second point of view', respectively.). Such attacks may be seen to push love either to the margins of philosophy, or out of philosophy altogether.[79] This is a problem for the philosopher (such as Marcel, or Murdoch) who thinks that love is and should be central to their own philosophical investigations, where 'mystery' or the 'mysterious' elicits love in the enquiring spirit (either in philosophy, or in life; as I shall discuss further in this section below). The alliance between the concepts of mystery and love is designed (1) to promote that kind of thought which is congenial to an expression of love; and (2) to philosophically protect the concept of love by not providing an easy target (the word 'love'). This philosophical

[79] When Murdoch introduces *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), she points out that "modern ethics tends to constitute a sort of Newspeak which makes certain values non-expressible". (IP, 1964, 2). Murdoch is particularly concerned about this situation in relation to the concept of love: "Instances of the facts, as I shall boldly call them, which interest me and which seem to have been forgotten or 'theorized away' are the fact that an unexamined life can be virtuous and the fact that love is a central concept in morals. Contemporary philosophers connect consciousness with virtue, and although they constantly talk of freedom they rarely talk of love." (IP, 1964, 2) The exact nature of these attacks do not here concern us, because presently I am only concerned to establish the effect of these potential attacks in relation to Murdoch's philosophical approach to the concept of love.

alliance between mystery and love functions in the above manner both in the philosophy of Marcel's Gifford Lectures, and also that of Murdoch (which includes 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), 'The Image of Mind' (1951), and *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), as we shall see in this section below).

'The second point of view' (as mentioned above) – that the word 'mystery' or 'mysterious' allows the philosopher to access the concept of love without resorting to the word 'love' – can be taken simply as a matter of philosophical strategy. Murdoch sees the word 'mystery' and 'mysterious' from precisely this point of view, as seen in the philosophy of Marcel. If one does not mention 'love', one cannot be attacked for doing so. The first time Murdoch mentions 'love' as a philosophical concept, she refers to that of another philosopher (Marcel). This could indicate Murdoch's own wariness about the application of the word 'love' to philosophical contexts.[80] Murdoch has hitherto been careful only to use the word 'love' in the context of her philosophical discussion of the existentialist novel (as I have discussed above in chapter 1), which is not a direct philosophical context such as her review of the philosophy of Marcel. Murdoch legitimises the philosophical use of the concept of love not only by referring to 'love' as an integral part of somebody else's philosophy (that of Marcel), but by recognising its importance as such (as discussed in § 2.1 above). I shall now examine what Murdoch sees in Marcel's Gifford Lectures (especially when viewed in relation to his earlier philosophy): the possibility that the word 'mystery' (or 'mysterious') may function as a philosophical ally for the concept of love.

That Murdoch identifies the possibility of this alliance between mystery and love through Marcel's special use of the word 'mystery' or 'mysterious', in his Gifford Lectures, is partly due to her familiarity with his earlier philosophy. Murdoch alerts her reader to such familiarity in the conclusion of her review, when she states that those "acquainted with

[80] I shall elaborate upon this idea in chapter 3, § 3.1, below.

Marcel's earlier work will find little that is new" (IM, 1951, 129) in his Gifford Lectures. However, there is one very notable contrast between Marcel's earlier philosophy and his Gifford Lectures, which relates to Marcel's use of the word 'love'. In Marcel's earlier philosophy we find an abundant use of the word 'love', whereas in his Gifford Lectures we do not (as I shall discuss below). Murdoch also concludes that Marcel's "genius lies in the revelatory power of the concepts which he coins to describe aspects of our experience which we will agree with him in finding important" (IM, 1951, 129). Love – as we might now already agree – in its many various aspects, as related directly to our personal experience, could certainly be that which we find important; and such love – for now, in 'The Image of Mind' (1951) – is that which I have already shown is elicited by the word 'mystery' or 'mysterious', as Murdoch see it.[81]

Earlier in her review, Murdoch provides us with a short list of these revelatory concepts (which are coined by Marcel), where she refers to "his use of special concepts such as mystery, availability, participation" (IM, 1951, 126). In addition to this list of 'special concepts', Murdoch also provides us with a short list of 'terms' (special words) particular to Marcel's Gifford Lectures. To introduce these philosophical terms, Murdoch focuses on "respect for an *otherness* to which I find myself related, the varying nature of which Marcel attempts to conjure up for us by such terms as 'mystery', 'presence', 'essence'" [Murdoch's italics] (IM, 1951, 126).[82] The word 'mystery' is put first in each of these two lists, which surely indicates the pre-eminence of 'mystery' both as a philosophical "term" (special word) and as a "special concept". The word 'mystery' is also the only word common to each of these lists, which supports my

[81] Compare my discussion of extract one in §2.2 (above), where I argue that Murdoch elicits the concept of love as "that in the life of the individual which claims an absolute worth" (IM, 1951, 125). Also compare Murdoch, in regard to her assumption that we can all agree that love is important, in her own mature philosophy: "I have not spoken of the role of love in its everyday manifestations...One cannot but agree that in some sense this is the most important thing of all…" (OGG, 1969, 73)

[82] For my related discussion of Murdoch's preferred conception of the existentialist hero, as one who is mysterious and able to respect others (otherness), and who consequently has the capacity to love and to be loved well, see § 1.4, above.

argument that Murdoch is primarily interested in 'mystery' as a philosophical ally to the concept of love (both as a philosophical term and as a special concept).[83] One might argue that Marcel's other "terms" ('presence' and 'essence') and "special concepts" ('availability' and 'participation') – as mentioned on Murdoch's two lists – are at the least congenial to philosophical expression about love, if not pointedly employed to elicit the concept of love. However, my purpose here is mainly to show how Murdoch is primarily interested in 'mystery', as employed by Marcel, as a philosophical ally to the concept of love.

When Murdoch reads the earlier philosophy of Marcel, she finds explicit and constant attention given to love, by a philosopher who is unafraid to use the word 'love'; for instance:

> The reality of the beloved one is essential to love—no (subjective) truth can transcend that reality. In this sense it is perhaps true to say that only love is real knowledge and that it is legitimate to associate love and adequate knowledge, in other words that only for love is the individuality of the beloved immune against disintegration and crumbling away, so to speak, into the dust of abstract elements. But it is only possible to maintain the reality of the beloved because love posits the beloved as transcending all explanation and all reduction. (Marcel, [1927] 1952, 62)

The above quote is indicative of much of Marcel's earlier philosophy, where one finds a liberal use of the word 'love', which may even function as part of his argument: "…love posits the beloved as transcending all explanation and all reduction." In this last quote, for instance, 'love' itself is that which generates a situation of transcendence (with the beloved); and so 'love' may contribute to an argument for the transcendence of the beloved, as part of the "reality of the beloved" (see main quote above). Murdoch (or the Marcel of the Gifford Lectures) may add that something or someone that transcends "all explanation and all

[83] That is, in regard to what I referred to above as 'the first point of view' (the concept of mystery as a philosophical ally to that of love) and 'the second point of view' (the word 'mystery' or 'mysterious' as a philosophical ally to the concept of love), where mystery elicits love.

reduction" might also be properly seen as mysterious.[84] Marcel's Gifford Lectures are distinct from his earlier philosophy in regard to his use of the word 'love'. In his earlier philosophy Marcel indulges in this liberal use of the word 'love'; whereas in his Gifford Lectures the word 'love' is not used as frequently, and neither does it carry as much salient philosophical significance (when it is used). In the Gifford Lectures, the word 'love' is used more in passing, and not so much as a philosophical term to elucidate a particular position or to help form a particular argument or description (as in the main quote above).

In the Gifford Lectures the word 'mystery' is intentionally employed by Marcel as a philosophical term, as Murdoch suggests in her review (as I have just discussed above), and as we shall see in the main quote below. Marcel at times almost seems to substitute the word 'love' (abundant in his earlier philosophy) with that of 'mystery' or 'mysterious' in his Gifford Lectures.[85] The noun 'mystery', or the adjective 'mysterious', is far more frequently employed by Marcel in his Gifford Lectures than in his earlier philosophy; and this (I suggest) is related to the relative scarcity of the word 'love' in his Gifford Lectures (when compared to his earlier philosophy). A plausible explanation for such a substitution might be that the philosopher is concerned that the word 'love' might not be received seriously by his philosophical readership. Marcel is also worried about how his use of the word 'mystery' will be received by the same readership, when speaking about "the mystery of the family bond" (Marcel, 1950, 204):

[84] My sole purpose for providing the main quote above is to exhibit Marcel's use of the word 'love' in his earlier philosophy, in order to show the contrast with his Gifford Lectures in this respect. I have briefly pointed out one function of the word 'love' only to demonstrate the philosophical lifting it is expected (by Marcel) to do. The myriad of other philosophical issues involving love, in the main quote above, do not concern us here. Although, it is perhaps worth noting that Murdoch would find the gist of this description very interesting and would be sympathetic to it (Compare Murdoch's description of love of the individual, especially in S&G, 1959, 215-16, 218-19; SBR, 1959, 283: and in IP, 1964, 27-29).

[85] What seems to be Marcel's preference for the word 'mystery' instead of 'love' (in the Gifford Lectures) can be most clearly seen throughout 'Chapter 10: Presence as a Mystery' (Marcel, 1950, 197-219). One can also properly understand Marcel's title for the Gifford Lectures, *The Mystery of Being* (1950), in the sense that the concept of love is elicited by the term 'mystery'. For Marcel, it is certainly part of the mystery of being that we are connected to God, to other people, and to the world, by love.

> When I talk about the mystery of the family bond some of my readers, I fancy, are disconcerted…In talking about its *mystery*, am I not bringing in a touch of vague literary floweriness at a level of discourse where such battered ornaments of speech have no proper place? However, as we have seen already, the situation with which we are concerned, in our special context, is one whose true nature can be grasped or acknowledged only from the inside; there are no objective statements that can be made about it from the outside, for by definition it is *our* situation, the situation we cannot get outside of. That is why the kind of writer who makes the mystery of the family palpable to us is always, for example, the novelist rather than the historian of social institutions. However, though these remarks help to clear the ground a little, we have not yet succeeded in giving the term 'mystery' that very precise and almost technical sense which alone can justify its introduction into the vocabulary of a philosopher." (Marcel, 1950, 204)

Marcel's concern about this use of the word 'mystery' in relation to his philosophical readership, even if not directly involving love (which is the point of love's alliance with mystery), amounts to what kind of expression (or which words) are deemed appropriate for philosophical enquiry. In the above quote the word 'love' is not employed by Marcel in regard to "the family bond"; instead Marcel opts for the word 'mystery' for the purpose of developing "the vocabulary of a philosopher". I have already shown how "talk about the mystery of the family bond" (see main quote above) elicits the concept of love (in § 2.2 above), and I have also suggested (in this section above) that the word 'mystery' or 'mysterious' serves precisely this purpose in particular (to elicit love).

Marcel's interest in "the mystery of the family bond", together with his special emphasis on "talking about its *mystery*" [Marcel's italics], presents us with the kind of concern that (I suggest) Murdoch has about using the word 'love' in her early philosophy. This is possibly why Murdoch has to this point in her philosophical career only used the word 'love' in the context of discussing existentialist novels (as I mentioned earlier in this section in a slightly different context).[86] The word 'love' together with talk about love is naturally at home

[86] I have examined every instance where Murdoch has previously mentioned 'love' prior to 'The Image of Mind' (1951) in chapter 1, above.

in the form of the novel; and similarly, as Marcel mentions, it is the novelist "who makes the mystery of the family palpable to us" (see main quote above). Murdoch is circumspect about using the word 'love', even though (as I continue to argue) she is already chiefly interested in producing the kind of philosophy wherein the concept of love is central. It is not surprising then that Murdoch, in her review, defends Marcel against charges akin to "literary floweriness" (see main quote above): "It would be a mistake however to imagine that because a comparison with Proust is in order, and because Marcel is a playwright, his writings can be dismissed from the field of philosophy as we understand it." (IM, 1951, 127) Marcel's concern that the term 'mystery' is attacked, rejected, or diminished, by philosophers, as mere "literary floweriness" (see main quote above), is related to what 'mystery' indicates in the context of the "family bond" (see main quote above). The "family bond", without the concept of mystery, could easily be reduced to one of material dependence, biological fact, or as a matter for the law; to mention but three examples, none of which elicit the concept of love. For Marcel, and for Murdoch in her reading of Marcel, the more mysterious aspects of the family bond tend to indicate the presence of love.

Marcel elicits the concept of love through his use of the words 'mystery' and 'mysterious'; and, as we have seen, so does Murdoch in 'The Image of Mind' (1951). Indeed, in her review, Murdoch may well imitate Marcel not only to demonstrate her understanding of the philosopher, but to also explore and exhibit how this philosophical alliance between mystery and love functions to elicit love as a concept. In his Gifford Lectures, Marcel elects to generally avoid using the word 'love' as part of "the vocabulary of a philosopher" (see main quote above), but quite possibly substitutes the word 'love' for that of 'mystery'. 'Love' is not expected to do any heavy philosophical lifting (as it is expected to do in his earlier philosophy), but may still be central to his philosophy as a concept. It is the word 'mystery' that is expected

to do this philosophical lifting in the Gifford Lectures, which accounts for Marcel's concern about that particular term (as discussed above).

This change in Marcel's philosophical approach to the concept of love can also be seen by comparing two versions of the dualism, one from Marcel's earlier philosophy and the other from Marcel's Gifford Lectures, which is represented by Murdoch as that "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129).[87] Both versions approximate to this dualism singled out by Murdoch as important. However, the earlier version includes the word 'love' as part of its terminology, whereas the later version of the Gifford Lectures omits the word 'love'. In Marcel's Gifford Lectures one can find an explicit version of this dualism with the words 'mystery', 'problem', and 'technique', all present, but not the word 'love' (Marcel, 1950, 211). However, in Marcel's earlier philosophy, we find the philosopher using the word 'love' to distinguish one side of a similar dualism (Marcel, 1927; 1952, 63). That Murdoch includes the word 'love' in her representation of Marcel's dualistic thinking in the Gifford Lectures might be justified by the idea that Marcel seeks to elicit the concept of love through the term 'mystery'. In Marcel's earlier philosophy the word 'love' is expected to carry philosophical weight, as it is, for example, in Murdoch's later philosophy of *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970); but in Marcel's Gifford Lectures the word 'mystery' or 'mysterious' does this job for 'love'— in just the same way that it does for Murdoch in her earlier philosophy.[88] In this respect, Murdoch's early use of the word 'mystery' and 'mysterious' might be seen as philosophical imitation of Marcel.

[87] For my initial discussion of these two versions of the dualism represented by Murdoch as that "between love and technique (mystery and problem), see § 2.1, above.

[88] This is one of the more important claims of my thesis. If Murdoch can be understood as eliciting the concept of love through her use of the word 'mystery' or 'mysterious', even in her earliest philosophy (such as in EH, 1950, 114-115; or IM, 1951, 125, 126, and 129) where the word 'love' is most seldom found, then my major claim – that Murdoch is interested *ab initio* in making the concept of love central to her philosophy – could move from being described as plausible to being seen as true.

'The first point of view' (as mentioned in this section above, and to move beyond our discussion of philosophical strategy) – that the concept of mystery helps to generate love in the interested observer – may be seen in relation (a) to the individual, and (b) to God; although we also see Murdoch apply this philosophical alliance between mystery and love to her notion of the Good, in her later philosophy (as I shall note shortly, below). Murdoch sees the concept of mystery from precisely this point of view, as seen in the philosophy of Marcel. Let us first look, for example, at how a mysterious individual attracts one's attention, captivates one's interest, in a way that a person who is perceived to be unremarkable doesn't. In finding the mysterious individual more attractive, one might desire to know them more intimately, being more likely of course to develop a love interest for them than for the unremarkable person. But, strangely, and over time, one might fall in love with the unremarkable person. However, as one falls in love with the unremarkable person, the unremarkable person becomes more mysterious and not so unremarkable. Correspondingly, when one falls out of love with a person, that person (once so mysterious and attractive) becomes less interesting; the mystery (of love) is gone. When mystery is attached to the individual, love seems to be more present than when mystery is not attached to the individual.[89]

Let us now continue to explore this mystery of love as made manifest in the individual (at times placing 'God' in parenthesis), in order to show the same phenomenon: that the expression of love is supported by mystery or the mysterious, as applied to the relationship between God and the believer. The believer is an individual who loves God, and who is loved by God. The mystery and the mysteries commonly associated with God are directly related to God's love (for the believer), and this has special relevance to the philosophy of Marcel (who is a believer).

[89] For my discussion about how Murdoch's representation of existentialist characters as mysterious is integral to them being loveable, in relation to their role in novels as an existentialist hero, see § 1.4 above.

I have just shown above how an individual (God) who is perceived as 'mysterious' can prompt one to love in the form of wanting to know them (Him) better. Such a phenomenon can also be expressed by wanting to be closer to them (Him), or wanting to be in the presence of them (Him). Being mysterious, especially when attached as a quality to particular individuals (or to God) in an intimate relationship, is of a piece with how one might look lovingly toward another person (or God): where 'looking with love' can be seen as a search for understanding which results in simply being with another (more intimately). The beloved (or God), if viewed as mysterious, also seems less likely to be reduced (for example) to one's own ends, to one's possession, or to a caricature. The beloved (or God), if viewed as mysterious, seems more likely to be explored in greater detail, and as such entails more that is knowable. To acknowledge the mystery of a person (God) leads to that person (God) being known in more aspects, in a far deeper way; and as such we are led on to have greater knowledge of that which we love than that which we do not love.

One does not need to be a believer to appreciate the nature (and apparent functionality) of this special relationship between mystery and love, in regard to God. That God is commonly understood as mysterious is made obvious by the cliché: 'God moves in mysterious ways'. The figure of Jesus Christ (God) may possibly be the most well-known individual in history and yet also the most mysterious. That Jesus is strongly and often characterised by mysteriousness may lead to him (Him) being loved the more as such. Christianity is a love-centred religion, with a human individual as its central image and guide. So it should not be surprising to find in Marcel (a Christian existentialist philosopher) a love-centred philosophy, where individual relationships of love such as "family relations" (IM, 1951, 125, 129) predominate.

This alliance between mystery and love need not be seen as exclusively philosophical, nor reduced to mere philosophical strategy; although the selection of 'mystery' as a philosophical term, in order to elicit the concept of love without resorting to the word 'love',

can be seen exclusively as a philosophical move. Other people are mysterious to us, and perhaps more so when we are perceiving them with love. Knowing another more intimately, *ergo* having more knowledge of a person, increases their mysterious quality in proportion to our sense of love for that person (or God). The connection between love and an irrepressible inexhaustible enquiry for knowledge is made evident in the mysterious, as an aspect of being in relation to the many details which provide various focal points for the interested observer.[90] For example, think of the details of little Gyan's ten-year-old life, in evidence to his mother (the interested observer): the particular way he is walking to school, and what this may reveal about how he is feeling about any number of things (perhaps simultaneously), which are partly revealed, and still questionable. Gyan's mother, looking with love at her son, focuses on the details of Gyan's life: his particular walk (at a particular time); his particular smile (at a particular time); *et cetera*. The study of such details (prompted by love) reveals more about Gyan, and at the same time preserves his mystery which is properly related to his independent being (that is, to the individual). This kind of phenomenon is precisely that which Murdoch, and Marcel, not only seek to study under the discipline of philosophy, but also take as a model for their own philosophical enquiry and attitude.

[90] How a disinterested impartial would-be neutral observer – that position commonly taken or attempted by a scientifically-styled method – could perceive the mystery of love (let alone study it, or express it) is another methodological question with which Marcel and Murdoch were no doubt grappling. Marcel's response is simple (as quoted above): "…the situation with which we are concerned, in our special context, is one whose true nature can be grasped or acknowledged only from the inside; there are no objective statements that can be made about it from the outside, for by definition it is *our* situation, the situation we cannot get outside of." (Marcel, 1950, 204) For Marcel, we simply are interested in aspects of our family situation which are mysterious to us, and which involve the concept (or presence) of love. For Marcel, disinterested studies are simply fakes; they are interested studies which feign disinterest. Although Murdoch would agree with this view, in her later philosophy on love she does introduce an impersonal element to her love of the mysterious Good (OGG, 1967, 73), where "the quality of the love is *automatically* refined" [my italics] by the Good. However, the love itself is still very much *her* love. In this philosophical context, it does not appear to be an accident that Murdoch introduces her mature expression of love-centred philosophy, *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), by a clear statement of personal interest: "Instances of the facts, as I shall boldly call them, which interest me and which seem to have been forgotten or 'theorized away' are the fact that an unexamined life can be virtuous and the fact that love is a central concept in morals." (IP, 1964, 2). When one considers that "the unexamined life", though imaginable, cannot by definition be examined by philosophical enquiry; what we then see is that Murdoch rather incisively sharpens her philosophical focus on "the fact that love is a central concept in morals" (IP, 1964, 2).

In regard to the functionality of such a philosophical alliance between mystery and love, it needn't matter whether a genuinely mysterious individual prompts love in another, or love prompts one to look upon the individual as mysterious. The more one sees the moment to moment mysteriousness of the individual (or God), the more likely one is to love that individual (or God). There seems to be a direct correlation between the extent to which X is perceived as mysterious and the extent to which X is loved by the individual. The more mysterious X is or becomes, the more love X seems to elicit love from – or in – the individual. This is important if one's philosophical purpose is to investigate the concept of love in some way: whether that be love's connection to being as informed by God (Marcel); or the possibility that love may function practically and philosophically to make one's life or philosophy better (Murdoch). Murdoch sees the possibility of this special philosophical alliance between the concept of mystery and that of love, in that mystery may function to elicit love in philosophy, as in the life of the individual.[91]

Let us now return briefly to 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950) so that I can show how Murdoch already has this alliance between the concept of mystery and that of love in mind, together with the thought of Marcel as a conduit for its expression, in her earliest philosophy. Indeed, just as the concept of mystery can be seen to be a philosophical ally to that of love (as discussed in this section above), so Marcel can be seen to be a philosophical ally to Murdoch,

[91] In the mature philosophy of *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) Murdoch first suggests that "the central concept of morality is 'the individual' thought of as knowable by love" (IP, 1964, 29), before she employs the philosophical alliance between the concept of mystery and that of love toward her conclusion of that work. When Murdoch is concerned that one is able to love the Good (SGC, 1967, 99-100), she seeks first to reinforce its mystery (to help make it loveable): "A genuine mysteriousness attaches to the idea of goodness and the Good. This mystery has several aspects." (SCG, 1967, 96) One aspect of this mystery is the magnetism of Good, described by Murdoch in relation to love: "Good is the magnetic centre towards which love naturally moves…And when we try perfectly to love what is imperfect our love goes to its object *via* the Good to be thus purified and made unselfish and just. The mother loving the retarded child or loving the tiresome elderly relation." (SGC, 1967, 100) Murdoch's use of "family relations" (IM, 1951, 125) and "the mystery of the family bond" (Marcel, 1950, 204) to make an example of love (the "retarded child" and "the tiresome elderly relation") recalls the philosophy of Marcel's Gifford Lectures, while also taking the concept of love back to 'the individual'. For Murdoch, in her mature philosophy of *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), a sense of the mysterious is connected to good love, as it is also to the love of the individual.

in that both seek to render a mode of enquiry or description of experience congenial to the expression of love. Such a description of experience can ordinarily be that which occurs, for example, in a novel. When Murdoch introduces the concept of mystery, in her concluding remarks about existentialist characters and their worlds (as portrayed in novels by De Beauvoir, Sartre, and Camus), it is not therefore surprising to find a reference to Marcel:

> For myself, I find these people extremely appealing: Françoise, Mathieu, Schneider, Rieux…These people are appealing, but they are never enchanting – and the worlds in which they live are without magic and without terror…There is none of the enticing mystery of the unknown…In these worlds there is ambiguity but there is no mystery. And this alone would condemn them in the eyes, for instance, of a rival existentialist, Gabriel Marcel. This fact alone, that there is no mystery, would falsify their claim to be true pictures of the situation of man." (EH, 1950, 114-115)

Murdoch introduces the concept of mystery in the above quote by noting its absence in relation to the individual characters who inhabit the world of the existentialist novel. Murdoch has already made the failure of existentialist love relationships a main focus, especially through her prior discussion of the relationship between Pierre, Françoise, and Xavière (as I have discussed in § 1.3 above). Marcel's concept of mystery, connected as it is to love, thereby supplements Murdoch's discussion about existentialist characters and their problems of love. Murdoch notes this lack of mystery as a criticism of existentialist characters and of the existentialist novel (the worlds of these characters) in general. However, that Murdoch associates this lack of mystery, as a general criticism, with the thought of Marcel anticipates her exploration of the concept of mystery as a philosophical ally to that of love in 'The Image of Mind' (1951) (as discussed in this chapter above). This (quoted above) is Murdoch's first positive step forward toward a philosophy of love, and as such should be distinguished from mere criticism of existentialist character portrayal. Murdoch's general criticism of existentialist

character portrayal is intimately connected (a) to the concept of love and (b) to characters being loveable. The introduction of mystery provides an alternative concept to ameliorate these troubled existentialist love relationships.

These concluding remarks (see main quote above) associate a lack of mystery with the failure of existentialist love relationships which Murdoch examines in 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950). I have already shown how Murdoch employs "a mysterious character called Schneider" (EH, 1950, 114) to develop her own notion of the ideal existentialist hero, through her later description of Rieux, as one who has the capacity to love and be loved on account of being mysterious (see my discussion in § 1.4 above). If the existentialist hero is simultaneously mysterious and capable of discerning the mystery in others, they are that much more likely to love and be loved. We can therefore see that Murdoch is not only interested in how the concept of mystery might function as an ally to that of love in philosophy (as discussed in this section above). Murdoch is also interested (as a novelist) in how this alliance (between mystery and love) might function in relation to character portrayal in the existentialist novel. That is, in regard to how the novelist might build an existentialist hero who is loveable; and also in regard to how existentialist characters, as portrayed in novels, may be able to love and be loved in a better way. Murdoch is not interested in presenting mere phenomenology of love; though she may strive for realistic (accurate) descriptions of the experience of love (be that in her novels or in her philosophy). Murdoch is interested (both as philosopher and novelist) that we are able, if possible, to love each other well.

Murdoch explores the concept of mystery to this end, both in regard to the existentialist novel and to her philosophy, and as such anticipates her description of the Good as that which is mysterious and loveable in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) (see my previous footnote above). In her conclusion to 'The existentialist Hero' (1950) Murdoch points directly forward to her seminal philosophical expression of this alliance between the concept of mystery and

that of love in 'The Image of Mind' (1951). That Murdoch often concludes her philosophical pieces with a suggestion about what is important for further reflection is not remarkable in itself; but that she elicits the concept of love as that which is important for further philosophical reflection, in the conclusions of three of her earliest pieces of philosophy (NM, 1950, 107; EH, 1950, 115; and IM, 1951, 129), is indicative of Murdoch's philosophical quest *ab initio*.[92] Murdoch seeks to provide her reader with philosophy, wherein the concept of love is central.

The way in which Murdoch explores this philosophical alliance between the concept of mystery and that of love, in her earliest philosophy, together with how she maintains almost exactly the same idea in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), is one of the strongest pieces of evidence for the following claim: that Murdoch, from the beginning of her philosophical career, is interested in making the concept of love central to her own philosophy. For this reason I have provided a decent portion of discussion weighing up such evidence, cognizant that Murdoch herself of course only mentions the word 'love' once in 'The Image of Mind' (1951). However, even this fact (mentioning the word 'love' once), when examined in further depth (see especially § 1.1, 1.2, § 2.1, and this section, above), becomes an effective part of my argument for Murdoch's careful and deliberate philosophical consideration of love. I shall now strengthen my central claim in the next section: that in 'The Image of Mind' (1951) we do not only find Murdoch as a philosopher interested in the concept of love, but as a philosopher already striving to make the concept of love central to (her own) philosophy.

2.4 Love as 'the central idea' in the philosophy of Marcel

[92] For my discussion of how Murdoch's conclusions to 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) and 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950) are designed to indicate the importance of love, see § 1.5, 'Murdoch's Conclusions about Love', above. Also note how Murdoch discusses love at the conclusion of both 'On "God" and "Good"' (1969) and 'The Sovereignty of Good over Other Concepts' (1967) (OGG, 1996, 73; SGC, 1967, 99-100), which (like in her earlier philosophy) suggests the importance of the concept of love and encourages further philosophical reflection on love.

In this section I shall simply draw attention to Murdoch's search for "the central idea" (IM, 1951, 125) in the philosophy of Marcel; and I shall argue that Murdoch suggests indirectly that the concept of love could be taken as the central idea in the philosophy of Marcel. However, Murdoch's attempt to suggest this idea is far from simple. Murdoch's consideration of Marcel's "central idea" (IM, 1951, 125) – like so much else which concerns love in her philosophy – is highly considered, deliberate, and subtle. I shall show how Murdoch attempts to make the concept of love central to her own review, when she suggests (rather than states) that the concept of love is central to the philosophy of Marcel. This early philosophical effort by Murdoch (to make love a central concept in philosophy) reflects her own later conviction, which she states (rather than suggests) in the mature philosophy of *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970): "We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central." (OGG, 1969, 45) I shall argue that the 'The Image of Mind' (1951) is a remarkably early instance of Murdoch's philosophical effort to fulfil this conviction. I shall conclude that Murdoch seeks to provide her reader with a philosophy – that is, her own philosophy and that of Marcel – in which the concept of love can be made central; in that the concept of love is exactly what Murdoch has in mind when she says that it "is not easy to state the central idea" of Marcel's philosophy.

Murdoch sets up 'The Image of Mind' (1951) primarily as a search for "the central idea" of Marcel's philosophy:

> What does M. Marcel think that philosophy is? He uses various phrases to describe it in his first volume of Gifford lectures. It is a reflective quest inspired by a metaphysical uneasiness. It is the reinstating of a proper description of experience. It examines that in the life of the individual which claims an absolute worth and which seems to resist other kinds of classification. It is concerned with the relation of living to truth. // It is not easy to state *the central idea* of the descriptive analysis which Marcel offers in fulfilment of this programme....to reveal to us (conceptualise for us) how what we value most is felt as a mysterious bond which links what we are with something which belongs to us and yet lies beyond us. Personal relations, particularly family

> relations, provide *the key idea* of Marcel's philosophy. [Italics mine] (IM, 1951, 125)

Murdoch's claim that it "is not easy to state the central idea" of Marcel's philosophy, if viewed in isolation, could be taken in several ways. One might suppose that Murdoch is uncertain in some way about Marcel's "central idea", or that because there are many different ideas in Marcel's philosophy it is not easy for Murdoch to select the central one. However, this is not the case. We quickly see that Murdoch is quite certain about one thing in particular: "Personal relations, particularly family relations, provide the key idea of Marcel's philosophy." Murdoch supplies "the key idea" of Marcel's philosophy to her enquiry about "the central idea" in the same introductory paragraph (see main quote above). Each of these phrases is designed to add further meaning to the other (as I shall discuss below), yet taken together they define the main parameters of Murdoch's philosophical review. Murdoch intends to develop her interest in "the central idea" of Marcel's philosophy, even though it is "not easy to state".

Murdoch's introductory comments about Marcel's "central idea" (that it is "not easy to state") do not indicate uncertainty in the focus of the reviewer. Rather, Murdoch's further suggestion about what provides "the key idea of Marcel's philosophy" is specific, concrete, and easy for her reader to entertain. That Murdoch is so definite, so specific about "family relations", suggests that she has something just as definite in mind about Marcel's "central idea". There is even a sense of mystery in Murdoch's being so definite about something which is at the same time so difficult to state. This sense of mystery could of course spur the reader on in their search for "the central idea". In this introductory paragraph Murdoch encourages her reader to first think about "the central idea" (which is rendered mysterious as being "not easy to state"), and then to find it (the concept of love) by thinking about "family relations". In such a highly considered and deliberate fashion, Murdoch provides a particular key for her

reader to unlock, understand, and appreciate that which she sees as central to the philosophy of Marcel.

That is, Murdoch elicits the concept of love as "the central idea" in Marcel's philosophy (as I have established in § 2.2 and § 2.3 above). Murdoch helps her reader to approach "the central idea" by her pointed reference to "family relations" (as I have just shown), and in this manner she also allows her reader some control over terminology for the concept of love. When her reader thinks about personal relations or family relations the word 'love' might or might not immediately come to mind, but the concept of love is probably present (somewhere or somehow). This is perhaps especially the case, if the reader thinks about those people or family relations who are the most important to them. For example, one might think about one's aging parents and the care that is required for them; or one might think about one's children and even the pain which is associated with seeing their injurious path— in each of these cases, which exemplify thinking about family relations, the word 'love' is not present; but the concept of love plausibly is. If one asks oneself the question: 'Do I think like this about my parents (or about my children), because I love them?' The answer is, plausibly: 'Yes'. The reader has some control over which family relations are considered, and about the terminology chosen. Rather than mention 'love', and then rely on the reader accepting or understanding a particular usage of the word 'love', Murdoch (like Marcel) offers situations, examples, or other terms (the main term being 'mystery' or 'mysterious', as fully discussed in § 2.3 above), to elicit the concept of love.

I have established this beyond doubt in § 2.2 and § 2.3 above: In § 2.2 (above) I established (1) that Murdoch elicits the concept love as that which Marcel finds especially valuable or important; and (2) that Murdoch also uses the concept of mystery or the mysterious to elicit the concept of love. Indeed, the main quote above (which I here quote to show Murdoch's search for what is specifically "the central idea" of Marcel's philosophy) contains

two of the three extracts (extract one and extract two) selected for the purpose of showing that Murdoch elicits the concept of love in 'The Image of Mind' (1951) (as discussed in § 2.2 above): I showed that Murdoch elicits the concept of love as (1) "that in the life of the individual which claims an absolute worth" (from extract one, and also in the main quote above); and (2) "how what we value most is felt as a mysterious bond" (from extract two, and also in the main quote above). Murdoch repeatedly emphasises that what is of the most value in the philosophy of Marcel is also mysterious, and as such should be seen as mysterious. In § 2.3 (above), I then went further to establish that both Murdoch and Marcel employ the word 'mystery' or 'mysterious' not merely to elicit the concept of love, but also specifically as a philosophical ally to the concept of love. We can now see (in this section) that Murdoch not only elicits the concept of love because it is philosophically important (for herself and for Marcel), but that she attempts to make the concept of love central to 'The Image of Mind' (1951) in doing so.

The point at which Murdoch is most explicit in delineating the main parameters of her review (as a search for "the central idea" in Marcel's philosophy) is precisely where Murdoch states most clearly her own philosophical problem: "It is not easy to state the central idea of the descriptive analysis which Marcel offers in fulfilment of this programme." One reason for why the central idea (the concept of love) is not easy to state is that certain scientifically-styled modes of enquiry threaten what Marcel sees as important:

> …he [Marcel] wants to analyse that in our experience which we feel to be important, valuable, irreducible – that which is threatened by psychoanalysts, sociologists, and crude positivists…He [Marcel] values respect for natural bonds, for the inherited, for the mysterious and fruitful links with *being*, which our deracinate civilisation seems to threaten. [Murdoch's italics] (IM, 1951, 128-129)

In the above quote we find Murdoch again eliciting the concept of love through notions about what is 'important' and 'mysterious': a repeated emphasis that what is most valuable is

also mysterious, and should be examined as mysterious (as Murdoch does, in her review). Indeed, the second half of the above quote can also found, in my discussion of how and where Murdoch choses to elicit the concept of love, as extract three in § 2.2, above. We also find the adjective 'irreducible' connected to what I argue is the concept of love (as elicited rather than stated), alongside those kinds of scientifically-styled enquiry which might reduce 'love', for example, to some kind of biological function (for my full discussion of this example see § 2.1 above).

The scientifically-styled approach to enquiry – as generally seen in Murdoch's list of "psychoanalysts, sociologists, and crude positivists" (see quote above) – privileges concepts which are perceived to be established beyond conjectural speculation. Such an approach may in effect reduce the scope one one's enquiry to that which can be clearly seen, stated, or defined. In this context the concept of love might be seen to be impossibly conjectural (or speculative), with definitions of love tending to fly away easily into further conjecture. For example: 'love is basically sex (Freud); no, it is compassion; no, it is being truly connected with another human being; no, it is caring for the well-being of any object; no, it is…et cetera'. The concept of love is not easy to state. However, we can see how the concept of mystery, a concept about which it is impossible not to be conjectural (almost by definition), is intimately connected (a) to what Marcel finds valuable; (b) to the concept of love; and (c) to love as a central concept in the philosophy of Marcel, as Murdoch regards it.

Marcel opts for the word 'mystery' almost as a substitution for the word 'love', in order to investigate the concept of love in the Gifford Lectures (as I have discussed in § 2.3 above). This may partly be because even the most scientifically-minded philosopher might find it difficult to deny (either by omission or reduction) that the concept of mystery forms a significant part of human experience. The same philosopher may more easily construct a reductive explanation for the phenomenon of what we call 'love' (for example, the kind

biological explanation I referred to earlier in this section, and as I have discussed in § 2.1 above). This explains the repeated emphasis by Murdoch (and Marcel) on that which is most philosophically important as being that which is mysterious. That the concept of mystery seems immune to being "'theorized away'" (IP, 1964, 2) in this fashion, where at times (in our experience) people or things or phenomena seem irrefutably 'mysterious' to us, provides a stronger philosophical platform from which the concept of love (as mysterious) can be investigated. In this sense, to unlock the philosophy of Marcel is to unlock its mystery, and that is something to be done with love (as Murdoch sees it). This is of a piece with what with what I shall call 'the technique of elicitation' in § 2.5, below; that which is suggested – elicited – remains in some way mysterious.

I conclude that Murdoch seeks to make the concept of love central to philosophy, both as philosopher and reviewer, the first time she mentions 'love' as a philosophical concept (that of Marcel). Indeed, Murdoch selects the philosophy of Marcel as the perfect vehicle for this purpose. Murdoch recognises Marcel as a philosopher for whom the concept of love is of prime importance; and by suggesting that the concept of love is central to the philosophy of Marcel, she make the concept of love central to her own (philosophy). The selection of Marcel's philosophy for this purpose is a carefully considered move, one which shows Murdoch's clear intent at the beginning of her philosophical career, as can be seen from her reference to Marcel (and his concept of 'mystery') in her conclusion of 'The Existential Hero' (1950) (as I have discussed in § 2.3 above). Murdoch enlists the concept of mystery as a philosophical ally to that of love, in that a focus on what is mysterious at least provides one with the kind of enquiry which is congenial to the expression of love (as discussed in § 2.3above)— for that purpose of making the concept of love central to philosophy, even though it "is not easy to state" (IM, 1951, 125). It is the concept of love that "is not easy to state", and which is especially difficult to state in a philosophical context for Murdoch (and for Marcel). Murdoch's search for "the

central idea" (IM, 1951, 125) in Marcel's philosophy is a philosophical search for the concept of love. When Murdoch makes the concept of love central to Marcel's philosophical enterprise, she also makes it central to her own.

2.5 Love, mystery, and the problem of technique

In this short section I shall return to the first and only time Murdoch mentions 'love' in 'The Image of Mind' (1951), in her representation of the dualism in Marcel's philosophy "between love and technique (mystery and problem)" (IM, 1951, 129). I mentioned in § 2.1 (above) that this dualism had a 'Murdochian flavour' on account of Murdoch's emphasis on "love and technique", with the terms which are closer to the philosophy of Marcel being relegated to explanatory parenthesis as "(mystery and problem)". I shall argue below that Murdoch's own interest in developing a philosophical technique for the treatment of love, as a central concept in philosophy, accounts for the 'Murdochian flavour' of the above dualism. I shall argue that the philosophical alliance between the concepts of mystery and love (as discussed above in § 2.3), along with the way Murdoch elicits the concept of love in her review of Marcel's philosophy (as discussed above in § 2.2), are in fact developments in Murdoch's own philosophical technique.

This aspect of philosophical technique, which is designed to elicit the concept of love so that it might more readily become a central concept in one's philosophy, might be called the 'technique of elicitation'. There is no doubt that such a technique would be useful in a philosophical environment which is hostile to the expression of love, or to the use of the word 'love', for the philosopher who seeks nonetheless to discuss aspects of love. This could be a reason for employing the 'technique of elicitation'; whereby hostile philosophers would either have more difficulty in pinning down their target, or may not even notice 'love' as their target

(with the word 'love' suppressed).[93] For example, Marcel might be taken at face value; that he is only speaking about family relations. In any case, Marcel is unlikely to be attacked on whatsoever grounds about love, if he speaks only of the mystery in family relations.

However, the philosopher who wishes to make the concept of love central to their philosophy, who is not necessarily intimidated by philosophical hostility to love's expression, may still prefer to elicit thought about love rather than to use the word 'love'. To elicit the concept of love may be seen as an effective means (technique) to a philosophical end (making love a central concept to philosophy). To understand why a philosopher might decide to elicit love rather than to say 'love', one may consider an analogy about how one chooses to best express love to a person: one might think of the difference between saying 'I love you', and deciding not to say 'I love you' in favour of showing one's love in some other way, through some other action or expression (such as making a cup of tea for a person, or complimenting them). Sometimes the word 'love', or sometimes the suppression of the word 'love' in favour of some other expression, more effectively communicates the sense of love to another person.

An important part of Murdoch's main purpose in writing her review on the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel is to raise the problem of philosophical technique in relation to the concept of love. Murdoch can see in the philosophy of Marcel the possibility of an alliance between the concepts of mystery and love and the potential this has for her own philosophical technique. Murdoch uses her review to explore this interest by employing the concept of mystery as a way to access the concept of love more than once (as shown in § 2.2). I mentioned in § 2.4 that Marcel was the vehicle by which Murdoch could elicit love as a central concept in philosophy. I would add to that that Marcel is actually the perfect vehicle for this on account of the following: Marcel's philosophy demonstrates 'the technique of elicitation' by eliciting

[93] I have discussed this aspect in reference to Marcel's use of the words 'mystery' and 'mysterious', in that these words almost stand as substitutes for the word 'love' in the Gifford Lectures (see § 2.3, above).

precisely the concept (love) in which Murdoch has an interest; but Murdoch can then criticise Marcel's own technique thereby distancing herself from his philosophy. The final sentence in Murdoch's review, in conclusion, reads: "His [Marcel's] profound and suggestive technique is, I think, capable of a greater precision than he has yet cared to give to it." (IM, 1951, 129)

In another criticism of Marcel's technique Murdoch mentions that we have "at best an impulse to think the matter out for ourselves" (IM. 1951, 127). Although this comment is pejorative, it also describes what a technique of elicitation will do. If one thinks that a certain concept (for example, love) cannot be proved, but must instead be 'recognised' (IM, 1951, 129) by a process of reflection (like the dualism which entails love, as discussed above), then the technique of elicitation stands (perhaps) as the only technique. Murdoch is very aware, again, of this process of reflection whereby the philosopher can 'conjure' rather than state concepts:

> In the course of this reflection there is demanded of me a certain sensibility or respect for an *otherness* to which I find myself related, the varying nature of which Marcel attempts to conjure up for us by such terms as 'mystery', 'presence', 'essence'. [Murdoch's italics] (IM, 1951, 126)

I conclude (1) that what Murdoch sees (in Marcel's Gifford Lectures) is a philosophical technique whereby one may elicit the concept of love without using the word; and (2) that Murdoch deliberately imitates this technical aspect of Marcel's philosophy in 'The Image of Mind' (1951). Murdoch is interested in the prospect of a philosophical technique, where one may elicit the concept of love without mentioning the word 'love', which may function to make the concept of love central to one's philosophy. Murdoch is sympathetic to Marcel's philosophical endeavour regarding the concept of love, but critical of his technique. However, in regard to her own problem concerning the development of a philosophical technique, by which to make the concept of love central to philosophy, she has found a pointer in Marcel's use of the concept of mystery. Murdoch develops part of what she alludes to as Marcel's "profound and suggestive technique" (IM, 1951, 129) into her own 'technique of elicitation',

which she clearly states (as a process) years later in her essay, 'Existentialists and Mystics' (1970): "In order to tell the truth, especially about anything complicated, we need a conceptual apparatus which partly has the effect of concealing what it attempts to reveal." (E&M, 1970, 221).

2.6 Conclusion

I conclude that Murdoch's own interest in the concept of love, as a concept which can (and should) be made central to philosophy, accounts for the greater part of her interest in the philosophy of Gabriel Marcel. Murdoch uses her review of Marcel to explore the possibility of a philosophical technique for enquiry into the concept of love, which is of a piece with her commitment to make love a central concept in philosophy. Murdoch finds in Marcel's Gifford Lectures an alliance between the concepts of mystery and love, which serves to support the concept of love against reductionist philosophical attacks. Murdoch also finds the 'technique of elicitation' in the philosophy of Marcel, in that the concept of love is elicited without use of the word 'love', which she also imitates in her review.

Murdoch incorporates these aspects of philosophy (the alliance between mystery and love) and of philosophical technique (eliciting rather than stating the concept of love) into her mature philosophy, as I have endeavoured to show especially by occasional references to that philosophy. The first time Murdoch mentions the concept of love as a philosophical concept (that of Marcel) is certainly an appropriate time to make such positive suggestions regarding the concept of love and philosophical technique. In this respect 'The Image of Mind' (1951) might be considered one of Murdoch's most important pieces of early philosophy, as it provides a clear introduction to Murdoch's central area of interest (the concept of love) and to the development of her philosophical technique (by which to treat the concept of love).

Chapter 3

The Concept of Love in 'Thinking and Language' (1951)

3.0 Introduction

'Thinking and Language' (1951) is Murdoch's first serious philosophical paper.[94] The paper was presented to philosophers at the Joint Session of the Mind Association and the Aristotelian Society (in June 1951) and published in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (Suppl. Vol. 25) later that same year. Until this point Murdoch had broadcast two radio talks on the BBC, and she had published three book reviews. In the radio talks and these early reviews Murdoch strikes a suggestive note, that of a reviewer or lecturer who seeks to display the ideas of her subject. She often makes clear where her sympathies lie in these pieces, but in the form of hints, questions, or criticisms, as distinct from philosophical argument. Whereas in 'Thinking and Language' (1951) we find Murdoch's first development of what might be called her own philosophical position. This position not only includes her defence of a person's private thought, or inner life, as meaningful; but also what I take to be her quite original position on language and how language might be understood as part of a philosophical technique. I shall argue below that both her defence of the inner life and her position on language are designed to accommodate the concept of love.

In § 3.1, 'Murdoch's mention of the word 'love' in 'Thinking and Language' (1951)', I shall focus on how Murdoch mentions the word 'love'. In doing so I shall argue that by mentioning love in the way that she does, that is, by providing an image of love by way of an example, Murdoch *pictures* (to use a Murdochian expression) the concept of love as a problem for philosophy and for linguistic behaviourism in particular. Then in § 3.2, 'The presence of

[94] Broackes simply refers to 'Thinking and Language' as "Murdoch's first paper" (Broackes, *Introduction*, p. 21).

love elsewhere in 'Thinking and Language' (1951)', I shall show how Murdoch elicits love without further mention of the word.

In § 3.3, 'The inner life: thinking and its relationship to love', I shall examine Murdoch's attempt to retain the private experiences of the inner life as meaningful. I shall then argue that the philosophical preservation of the inner life as private experience or thought facilitates a treatment of the concept of love, which is already of central interest to Murdoch as a philosopher (as I have argued in chapters 1 and 2). In § 3.4, 'A note on Murdoch's philosophical technique (for love)', I argue that what I have hitherto discussed forms another early development of Murdoch's philosophical technique, which is designed to accommodate the concept of love within the discipline of philosophy.

In § 3.5, 'Enemies of love: A note on convention and neurosis', I discuss Murdoch's brief use of the concepts of 'convention' and 'neurosis' in 'Thinking and Language' (1951) and relate this to her later use of the concepts, where she describes them as "enemies of love" (S&G, 1959, 216-17). I then conclude in § 3.6, that (a) Murdoch's major philosophical concerns in her earliest work are linked to what can be seen, and perhaps should be seen, as problems of love; and (b) Murdoch's passing allusions to love, prior to her book *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953), reveal a thinker for whom love is already of central importance.

3.1 Murdoch's mention of 'love' in 'Thinking and Language' (1951)

In this section I examine Murdoch's only mention of the word 'love' in 'Thinking and Language' (1951). I shall show how Murdoch's use of the word 'love' is comparable to her other singular mentions of 'love'; those in her first radio talk and also in her review of Marcel.[95]

[95] For my previous discussion of these singular mentions of 'love' in 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) and in 'The Image of Mind' (1951), see chapter 1, § 1.1, and chapter 2, § 2.1, respectively.

I shall argue that Murdoch's particular use of the word 'love' indicates both the prominence of the concept of love in her thought and supplies the interlocutor with an image, or what Murdoch might refer to as a 'picture', with which to see the problem of mentioning love in the discipline of philosophy.

Since 'Thinking and Language' (1951) may be considered Murdoch's first serious paper, one might consider also that Murdoch is mentioning 'love' for the first time as part of her own philosophy. Murdoch puts the word 'love' into an example:

> Considered as a content of thought, language may have a revelatory role (as when in *La Chartreuse de Parme* Mosca fears the *mention* of the word 'love' between Fabrice and the duchess) or it may have the opposite role. (TL, 1951. 35)

As emphasised, this is the only time that Murdoch mentions love by name in the paper. Notice that this exactly replicates her approach to the word 'love' in her first radio talk. This sole mention of love is every bit as pointed and just as important to her, as her conclusive acknowledgement of the love in the first public expression of her ideas (See my discussion in chapter 1, § 1.1). I have also discussed (in § 2.1 above) how Murdoch mentions the word 'love' just once in 'The Image of Mind' (1951), the first time she alludes to 'love' as a philosophical concept (that of Marcel). I also showed (in § 2.5 above) how Murdoch subtly suggests that love is "the central idea" of Marcel's work, and that as such it is "not easy to state" (IM, 1951, 125). I argued there, as I shall argue here in my discussion of 'Thinking and Language' (1951) below, that love is the central idea of Murdoch's work but that it is not easy for her to state it.

Now, in her first serious paper, the first time Murdoch formally attempts to edify a particular position by philosophical argument, she also only mentions the word 'love' once. I do not believe this to be co-incidence, but argue that Murdoch deliberately inserts 'love' as a once only occurrence in these moments of philosophical inception. She mentions 'love' once

(a) in ‘The Novelist as Metaphysician’ (1950) when she first publicises her ideas, (b) in ‘The Image of Mind’ (1951) when love is mentioned as a philosophical concept for the first time, and (c) in ‘Thinking and Language’ (1951) when for the first time love is part of her own philosophy. She does not throw the word about carelessly, nor does she let us forget the concept. Part of the reason Murdoch only mentions the word ‘love’ once in these three pieces of work, I argue, is pictured by her example quoted above.

So, firstly, what is Murdoch attempting to show in this example? Murdoch seeks to picture an instance where language can either reveal X or obscure X. In this case language can either reveal love or conceal it. It is not necessary to recount the full complexity of how these characters relate to each other in the novel to grasp Murdoch’s philosophical point about language. Mosca does not fear love, but the verbalisation of love. Murdoch italicizes ‘*mention*’ to emphasise the following phenomenon: uttering the word ‘love’ changes that situation in which love is the central point of focus. In the example love is the focus (a) for Mosca, (b) for the reader, and possibly (c) for Fabrice and the duchess. Murdoch pointedly examples a situation where the central point of focus (love) is not mentioned by any of the characters involved. If the reader concedes that they can understand this example to be a comprehensible picture, they are also conceding that X has sensible influence outside of its being expressed in language. Mosca’s fear is all about love, as he understands it, but love is not expressed in language. It is easy for us to understand that love is in his thoughts, maybe not by name.

When we think about love, do we think about the word ‘love’, about those situations in which we love, or about those people whom we love? Murdoch’s example is designed to illustrate two things. It is designed to show (1) how private thought can be meaningful even when not verbalised, and (2) how private thoughts – like fearing the mention of the word ‘love’ – can be represented by language in an intelligible way. Indeed, it is love that makes Murdoch’s

example intelligible, in that without understanding what love is in some way the example makes no sense.

It is not a co-incidence that the word 'love' is selected as central to Murdoch's example of verbal speech, the utterance of which is feared (by Mosca). Murdoch could be 'picturing' (to use one of her frequent expressions) the following problem: that the word 'love' is suppressed in much of the philosophical expression of her time, and that philosophers may even be afraid to mention the word 'love'. Does this mean that the concept of love is not there? Certainly not. This example, wherein "Mosca fears the *mention* of the word 'love'" (see quote above), shows us precisely how a concept may occupy a dominant position in one's thought, or philosophy, while remaining hidden or suppressed. Murdoch sees this problem of regarding love in philosophy as two-fold: (1) love is commonly seen by people as of central importance to their lives, and so philosophy (thinkers) surely ought to help such people understand love a little better; and (2) philosophy, by neglecting the concept of love, thereby neglects the greater part of the content of a person's consciousness, which amounts to a significant deficiency for a discipline which claims to study the mind or the contents of the mind.

Does Murdoch need to mention the concept of love for demonstrating her philosophical point about language and its relationship to thought? Probably not. One could think of many examples which would serve, particularly involving a person's fear. For example: Peter is so frightened of dogs that he decides not to walk the short way past the blue house where the Great Dane lives. He says to Frances: "Let's walk the long way so that we can look at the view." Language can still be seen as a content of thought, and the idea of inner life or experience still seems to make 'good sense' in regard to what Peter actually says. Peter does not have to say 'I am frightened of the dog' for the proposition 'I am frightened of the dog' to be actively in play, that is, to make good sense in the context of walking the long way. Peter knows that he does not want to walk past the blue house. Does Murdoch fear the mention of the word 'love', just

like Mosca? As we have seen from my discussion of 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950), Murdoch is certainly not afraid to mention love when discussing novels. Murdoch is possibly fearful to mention the concept of love (as 'love') in the philosophical company she is keeping.

Does Murdoch's example need to come from a French novel? Certainly not. But the fact that Murdoch has chosen another French novel certainly recalls to mind those other French novels, which she uses to exhibit and explore the difficulties existential characters experience in love-relationships. In these cases, Murdoch implies that such difficulties arise from the philosophical inclinations of those characters (See my discussion in chapter 1, § 1.3). Murdoch deliberately connects her first philosophical paper to 'The Existentialist Hero' (1950) both by her selection of French novels as examples and by her passing allusions to the concept of love, with which the French novels and examples are consistently associated. She also does this with her only passing allusion to love in 'The Existential Political Myth' (1952), which appears in her use of Simone de Beauvoir's *Le Sang des autres* as "the girl one fails to love" (EPM, p. 139). Each time Murdoch writes, in this early period, she carefully builds a cohesive picture of what her central concern is by an allusive method. The fact that love is for the most part incidental to her examples (a) removes the concept from having to do any philosophical work and (b) suggests that this concept is nonetheless of central interest to Murdoch. It is precisely because she could have used other concepts to example her philosophical point (In the case of 'Thinking and Language' (1951), a point about the nature of language and its relationship to thought) that one can more clearly see the method applied to love in her selections.

Murdoch's 'love' example (see quote above) also serves another purpose, for which Murdoch's description of a character fearing the mention of 'love' provides the image. This example, delivered to the linguistic behaviourist company of Ryle, pictures more than just an operational 'inner life', more than just the revelatory or obfuscatory roles of language. This example pictures for Ryle the kind of problem philosophers might have with mentioning love,

in that they, like Mosca, may fear the mention the word. Is Murdoch's example, which involves Mosca's fear that the word 'love' will be mentioned, merely a casual passing allusion to love? After all, she only mentions the word 'love' once in this her first serious philosophical paper. Or is it an extremely pointed mention of a concept which is of central interest to her? Why has Murdoch decided to put this thought about love into the head of Gilbert Ryle and others?

I conclude that it is because she thinks that it is important. As mentioned above, to illustrate the revelatory or obfuscatory role of language, love need not have been mentioned. Similarly, to argue for her assumption that "thinking is a private activity which goes on in our heads" (TL, 1951, 33), that is, in an argument for inner life, Murdoch need not have alluded to love. Murdoch illustrates her philosophical point about language and it relationship to thought by putting the thought of love into our heads. In asking Gilbert Ryle to consider the scene between Mosca, Fabrice and the duchess, she is asking him to verify that something that is not overt, not seen, and not publicly expressed, is nonetheless considerable. Otherwise, the example would not serve its purpose. By her use of this example Murdoch is attempting to clear a philosophical (linguistic) way for the treatment of the concept of love, or of other comparably mysterious concepts (for example, the individual), while in such company. If Murdoch succeeds in having this example pass by at this Joint Session, she in a sense proves that the concept (of love) is valid. If there are no objections to her examples, if they are taken as understandable, then this can also serve as an argument that the concept of love is linguistically and philosophically intelligible.

3.2 The presence of love elsewhere in 'Thinking and Language' (1951)

In this section I shall discuss where Murdoch elicits the concept of love elsewhere in 'Thinking and Language' (1951). I shall show how Murdoch seeks to elicit love in a

comparable way to how she elicits it in her review of Gabriel Marcel. In chapter 2 I have already drawn attention to how Murdoch, in her review of Marcel, more frequently elicits the concept of love than refers to it by the name 'love'. In § 2.2, 'The presence of love elsewhere in 'The Image of Mind' (1951), I argued that this is part of Murdoch's philosophical technique for accessing and accommodating love. Again, in 'Thinking and Language' (1951), one can see a preference for this kind of technique in regard to the concept of love. In two places Murdoch clearly elicits the concept of love. The first occurs as a consideration of communication which might be seen as more private than other kinds of communication:

> To take such an example is convenient because it constitutes a sort of public object which we can all handle, whereas communication of certain other types of mental experience is often only possible in limited societies, sometimes only in societies of two. (TL, 1951, 37)

This first appearance of what I argue is an instance of elicited love follows Murdoch's quotation of four lines from a poem about a snail (TL, 1951, 37). Murdoch contrasts the communication made by a poem, as a "public object", with more private forms of communication. To instance a poem as "a sort of public object which we can all handle" (TL, 1951, 37) is rather provocative. Murdoch uses poetry as an example to make the point that metaphorical description is both natural to us and easy to understand. It is provocative on account of her immediate linguistic behaviourist audience, the philosophical style of which would most likely not approve of the wilful use of metaphor for any attempt at clear communication. Ryle's response to Murdoch on the natural use of metaphor as comprehensible at the Joint Session is at best evasive, as Broackes points out, "it seems quite unclear that the elements of a 'best description' would in all cases (as I think Ryle wants to suggest) be able to

do without metaphor or transferred usage" (Broackes, 2012b, 22).[96] Murdoch's example of poetry is perhaps an obvious choice to demonstrate an instance of metaphor. However, Murdoch's recognition of the role of metaphor in language use is far more pervasive, as shown by another example by which I argue that she also elicits the concept of love.

This second instance where love seems to be present in Murdoch's paper bears a remarkable resemblance to that example where Murdoch mentions the word 'love'. Murdoch attempts to again show by example the natural usage of metaphor, but she is not now discussing poetry. This example is introduced by the same words, 'as when', as that example in which the word 'love' appeared in a non-verbalised form. 'Love' is merely in the head of Mosca when he "fears the *mention*" of it. Here Murdoch introduces an example, or image, of strength when introducing her own position on metaphor and language:

> We naturally create metaphors in the context of certain kinds of attempt to describe. As when, for instance, we speak of having a bond with somebody which remains unbroken through times of emptiness or even of hostility. Such a mode of speech is so natural to us that we might be surprised when its metaphorical character is pointed out. (TL, 1951, 40)

This idea of "having a bond with somebody which remains unbroken" (TL, 1951, 40) doesn't just example metaphor but elicits the concept of love. Let us compare this quotation to the first quotation above about communication in "societies of two" (TL, 1951, 37). The extra information supplied to us in the first quotation, these "societies of two" (TL, 1951, 37), perhaps recalls "how what we value most is felt as a mysterious bond" (IM, 1951, 125), as mentioned in her review of Marcel. If Murdoch had not mentioned "societies of two", but ended

[96] Broackes points out that Ryle's preference that a 'history' should describe X instead of metaphor is "replacing a rather interesting point in Murdoch— about the indispensability of metaphor … —with a weaker and less plausible point." (Broackes, 2012b, 22). I shall go on in § 3.4 to discuss Murdoch's position on seeing language as "fundamentally metaphorical" (TL, 1951, 40) in the context of the concept of love and then relate this in § 3.6 to the development of her philosophical technique.

the sentence with “limited societies”, the concept of love would not have been clearly elicited. One thinks of love, when one thinks about certain types of communication which are only possible in societies of two. Similarly, Murdoch’s interest in this kind of ‘communication’ also leads one back to Françoise and Pierre: “Sooner or later there come the experiences which cannot be communicated. Perfect love and understanding cannot be maintained.” (EH, 1950, 109). Murdoch is carefully developing the possibility that love features more overtly in her philosophy, and this highly allusive and subtle style prepares the way for this. Symposia for philosophers are not “societies of two”. But should this preclude the discussion of such types of communication, if such types of communication are regarded as important? Murdoch may not be searching for a “world of perfect communication” (EH, 1950, 108) for those who love each other, as she ascribes to the expectation of Françoise, but she is clearly affirming the possibility of at least some kind of communication in the relatively private society of two.

Murdoch, in her first serious paper, is far more positive about (a) the prospect of communication in “societies of two” compared, for instance, to the example she makes of Françoise and Pierre; and (b) the prospect of “having a bond with somebody which remains unbroken” compared to, for instance, the lack of any such guarantee in the existentialist characters, as represented by Sartre, De Beauvoir, and Camus (see chapter one). This contrast between the possibility of communication in love relationships, which is strong and positive, can also be extended to the image of Mosca. Mosca fears that love be mentioned in certain company, and as such again presents love as problematic in the fearfully timid human situation. Similarly, the last line of Murdoch’s provocative poetry extract, which she employs as part of her argument that metaphors can be understood, speaks of a snail who “withdraws his timid horn / And fearful vision weaves” (TL, 1951, 37). Mosca is afraid, the snail is afraid. Are philosophers afraid to discuss with rigour the nature of that “bond with somebody which remains unbroken”? Again, Murdoch does not need to use this particular example about

"fearful vision" in relation to a snail to make her point about metaphor. Is Murdoch afraid to be direct about the concept of love and its central importance to her philosophy, especially at this early stage of her development, or is she strategically preparing the ground upon which she may lay her first clear philosophical claims for love? For the remainder of this chapter I shall argue in the affirmative to this latter question.

3.3 The inner life: thinking and its relationship to love

Justin Broackes, apart from acknowledging that Murdoch's 'Thinking and Language' (1951) "was an astonishingly independent and brave performance" (Broackes, 2012b, 22), suggests that this paper's "main project is to investigate how far the kinds of concern Wittgenstein and Ryle pressed about the ways we learn and employ psychological language imply (as many people supposed) that there is no such thing as 'inner experience' (TL, 1951, 38)" (Broackes, 2012b, 22). Murdoch certainly seeks to rescue some form of the "inner life" (TL, 1951, 33). However, I shall argue in this section below that Murdoch's "main project" is far more ambitious, and far more radical in terms of her linguistic behaviourist company at the time.[97] I have argued in § 3.2 that what really interests Murdoch (love) is at the same time far more subtly present either than her observation that "we need and use the idea that thoughts are particular inner experiences" (TL, 1951, 38), or her assumption that "thinking is a private activity which goes on in our heads" (TL, 1951, 33.). I shall argue that Murdoch is more concerned with how to discuss the concept of love with her philosophical peers, rather than merely reacting to philosophical attacks on the 'inner life' by defending that concept. Murdoch

[97] The Joint Session (in June 1951), at which this paper was presented, also featured papers by Gilbert Ryle and A. C. Lloyd. Murdoch's direct linguistic behaviourist company is of course Ryle, who held that what might be called the experiences of one's inner life only make sense if they are publicly observable as such. The philosophy of Lloyd focuses for the most part on aspects of Platonism.

may well "need and use" the preservation of inner life as a meaningful entity to better facilitate such discussion about love. But this is only part of what I argue is a Murdochian strategy by which she makes her first philosophical overture to love. Apart from mentioning the word 'love' and also eliciting love (without using the word) so that her interlocutors would consider it, another proactive component of Murdoch's paper develops and then states a clear philosophical position on language and its relationship to thought.[98] The "main project" of Murdoch's first serious philosophical paper is to accommodate the concept of love, and it is for this that she develops and demonstrates her philosophical position on the inner life, thought and its relationship to language.

So what exactly is Murdoch's objection to the behaviourist position that inner life must be publically observable in order to make sense? Why would the retention of one's meaningful private experiences offer a better conceptual framework with which to communicate about love? To answer both of these questions, let us look again at Murdoch's example in which she posits the concept of love:

> Considered as a content of thought, language may have a revelatory role (as when in *La Chartreuse de Parme* Mosca fears the *mention* of the word 'love' between Fabrice and the duchess) or it may have the opposite role. (TL, 1951, 35)

From here it is easier to concede also that (a) the inner life X may be spoken about; but that (b) speaking about "thought" or the "inner life" changes the situation of that which is described. If the word 'love' is uttered by Fabrice or the duchess presumably Mosca, who fears its mention, will behave differently than if (a) love is not mentioned or (b) he is unaware that love has been mentioned. Importantly, a changed form of love, to follow Murdoch's example,

[98] I shall show throughout the dissertation how Murdoch's position on language, which is first set down here in 'Thinking and Language' (1951), remains consistent and fundamentally informs the development of her philosophical technique. I begin this discussion in § 3.4 below.

is still arguably a form of love. I argue that Murdoch, rather than "to rule out any good sense for talk of 'inner experience'" (Broackes, 2012b, 21), seeks to foster a simple form of awareness that when one verbalises a thought content one may change that thought content. As I mentioned above in § 2.3, Murdoch may well "need and use" (TL, 1951, 38) the 'inner life' to facilitate a discussion about concepts such as love, made evident by her example. I would argue that this position does not present a problem to understanding the non-verbalised X; and indeed may even help one to come to terms with love and its mystery. If one cannot reflect about one's thoughts and private experiences in relation to the concept of love, or about private experiences that become one's thoughts, or the person's inner life, one could be disabling access to that very part of a person which might occasion human growth and well-being.

It is baffling that despite so much having been written on Murdoch's philosophical effort to retain a workable concept of inner life as meaningful private experience, combined with that philosopher's own later claim that "we need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central" (gg, p. 45), no-one to my knowledge has argued that Murdoch might be interested to preserve such a form of the inner life in order to reintroduce love to philosophy.[99] Murdoch saw that a philosophical respect for the private thoughts or inner life of the individual, as meaningful and requiring attention, opens the way for a discussion about love.

3.4 A note on Murdoch's philosophical technique (for love)

[99] However, Troy Jollimore certainly benefits from an untroubled conception of the inner life in relation to his treatment of "love for and between *persons*" (Jollimore, 2011, xii): "My approach to understanding this kind of love involves the thought that the essential characteristic of such love objects is their possession of an inner life—loving, indeed, is in large part the longing to somehow come into contact with that inner life." (Jollimore, 2011, xii) Jollimore thinks that "love is, in a very real way, a kind of perception, a way of seeing the world" (Jollimore, 2011, xi) and yet is not troubled by his own observation: "Seeing one thing always means not seeing something else." (Jollimore, 2011, xi) Jollimore can embrace the inner life as essential to love relationships between people, at least partly because he is not so concerned that we must seeing everything, or see accurately, in order to love; blind spots are an integral part of love's vision.

In this section I shall develop the argument that in both 'Thinking and Language' (1951) and in 'The Image of Mind' (1951), Murdoch is similarly concerned with developing a philosophical technique by which love might be more effectively treated by philosophy. I shall argue that the aspects of technique in which Murdoch is interested all involve indirect suggestive communication, by which to treat love, such as: (1) Mentioning love in examples (as discussed in § 1.3 and § 3.1 above); (2) the 'technique of elicitation' (as discussed or shown in § 2.2, § 2.3, § 2.5, and § 3.2, above); and (3) the use of metaphor (which I discuss in this section below).

Murdoch's early training and experience as a philosopher was predominantly that of a linguistic philosopher at Oxford from the late 1940s through to the early 50s. That Murdoch would seek to establish a solid position on language before she takes on her major philosophical concerns is somewhat conventional in the terms of the linguistic philosopher. A typical *rationale* for the linguistic philosopher in 1950s Oxford could be that since we are actually doing our philosophy in language, we must first understand language and the role language has in the investigation of our ideas.

> What I have just been talking about is how we can characterise or describe the activity of private thought. For if one is tempted to look at language as part of the content of such a thought, one must first consider the technique of description which is available for such a study." (TL, 1951, 39)

The Joint session on 'thinking and language', at which Murdoch presented her first published philosophical paper, provided Murdoch with the perfect opportunity to argue for her first major philosophical position. This is part of recognising the inner life or private thought as philosophically meaningful, and it also part of Murdoch's larger concern to treat the concept of love seriously, which involves metaphor.

Murdoch is interested to justify the use of metaphor as a legitimate descriptive technique for the philosopher. Partly this is because of her view that certain aspects of the inner life, such as thought prompted by love, are best expressed by some metaphor or picture that grants greater public access to what this particular thought is like. However, this is also because Murdoch thinks that "language is fundamentally metaphorical" (TL, 1951, 40) and that we naturally resort to metaphor when it is difficult to describe something. Love is a difficult subject about which to talk, and so often people talk around it rather than go straight to what is the truth of it (for them). This might be because the thoughts summoned to enliven or relive the truth of it causes the interlocutor acute pain. Or this might be because the interlocutor is afraid that the feelings so important and fundamental to their life will be unintelligible to another person. Murdoch makes the point that we resort to metaphor especially when we find something extremely difficult to describe. I suggest that for many people love might be a difficult about which to talk, and that therefore it is not surprising to find that Murdoch develops a position on language as fundamentally metaphorical. I shall then argue that Murdoch presents a picture of language by which philosophy might use metaphor to discuss love in a perfectly acceptable way.

Murdoch is troubled by the fact that philosophy neglects love, and that this is connected to the idea that love is commonly seen to be a matter of private experience. One's thoughts about love may more often than not be said to be private thoughts. This is precisely why the particularising phrase "society of two" might elicit thoughts about love in Murdoch's interlocutor, whereas the more generalising phrase "limited societies" probably will not elicit those thoughts about love. So, in her investigation of how one might "characterise or describe the activity of private thought" (TL, 1951, 39), Murdoch suggests language:

> For if one is tempted to look at language as part of the content of such thought, one must first consider the technique of description which is available for such

> a study. I have suggested that we have a technique which we use naturally, as a part of our ordinary living, and that there seems to be no good philosophical reason for abandoning it. One should rather attempt to investigate it and make it if possible more accurate." (TL, 1951, 39)

So, what does Murdoch do to attempt to make her technique more accurate, and how does this relate to her example of love? I conclude that Murdoch is continuing to build on the "profound and suggestive technique" (IM, 1951, 129) which she finds in Marcel (as discussed in § 2.5 above), which involves indirect communication about difficult subjects. Murdoch's technique for love can be seen to involve examples, elicitation, and now the use of metaphor. Indeed Murdoch endorses the resort to metaphor in an ordinary sense, as "the method of investigation, which will involve a study, a developing and vindicating of our ordinary and familiar linguist habits" (TL, 1951, 42).

3.5 Enemies of love: A note on convention and neurosis

I argued above in § 3.3 that Murdoch's defence of the inner life, one's experiences of private thought, serve to open the way for a philosophical treatment of love. I also argued in § 3.4 that Murdoch's understanding of language as fundamentally metaphorical, particularly in connection to her position on language in relation to private thought, also provided for an articulation of our thoughts about love. I shall now show how the concept of love is connected to thought in relation to problems of language, as described in 'Thinking and Language' (1951). I shall begin by drawing attention to Murdoch's later claim that convention and neurosis are enemies of love.

In 1959 Murdoch boldly claims: "The enemies of art and morals, the enemies that is of love, are the same: social convention and neurosis." (S&G, 1959, 216) The linguistic philosopher, whose concern is language and its capacity to occasion understanding or wisdom,

might also think that 'the enemies of love', convention and neurosis, are the enemies of language. So here, with Murdoch in 'Thinking and Language':

> We know too what it is like for thought to be stifled by a conventional description, or for a verbal summary to replace a memory image. Experience of this kind may lead to neurotic or metaphysical views about language ('consciousness is the gaps in the language') where it is thought of as a coarse net through which experiences slip. ('Thought seeks the unique, language gets in the way.') (TL, 1951, 34-35)

The substitution of the word 'love' for 'thought' in this quotation may be illuminating (Murdoch's first '*mention*' of love occurs only lines earlier). Think of how love is 'stifled by conventional description', and of how we might say that because love 'seeks the unique, language gets in the way'. Note also the appearance of 'convention' and 'neurosis' long before they became 'enemies of love' (in 1959); here they are pictured as damaging thought. I think Murdoch has established in her mind a meaningful connection between thought and love. Such a connection occurs sometime between 'Thinking and Language' (1951) and 'The Sublime and the Good' (1959). What kind of thought is so synonymous with love that it suffers comparable affliction? Such thought is a key to her philosophy. Should we attempt to render our thought (philosophy) lovingly, and what would this sound like? If love inspires thought, then could it be the case that true thought can only be rendered, in a sense, lovingly? Here we are coming closer to a study of motivation, and to Murdoch's exploration of consciousness. I would argue that the intimate connection made between 'love' and 'thought' is not merely one of comparable obscurity or metaphysical emptiness. Murdoch's selection of two pointed concepts sharpens our focus on love through thought. Convention *does* stifle love just as it stifles thought; and yes, neurosis is as harmful to a loving relationship as it is to communication, to an understanding between people fostered by language. The concepts of neurosis and convention are properly in place with exacting regard to love and thought, held together by the

integrity of the particular. In this view thought is for love precisely what love is for thought, each grows by the other, and so they each suffer similar vulnerabilities. In this area treating concepts like people, rather than like facts, may yield better connections.

3.6 Conclusion

I conclude that Murdoch is not merely developing a philosophical technique by which to treat the concept of love as a central concept in her philosophy, but that her technique is already in part developed. I have shown how Murdoch consistently mentions the word 'love' in her earlier work in such a way, in comparable passing allusions, as to generate an awareness of love as being of particular and prime importance. I have also shown how prevalently love features in Murdochian examples, where it need not feature for the example to serve its overt purpose. Murdoch's covert purpose in this early work is to put love into the mind of her interlocutor. The reason Murdoch, at this early point in her career, puts love (both the word and the elicited concept) into examples, and often into examples taken from novels, is to protect the concept of love from being philosophically debunked at this early stage. By demonstrating the expression of love in written form, and by using these examples in a philosophical context, Murdoch has proven discreetly that it is possible to mention love. I conclude that Murdoch's interest in the philosophical technique of Marcel, together with her investigation of linguistic behaviourism, show a philosopher already attempting to work on love while coming to terms with the philosophical fashions of her time. I conclude that even in Murdoch's very earliest work prior to her book, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953), the philosopher is primarily concerned with constructing the kind of philosophy by which the concept of love may occupy a central position.

Chapter 4

Problems with Love in *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953)

4.0 Introduction

In *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist (1953)* Murdoch moves beyond her passing allusions to love hitherto made in her previous work. The examples which picture situations of love to explore other philosophical issues, and the elicitation of love by associated images and concepts (e.g. family bonds, particular types of communication, appeals to what is important to most people in day to day living, etc.), are also for the most part absent. That is to say, what I have hitherto argued are the primary and unorthodox philosophical methods by which Murdoch creates awareness of love as her central point of interest (as studied in chapters 1 – 3), are not employed to the same degree. Murdoch decides instead, in her first book-length work, to broach the subject of love more directly. She does this by a brief but strong form of criticism in relation to Sartre's representation of love; and this will the subject of the following chapter.

In § 4.1, 'Sartre's popularity, and Murdoch's attraction to him', I argue that Sartre's popularity as a philosopher (at the time her first book, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist (1953)*, was published), combined with his study of consciousness and his willingness to discuss love, accounts for Murdoch's attraction to Sartre; where Sartre is seen by Murdoch both as an ally and a target.

Then in § 4.2, 'Murdoch on Sartre's representation of love', I discuss Murdoch's account of Sartre's representation of love, as it appears in *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953). I show that Murdoch identifies three main problems with Sartre's representation of love, and

that she presents these problems by critical implication rather than in direct statements of criticism. I discuss each of these three problems of love in the order that they appear in Murdoch's account of Sartre's representation of love.

In § 4.3, 'The problem of Sartre's popularity: Love's failure', I argue that Sartre's popularity is of a piece with what Murdoch sees as problems of love which are endemic to personal relationships of her day. I discuss what I take to be Murdoch's central criticism of Sartre's thought on love, which she calls his "imaginative solipsism" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129). I argue that, for Murdoch, Sartre's reflections on love picture the ego-centric enemy (of love); and that this, together with Sartre's popularity, makes Sartre her ideal public philosophical target.

Then in § 4.4, 'Conclusion: A summary note on 'Hegel in Modern Dress'' (1957), I conclude by making a note on Murdoch's review of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (1943; 1995), '*Hegel in Modern Dress' (1957)*, published four years after *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist (1953)*. I note that Murdoch's thought on Sartre remains pointedly consistent four years later; with one exception: Murdoch opens a clearer way for positive philosophical reflection on love, when she suggests that love between people may well be more fruitful than Sartre could ever possibly admit.

4.1 Sartre's popularity, and Murdoch's attraction to him

Sartre's popularity as a philosopher, together with the fact that Murdoch produced the first book-length philosophical study of Sartre in English (which was also her first book), provides us with clue to how Murdoch approaches the problem of love at this time. Murdoch also offers us another clue:

> Philosophers are not often popular idols, and works of philosophy rarely become guide-books to living, during the philosopher's lifetime. In the twenty years after the war Sartre was probably the best-known metaphysician in Europe, best-known that is not just among professional thinkers (many of whom ignored him) but among young and youngish people who, for once, found in philosophy, in his philosophy, the clear and inspiring explanation of the world which philosophers are generally supposed to provide. (SRR, 1953; 1987, 9)

I have already identified love, or more exactly the problems experienced in love relationships, as accounting for the greater part of Murdoch's interest in existentialist thought (as I have discussed in § 1.2, § 1.3, and § 1.4, above). That Murdoch is particularly interested in the existentialist novel, in which love relationships can be seen in all their so-called 'gruesome' detail, is of a piece with her philosophical interest: problems of love, as they occur, between particular people in particular situations. For this reason Murdoch almost wistfully laments that fact that Sartre stopped writing novels: "By now the metaphysician has said his final farewell to the messy accidental world of the novel, so full of encounters and moral conflicts and love." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 21) Let us note the content Murdoch puts into the form of the novel (in relation to the thought of Sartre).

Sartre's popular appeal on the continent to an audience far broader than that which consists only of academic philosophers, together with the lack of serious philosophical attention his writings received in Britain, meant Sartre's work was pliable enough to be of great use to Murdoch. Sartre's popularity, whereby his philosophical work reaches an audience beyond that of trained philosophers, could effectively carry Murdoch's philosophical attempt (that of making the concept of love central to one's philosophy) to that same audience.

Murdoch has already identified that the practical need – for attention to love – is the same as the philosophical need: in that she has examined problems in human relationships of love in the existentialist-type situation, and she has identified this as particular to the spirit of her time (as discussed in § 1.2, § 1. 3, and § 1.4, above). The idea of reaching out, as a

philosopher, to many people (not just philosophers), producing "guide-books to living" (see main quote above) and loving, is an important one for Murdoch (who wrote many novels). Although at times Murdoch is severely critical of Sartre (as I shall discuss later in this chapter), there are also many elements in Sartre's work with which she has great sympathy, and which lie extremely close to her own philosophical ambitions. This includes what Murdoch credits as Sartre's successful attempt to write a philosophical novel: "*La nausée*…is one of the very few unadulterated and successful members of the genre 'philosophical novel'. It is unique in Sartre's work, and I think in literature generally…" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 12) Sartre's popularity not only reflects Murdoch's own philosophical ambitions, which involves reaching that wider audience, but is also symptomatic of what Murdoch sees as a central problem (that of love of people for other people) touching the plight of the human individual.

Murdoch's philosophical attraction to Sartre is also related to what Murdoch wants to do and achieve, as a philosopher, in philosophy. As I mentioned above, the practical and the philosophical need, in Murdoch's eyes, are the same: the individual needs love as much as philosophy does (from Murdoch's point of view). Murdoch sees that linguistic analysis needs details of irresolvable conflict, needs depth in characters, and all of these qualities Sartre's characters and philosophy possess. For example, the human person represented in linguistic analysis does not tend to fall in love.[100] The central problems in linguistic analysis involve working out what language does and means, and not, for example, searching for philosophical or moral guidance about whether or not to commit a sin – of which language arguably may not even play a part. Linguistic philosophers might consider the work of Sartre in the same light as they do the concept of love, and similarly neglect it. This makes Sartre the perfect choice for Murdoch's first critical engagement. Murdoch can strike a sympathetic note in criticising her

[100] Compare Murdoch: "The 'world' of *The Concept of Mind* is the world in which people play cricket, cook cakes, make simple decisions, remember their childhood and go to the circus, not the world in which they commit sins, fall in love, say prayers or join the Communist Party." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 78-9) This sums up Murdoch's attraction to Sartre, as compared to British linguistic philosophy.

target but at the same time validate certain concepts, such as love and consciousness, as requiring philosophical attention.

Murdoch would not be the first person to choose the subject of her first major work, in her case the existentialist thought of Sartre, as much on the basis of what can be resourcefully criticised as that by which one is impressed. Moran points out that it is "not unusual for even the greatest polemics to proceed through some unfairness toward what they attack, indeed to draw strength from the very distortions which they impose upon their targets" (Moran, 2012, 181) Moran likens Murdoch's representation of Sartre's thought to a "good caricature of a person's face" (Moran, 2012, 181) In the case of Murdoch, making Sartre the target allows her to strike a sympathetic note to then-contemporary British linguistic philosophers, while at the same time instantiating concepts such as love, or the intensely private character of the individual's consciousness, as possibly central to philosophical enquiry.

> It is patent that what many readers of Sartre find in his writings is a portrait of themselves. A likeness is always pleasing, even if one is not handsome; and to be told that one's personal despair is a universal human characteristic may be consoling." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 111)

Murdoch is philosophically attracted to Sartre, even though she is unmistakably critical about Sartre's presentation of love, the concept which I argue is most important to her. Murdoch's primary philosophical attractions to Sartre lies in the latter's treatment of the individual as a particular, and in his philosophical attempt to describe the consciousness of this individual. Sartre's philosophical efforts in this area, as read against those of linguistic behaviourism, are for Murdoch far more attractive, philosophically, in that they at least approach the human being as somewhat difficult to delineate.[101] Sartre provides Murdoch with

[101] Murdoch mentions that "Bing and Nothingness is a very long and almost totally Hegelian work concerning the nature of human consciousness – a subject which no longer exists in British philosophy." (HMD, 1957, 146)

the perfect philosophical target, in that she can criticise his philosophy in some respects while affirming other aspects of his philosophy, such as his attempt to describe consciousness:

> Is Sartre attempting the impossible: a description of 'consciousness' which reveals a universal structure, and at the same time does justice to the unstable nature of what is described? On the latter point, it is curious how far, in a superficial sense at any rate, Sartre succeeds. The flickering nature of our actual thoughts and awarenesses, the way in which we move from 'subjective' to 'objective' apprehensions, which was dramatically presented in *La Nausée*, is more systematically dealt with in *Being and Nothingness*, and we are forced to recognise ourselves in the often unnerving picture. (HMD, 1957, 148)

Murdoch is philosophically attracted to Sartre's study of consciousness; and practically she is attracted to his popularity. The study of consciousness can become the study of love. We have already seen Murdoch fighting just for existence of 'the inner life' (see § 3.4, above), in the context of linguistic behaviourism, in order to clear a philosophical way for the concept of love. Sartre presents no issues here, with his study of consciousness; Sartre is quite willing to discuss love. Murdoch is attracted to the fact that Sartre, as a philosopher, can describe consciousness; she is attracted to the fact that he can discuss love (neither of which she can do effectively in linguistic philosophy). However Sartre's consciousness itself is not perhaps congenial to loving other well, and so we find Murdoch critical of Sartre on love (as will be discussed further in § 4.3, below). Murdoch is attracted to (a) his success in writing a philosophical novel, (b) his success as a philosopher in reaching a wider public than merely that of other philosophers, and (C) his success in identifying with and representing what might be seen as the spirit of his time. Sartre's popularity and Murdoch's attraction to him results in her first book-length philosophical work, in which Murdoch, in her study of Sartre's thought, also can scrutinise consciousness and even discuss a Sartre's representation of love.

4.2 Murdoch on Sartre's representation of love

Murdoch makes a sustained approach to the concept of love in a single passage toward the end of *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953) (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129 – 131), in which she presents her own critical account Sartre's analysis of love. This is the first time Murdoch presents, explicitly and in print, a critical account of love as a concept which warrants philosophical attention. The only other time Murdoch makes her focus on love explicit, in her philosophical work until this point, occurs in her radio talk on Simone Weil, '"Waiting on God": A Radio Talk on Simone Weil' (1951) (see my discussion in § 1.6, above). It is also the only time in her work, as far as I am aware, that Murdoch registers the possibility that love can be defined—Murdoch, curiously, refers to Sartre's account "as a definition of love" (SRR, 1953; 1987,130). The notion that the concept of love could be sensibly discussed, let alone defined, would have seemed perverse – or at best naïve – to many philosophers working alongside Murdoch at Oxford in the 1950s. Murdoch presents herself as a philosopher critical of the way in which Sartre perceives love, thereby provoking thought about the possibility of an alternative conception of love. She does not yet chose to provide any such alternative. Murdoch identifies three problems in relation to Sartre's representation of love; and I shall show, in this section below, how Murdoch presents these as problems of love by critical implication rather than in direct statements of criticism.

Mary Warnock states (a) that *Being and Nothingness* "shows itself to be central to the existentialist tradition" (Warnock, 1989, xiii), and (b) that "it would probably be agreed that anyone who is an existentialist must adopt the view that men are free" (Warnock, 1989, xiii). She maintains that "Sartre's insistence upon the vast and indeed almost limitless extent of human freedom is equally central to existentialism" (Warnock, 1989, xiii). Then, significantly,

Warnock points out: "There are notorious difficulties, perhaps particularly for Sartre, in the reconciliation of this extended sphere of human freedom … with the deterministic account which he gives in *Being and Nothingness* of the inevitable frustrations of love" (Warnock, 1989, xiii). Warnock recognises that problems of love are connected not only to the central existentialist project of Sartre, which concerns the recognition and role of an individual's freedom, but also to the central text of existentialism. Earlier, in 1953, in the first serious book-length study of Sartre's thought to appear in English, Murdoch identifies the same problems as Warnock – even using the same word 'frustration' in relation to love – when she discusses Sartre's portrayal of particular interpersonal relationships:[103]

> We can never sufficiently respect the liberty of the other: we cannot co-operate wholly in his freedom, or *make* him free, and yet short of that we constitute opaque obstacles in the world….Sartre analyses love as a particular case of this frustration." (SRR, 1953; 1987,129)

I have discussed the idea that the existentialist's freedom is connected as a central concept to that of love by Murdoch, as it is to what might be seen as the failed human love relationships of the existentialist type, in § 1.1, above. I based this discussion – about the existentialist's freedom in relation to human love relationships – on Murdoch's first reference to the word 'love' (in any of her works): where "loves and hates are seen to be discontinuous with the selves that may or may not go on affirming them" (NM, 1950, 107). One problem, for existentialist-type love relationships, is that each individual lives and must live in the (free) reality that (a) they may be abandoned by the one they love at any time; and (b) they may abandon the one they love (or loved) at any time (as discussed in § 1.1, above). How, then, do

[103] It is tempting to say that Murdoch's *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953) may have influenced Warnock, in regard to the latter's connection of the "almost limitless extent of human freedom [that is, Sartre's idea of 'human freedom'] equally central to existentialism" (Warnock, 1989, xiii) to "the inevitable frustrations of love" (Warnock, 1989, xiii). If we admit Murdoch's influence to Warnock in this way, then we might also suggest that Murdoch may have succeeded in making "the inevitable frustrations of love" a matter of central concern in philosophical discussion about Sartre.

two people decide when to have children, or when to build a house together? This is the kind of question Murdoch brings into focus, in 'The Novelist as Metaphysician' (1950) (her very first piece of philosophical writing). In § 1.1 (above) I discussed the existentialist's so-called 'freedom' precisely in relation to how Murdoch begins her account of Sartre's representation of love, in *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953)—that is, in relation to the very first sentence of that account: "Love is one of the forms under which we pursue stability of being." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129).

Murdoch then continues her account of Sartre on love, where she identifies three main problems in relation to the expression of love. Murdoch suggests, in regard to Sartre's representation of love, the following: (1) "Reciprocal love….is precarious, if not impossible" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129); (2) "as a definition of love it [Sartre's representation of love] is curiously abstract" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130); and (3) "There is no suggestion in Sartre's account that love is connected with action and day to day living" (SRR, 1953;1987, 130-31).

The above three problems are introduced by Murdoch, along with her whole account of Sartre's frustrated love, with what I take to be Murdoch's primary – or central – criticism of Sartre's representation of love ('central', in that it relates directly to all three problems of love mentioned above). Murdoch sees, in Sartre's thought about love, an expression of what she calls an "imaginative solipsism" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129). I shall discuss this Murdochian charge of "imaginary solipsism" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129) as the main subject of chapter 4, below. Let us now examine these three Murdochian problems of love one by one, as she introduces them, in her account of Sartre's representation of love.

Murdoch first points out that love, as mentioned above, "is one of the forms under which we pursue stability of being" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129), and such a view leads us directly to Murdoch's first problem of love: "Reciprocal love….is precarious, if not impossible" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129). Why is that love which is shared between two people, each loving the other

in a similarly endearing way, seen as barely possible? Murdoch explains that for Sartre 'stability' is to be found in "the steady adoring gaze of the lover, caught in which the beloved feels full, compact and justified" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129). That feelings of self-justification are the result of another's attention suggests (a) a self-centred orientation to the that the loving gaze; and (b) that Sartre's focus on 'stability' refers to stability in one's own sense of self (as distinct from stability in a human love relationship). Murdoch might see and even agree how a self-centred view of one's relationship of love may be unstable, with or without the idea of the existentialist's freedom.[104] The mere fact that we cannot even know all of another person could also mean that we can't be provided with certainties from them.

We have already seen Murdoch positively insist that other individuals are mysterious to us (as discussed in § 2.3 and § 2.4, above); and we have seen how impressed Murdoch has been with the endurance (a form stability) of Simone Weil's continuous loving gaze on God (see § 1.6, above). In both these cases (Murdoch on Marcel and Weil, as just mentioned above), Murdoch emphasises that love be viewed as respecting some kind of external reality as independent from oneself. Might Murdoch imply that "stability of being" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129) could be found, then, if one is content to continually look with love in the direction of the beloved (without thoughts for oneself)? This is not possible either; for the beloved may not continue to present themselves as a love object (unlike the God, if one has the belief in God). In her description of Sartre's representation of love, dramatic colour is also added by referral to the self-centred demands of the lover for "a similar returning gaze" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129), that is, for the return of that "the steady adoring gaze of the lover" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129). Relationships of love, in Murdoch's account of Sartre, are doomed either to "sadism or

[104] That is, the 'existentialist's freedom' in relation to love, as discussed in paragraphs one and two in this section, and also in § 1.1, above.

masochism" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130) because the demands of the lover are demands for attention; as distinct from the demands one might make upon oneself in an effort to see others.

Murdoch first problem with Sartre's representation of love lies in the fact that destabilising demands are made for the wrong reason (for the self); and not simply that reciprocity apropos of love is seen to be unstable on account of our insufficient knowledge of another person. We have already seen that (in § 1.6, § 2.3, and § 2.4, as mentioned above) Murdoch is philosophically interested in love as a mode of looking away from the self; but even this still might not guarantee our so-called "stability of being" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129). However, if one would look to see (another) rather than look for attention (from another), one might yet produce a greater sense of stability than the over-demanding lover; and in this way one might even be able to decide when to have children, or to buy that house. That reciprocal love is 'precarious' may be admitted; but by continuing with the stronger expression "if not impossible" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129), Murdoch suggests: (a) that we might give philosophical attention to this problem about whether reciprocal love is possible (for many may want and indeed believe in the possibility of reciprocal love); and (b) that looking at reciprocal love for oneself – seeking "stability of being" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129 – may be part of its impossibility.

Murdoch's second problem with Sartre's representation of love is that "as a definition of love it is curiously abstract" (SRR, 1953, 1987, 130). That Murdoch is critical of the abstract nature of Sartre's representation of love is implied by her use of the adverb 'curiously'. Murdoch takes Sartre's predilection for abstraction as a serious fault, as possibly inimical to a proper regard for the human situation (this would apply *a fortiori* in regard to situations of human love). The last sentences of *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953), indeed, the final word of the same, attest to the seriousness with which Murdoch sees the problem of abstraction in the thought of Sartre:

> His inability to write a great novel is a tragic symptom of a situation which afflicts us all. We know that the real lesson to be taught is that the human person is precious and unique; but we seem unable to set it forth except in terms of ideology and abstraction. (SRR, 1953; 1987, 148)

I mentioned that it is the adverb 'curiously' that makes it certain that Murdoch is in fact being critical of Sartre, in that it implies that a better representation of love than that of Sartre would perhaps be more concrete. Instances of Sartre's apparent abstraction apropos of love can be observed in the following phrases from Murdoch: "Sartre presents love…as a dilemma of the imagination" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130); "Sartre's lovers are each engaged in perpetual speculation about the attitude of the other" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130) and "their struggle is not an incarnate struggle" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130). Murdoch says that what "each one seems to crave, according to Sartre, is that he should be imaginatively contemplated by the other" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130). Murdoch's account of Sartre's representation of love implies that thinking is part of the problem, that when one is thinking about the other they are abstracting themselves from that person, or a love situation. Murdoch would somehow prefer to see an "incarnate struggle" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130) in love; a real-life physical dilemma represented, rather than "a dilemma of the imagination" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130).

This leads us on to consider (a) Murdoch's third problem with Sartre's account of love; and (b) Murdoch's philosophical interest in the novel as congenial to offering concrete descriptions about situations of love. Murdoch's third problem in regard to Sartre's representation of love is that there "is no suggestion in Sartre's account that love is connected with action and day to day living" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130-31). A little later Murdoch implies that Sartre's abstract lovers, who we have seen contemplate, imagine, and speculate (as discussed in this section, above), could be 'saved' by "by their involvement in a communal world of action" (SRR, 1953; 187, 132). That is, lovers might be rendered more concrete and more attentive to an external reality: "Love is not futile, not because we live it more

imaginatively but because we live it more externally." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 132) Murdoch suggests that an engagement in the world of action could serve to help Sartre's lovers, in a way similar to how it would help Sartre's account of love, realise "that the human person is precious and unique" (see main quote above). But Sartre and his representative lovers eschew this possibility, according to Murdoch, "their imaginings are conceived as selfish inertia". (SRR, 1953; 1987, 132).

Sartre's "inability to write a great novel" (see main quote above), according to Murdoch, may be connected to these shortcomings in his representation of love; that is, in the way Sartre looks at love as both a philosopher and a novelist. Murdoch is philosophically attracted to the novel because it can present human life, and human love, in a life-like drama full of concrete details which tell the reader something, but never in an exhaustive fashion (the novelist could always add another telling detail). I have already shown that Murdoch's philosophical attraction to the form of the novel is related to her interest in love, and that she is particularly interested in existentialist characters and situations in this regard (see § 1.1, § 1.3, and § 4.1, above). Sartre, though so different from Murdoch in regard to his philosophical regard for love, nonetheless appears as an ally to her; in that she can philosophically explore problems of love. That Murdoch can also criticise Sartre's representation of love allows her to distinguish herself from him, in terms of her central area of interest (love). Murdoch may aspire through her work on Sartre all the more, as a philosopher, to put certain things better—in a philosophy of love which teaches us that "the human person is precious and unique" (see main quote above).

4.3 The problem of Sartre's popularity: Love's failure

Murdoch makes a certain direct criticism of Sartre's thought, almost as an introduction to her own account of Sartre's representation of love. I take this to be Murdoch's primary and central criticism related to Sartre's representation of love, in that the three main problems Murdoch identifies in Sartre's representation of love (those I discussed in § 4.2, above) can be understood in relation to this criticism. Murdoch charges Sartre with "imaginative solipsism" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129). All three of these Murdochian problems of love can be read in the light of this central criticism: (1) 'reciprocal love' is "precarious, if not impossible" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129); that (2) Sartre's "definition of love…is curiously abstract"; and that (3) there "is no suggestion in Sartre's account that love is concerned with action and day to day living" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130-31) can all be seen, in Murdoch's view, as part of Sartre's "imaginative solipsism" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129):

> …Sartre's solipsistic view of meaning raises difficulties…He isolates the self so that it treats others, not as objects of knowledge certainly, but as objects to be feared, manipulated and imagined about. Sartre's is not a rational but an imaginative solipsism. (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129)

The above comments about "Sartre's solipsistic view of meaning" (see main quote above) sets the scene for Murdoch's account of Sartre's representation of love. Murdoch's charge of 'imaginative' solipsism might be understood in relation to what Murdoch would like the imagination to do (held up against what Sartre, in her view, doesn't do) in relation to love of others. Murdoch would like one to look with love at others, in such a way that we may know them better; and yet also know they are mysterious to us (as discussed in § 1.4, § 2.3, and § 2.4, above). In relationships of love between people, Murdoch values the attempt to imagine the other (for example, what they have been through; how they are feeling; et cetera); such an attempt might produce sympathy or compassion. The use of one's imagination may centre on another individual and their situation, as not being necessarily related one's own situation. For Murdoch, the more one can see another person as independent from oneself, the better we may

be able to love that person: that is, we might first apply a rigorous effort of attention to really see a person and their situation, and then use our imagination to better understand them in that light (that is, in their own light). Murdoch promotes a view where people are seen as "objects of knowledge" (see main quote above), and part of knowing (and surely loving) somebody else well involves the commonplace notion of 'imagining oneself in their shoes'.

In contrast to the last paragraph above, and in Murdoch's view, Sartre does not treat others as "objects of knowledge" (see main quote above), "but as objects to be feared, manipulated and imagined about" (see main quote above). The key word here is "feared" (see main quote above)—one's own personal fear of another person prompts "imaginative movement" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 132) as "a piece of self-deception, a self-protective dodge of the consciousness" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 131). In this sense, Sartre's "imaginative solipsism" is of a piece with Sartre's fear, which is particularly evident in relation to other people in love relationships. Such a view, which might be seen to entail fear as inimical to love, is frequently expressed by Murdoch throughout *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953; 1987): "Sartre fears, not loves, this notion of a volcanic otherness within the personality." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 78) Murdoch emphasises that Sartre's consciousness of love, which amounts to an attempted description of consciousness in the lovers' situation, "comes from the easily grasped examples of personal conflict" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129). Sartre's "imaginary solipsism" relates to what Murdoch sees as Sartre's fear of other people, and this particular fear is felt most intensely in relationships (conflicts) of love.

Murdoch's charge of "imaginative solipsism" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129) is as applicable to Sartre's major philosophical work, *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre, 1943; 1989) as it is to his

fiction. The reason for this is that in both his philosophy and in his novels Sartre is primarily concerned, in Murdoch's view, in attempting a description of the individual consciousness:[109]

> What Sartre does understand, the reality which he has before him and which he so profoundly and brilliantly characterises in *L'Etre et le Néant*, is the psychology of the lonely individual … The universe of *L'Etre et le Néant* is solipsistic. Other people enter it, one at a time, as the petrifying gaze of the Medusa, or at best as the imperfectly understood adversary in the fruitless conflict of love. What determines the form of this ego-centric and non-social world are the movements of love and hate, project and withdrawal, embarrassment and domination, brooding and violence, fascination and awakening, by which the individual 'takes' his life. (SRR, 1953; 1987, 107)[110]

Murdoch points out that 'imagination' for Sartre "is the 'essential characteristic' of consciousness" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 131); and I have just shown above how Murdoch presents Sartre's consciousness of love as fearfully self-centred (as opposed to other-centred). Murdoch observes that "Sartre presents love…as a dilemma of the imagination" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130); that "Sartre's lovers are each engaged in perpetual speculation about the attitude of the other" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130). Murdoch concludes her own account of Sartre's representation of love with the following: "There is no suggestion in Sartre's account that love…is other than a battle between two hypnotists in a closed room." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130-31) I have also just suggested above that Murdoch's central charge of "imaginative solipsism" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129), particularly in regard to human relationships of love, is at heart the view that Sartre cannot imagine (or doesn't try to imagine) others as real, in the sense that the so-called 'loved other'

[109] Compare Murdoch in 'The Existentialist Political Myth' (1952): "Sartre concentrates attention of the individual consciousness, and its immediate mental behaviour, and what emerges is a non-historical, non-social, and non-determined individual. A solipsistic picture." (EPM, 1952, 134)

[110] Compare this Murdochian view of *L'Etre et le Néant* (see main quote) with that in Murdoch's review of the first English translation of *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre, 1943; 1989), expressed fours year later: "The enormous metaphor [that is, *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre, 1943; 1989)] certainly tells us a lot about Sartre's own obsessions and evaluations, which we may see no reason to share. The picture is exceedingly egocentric. Our existence as historical entities and as members of society is quickly shuffled aside. Our 'fundamental dilemma' is seen as that of solitary being. Values have a solipsistic basis in the vain attempt of each consciousness to be *causa sui* – and even other individuals exist ultimately as threats or instruments." (HMD, 1957, 149)

is seen as independent from that consciousness by which they are perceived—in this respect, apropos of Sartre's lovers, Murdoch observes that "their imaginings are conceived as a selfish inertia" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 132). At this point one may see that Sartre's "imaginary solipsism" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129), for Murdoch, is clearly of a piece with Sartre's "ego-centric and non-social world" (see main quote above).[111]

In regard to "the relation of Sartre's people with each other" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 87) (that is, in regard to Sartre's fictional characters as they appear in novels), Murdoch states: "The tragic and magnetic unattainability of the loved other is not presented…" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 87). This 'loved other' might have helped to pull the individual away from their egocentric fears and preoccupations, really looking at another person (in a continuous 'magnetic' attraction), on account of the mystery of love (as discussed in § 2.4, above). But Murdoch also notes that "it is in Sartre's ruthless portrayal of the failure of sympathy that we often most feel his penetration and honesty" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 87); and such 'honesty' is seen by Murdoch as "psychological acuteness" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130) in regard to Sartre's representation of love. This so-called 'failure' of sympathy indicates that other failure, once again, to first see others as they are, before one then might make an imaginative effort to move toward them (and their reality). Significantly, Murdoch does not deny the truth of Sartre's so-called 'picture': "Other people, on Sartre's picture, appear as unassimilated parts of oneself. The death-struggle of one consciousness with another (a favourite topic of existentialist fiction) does, of course, exist. (HMD, 1957, 149)

Murdoch's charge of "imaginative solipsism" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 129)) entails a lack of one's imaginative effort to see and understand the human person as "precious and unique"

[111] Compare Murdoch: "Sartre, like Freud, sees life as an ego-centric drama; 'the world is my world' in that it is shaped by my values, projects and possibilities." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 124) In 'Hegel in Modern Dress' (1957), Murdoch makes the observation that we learn "a lot about Sartre's own obsessions and evaluations" (HMD, 1957, 149), where "even other individuals exist ultimately as threats or instruments" (HMD, 1957, 149). Such observations lead Murdoch to conclude, simply: "The picture is exceedingly egocentric" (HMD, 1957, 149).

(SRR, 1953; 1987, 148) in their own light. Sartre's own consciousness, as implied by Murdoch, is crippled by fear of the reality of other people (who attempt to strip Sartre of his freedom).[112] Sartre, like the characters from his fiction, abstracts himself from the reality of loving another person (simply, really) as that other person: "It is on the lonely awareness of the individual and not on the individual's integration with his society that his [Sartre's] attention centres….The individual is the centre, but a solipsistic centre. He [Sartre] has a *dream* of human companionship, but never the experience. He touches others at the fingertips." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 62-63). Sartre provides Murdoch with a clear picture (practically and philosophically) of the kind of consciousness which leads to the failure of interpersonal relationships of love; for "when action involves choosing between worlds, not moving in a world, loving and valuing, which were once the rhythm of our lives, become problems". (SRR, 1953; 1987, 75) For Murdoch, if the lover is prepared to really see the loved other, then the former does not need to choose between worlds (my world or your world) because the two lovers may move in a world together (that neither possesses); and this is what Murdoch, as a philosopher, hopes to prepare us for—"moving in a world, loving and valuing" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 75), together.

The popularity of Sartre's ego-centric concerns, combined with his "psychological acuteness" (SRR, 1953; 1987, 130) in regard to the damage done to interpersonal relationships of love by the expression of such egocentric concerns, no doubt made Sartre attractive to Murdoch. Part of Murdoch's attraction to Sartre is positive: Sartre, at least, as a philosopher, treated consciousness (which can be variously called the 'inner life', or 'mental phenomena') as real;[113] and he even discussed love in his treatment of that consciousness (as I discussed in § 4.1, above). In this sense Sartre can be seen as Murdoch's philosophical ally, in that his

[112] Compare Murdoch: "The conclusion of *Huis Clos*, and one message of *L'Être et le Néant*, is that *l'enfer c'est les autres*, hell is other people, all men are enemies, an expression of desperate or insolent solipsism which left no place for love or duty or the complex network of ordinary morals." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 14)

[113] This contrasts favourably for Murdoch with linguistic philosophy, in that "linguistic philosophers (in their early phase) took as real the facts of science and everyday life; they regarded as unreal the world of art, politics and religion, emotion, fantasy and dream." (SRR, 1953; 1987, 76)

philosophy and fiction provided Murdoch with philosophical access interpersonal love relationships the central problem area. However, Murdoch takes what she finds to be Sartre's egocentric expression of the individual's consciousness of love, together with that individual's conviction that they must be free (as discussed in § 1.1 and § 4.2, below), as a central problem (concerning love) in the society of her day. Sartre provides Murdoch with an ideal public philosophical target: a philosophical description of the enemy of love presented as consciousness; "the fat relentless ego" (OGG, 1969, 51); this is what Murdoch seeks to publically attack and will keep attacking, as a philosopher, in the hope that we may love each other less selfishly.

4.4 Conclusion: A summary note on 'Hegel in Modern Dress' (1957)

In conclusion I shall quote from Murdoch's review of the Barnes' translation of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, 'Hegel in Modern Dress' (1957), written four years after *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953). This review appears as a condensed version of Murdoch's prior work on Sartre; and as such Murdoch's criticisms of Sartre are remarkably consistent with *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist (1953)*. However, we also receive a fuller extended note of Murdochian optimism, not yet fully revealed in the Sartre book of 1953. This note of optimism involves an alternative view to Sartre on love:

> But if we believe that love is not necessarily fruitless, and that the apprehension of value, in personal relations, in society, and also in art, is connected with the ultimate and difficult apprehension of other persons and things as independent and real, then we are implicitly appealing to a conception of 'being' other than that which Sartre presents. (HMD, 1957, 149)

The view "that love is not necessarily fruitless" (see quote above) reveals Murdoch's philosophical expectations regarding love; those expectations which had remained implicit in

her criticisms of Sartre's thought in *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist (1953)*. These expectations of love are also implicit in Murdoch's earlier work on the existentialist's situation, which involves problems of love in human relationships, as made manifest in existentialist novels, through a study of existentialist characters (as discussed in chapter 1).

One also finds a similar significantly bright note on love in Murdoch's radio talk on Simone Weil (WG, 1951), as I discussed above (see chapter 1, § 1.6). Murdoch presents Weil's thought on love as applicable to this existentialist-type situation, where we have found so many problems in relation to love and love relationships. Simone Weil, like Murdoch, connects love "with the ultimate and difficult apprehension" (see main quote above) of that which "independent and real" (See main quote above). In Weil's case, love is primarily but not exclusively the love of God; whereas Murdoch is more interested (than Weil) in the fruitful application of love "in personal relations, in society, and also in art" (see main quote above). Murdoch's philosophical expectations for love – as expressed in the above quote, and as also seen in her criticisms of Sartre (as discussed in this chapter, above) – are also expressed in her presentation of Simone Weil's thought on love (as discussed in chapter 1, § 1.6). These expectations are precisely informed by Murdoch's reflection "that love is not necessarily fruitless" (see main quote above), when "the apprehension of value, in personal relations, in society, and also in art, is connected with the ultimate and difficult apprehension of other persons and things as independent and real" (see main quote above).

Such great expectations are part of Murdoch's attempt to make love central to (her) philosophy. When Murdoch says that "we are implicitly appealing to a conception of 'being' other than that which Sartre presents" (see main quote above), she is also saying that it may be possible (but difficult) to love others "as independent and real" (see main quote above). That is, one's love for another person might not be seen exclusively in relation to one's personal project, in the sense that one's love relationship is self-centred (as opposed to other-centred). I

conclude that this is exactly what Murdoch has been doing in much of her criticism of Sartre (and indeed in much of her earlier philosophy, on existentialist thought and otherwise)—"implicitly appealing" (see main quote above) to the idea that love is of central philosophical importance.

Chapter 5

Murdoch's First Philosophical Hints toward Love (1956)

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter I shall discuss Murdoch's first positive philosophical suggestions about the concept of love. These occur in her first explicit move into moral philosophy, with her paper 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956). That part of the paper most directly relevant – of course, all of Murdoch's work is relevant – to my investigation, as that which positively concerns what I argue is Murdoch's progressive attempt to centralise the concept of love in her own philosophy, begins half way through the paper (VCM, 1956, 86-95). Indeed, from that point where Murdoch says: "I leave my negative argument…" (VCM, 1956, 86), she then moves straight on to consider "whether there are not positive and radical moral conceptions which are unconnected with the view that morality is essentially universal rules" (VCM, 1956, 87). I shall show below how Murdoch takes love to be one of these "positive and radical moral conceptions" (VCM, 1956, 87); and I shall argue that Murdoch's long-standing preoccupation that love receive proper philosophical attention is one of the main motivations for her turn to moral philosophy.

'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956) is the place where Murdoch makes clear for the first time, in her own philosophical voice, her vision for a philosophy in which the concept of love is of central importance.[114] Murdoch nonetheless renders this vision by providing us with

[114] Justin Broackes says: "It was with this paper that Murdoch, I think, finds her voice." (Broackes, 2012b, 29) I take the main feature in Murdoch 'finding her voice' to be that of revealing, for the first time in her own philosophical voice, her serious interest in the concept of love (in contrast to presenting this interest indirectly through other thinkers). Broackes summarises 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956): "Murdoch contrasts, one the one hand, the moral philosophy of Hare and others that puts 'choice' at the centre (whether it be 'choice' of 'moral principles' or the taking of a particular practical decision), with, on the other hand, views that treat morality

a series of hints about love. There are four of these positive philosophical hints about love in all; and one finds in them Murdoch's first philosophical suggestions (in her own voice) that the concept of love has some kind of philosophical role to play. In order to bring out the full character of these suggestions as clearly as possible, I shall narrow my discussion of 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956) more strictly to those particular parts of Murdoch's paper which bear more directly on love (that is, where she mentions 'love' as a philosophical hint). I shall focus less on her peripheral objections to certain philosophical trends—for example, Murdoch objects to the idea "that ethics must be neutral analysis or nothing" (VCM, 1956, 98), where such a position may preclude a discussion of love in ethics, if one holds that discussion about love cannot be neutral.

One might say, and see, that these are only hints of love; and one should not read too much into them as such. However, when one studies closely how Murdoch presents them, as it were, 'progressively' (as I mentioned above) – like so much of her groundwork related this attempt to make love a concept of central importance in philosophy – in order to release (and reveal) an emerging picture of how a love-centred philosophy might work. These so-called 'hints', taken together in this way, have a strong cumulative effect. The effect is almost one of producing in miniature much of Murdoch's love-centred philosophy: both looking backwards to her engagement with existentialism, and looking forwards to her marriage with Plato in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), both made for and by love as a concept of central philosophical importance. For this reason I shall discuss these Murdochian hints toward a philosophy, wherein the concept of love is central, in the order in which they appear.

as a matter of 'vision'. (Broackes, 2012b, 23) Murdoch puts vision (not choice) first, in the title of her paper, which in a way symbolises how Murdoch is attempting to say what she really thinks first. Murdoch has long regarded the connection love has with vision as a positive and central moral force, at least since her 1951 radio talk on Simone Weil (as discussed in chapter 1, § 1.6, above). Broackes, looking forward, points out: "One sees in it ['Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956)], almost fully formed, though it is Murdoch's first publication in moral philosophy, many of the more ambitious themes of *The Sovereignty of Good*, advanced with care, control, and brio." (Broackes, 2012b, 24)

In § 5.1, ‘Murdoch’s first hint: The ‘connection of Knowledge with love’, I discuss the reason Murdoch may have to first connect love to knowledge as her first hint for love; and in so doing I discuss what, for Murdoch, characterises knowledge when it is connected to love. Then in § 5.2, ‘Murdoch’s second hint: Humility, then love’, I discuss Murdoch’s second philosophical hint about love, where the expression of love is connected to humility, which I connect to Murdoch’s concern for character (in the sense of whether one has good ‘character’ or bad; and in the sense that ‘characters’ exist in novels).

In § 5.3, ‘Murdoch’s third hint: The naming of ‘love’ as an alternative concept’, I discuss the first time Murdoch actually names ‘love’, in her own philosophical voice, as a concept of central philosophical importance, in that the concept of love might positively sustain one’s participation in moral practice and moral philosophy. In § 5.4, ‘Murdoch’s fourth hint: Deepening the concept of ‘love’, I discuss Murdoch’s fourth and final hint, which comes in the form of a footnote. In her footnote, Murdoch employs ‘love’ as an example of a concept which we may ‘deepen’, and also suggests that we can use a concept effectively without using the word for that concept. I discuss some implications of this Murdochian in regard to how one may then read – and how we have been reading – Murdoch’s earlier philosophy.

I conclude in § 5.5 that, Murdoch – with each progressive philosophical hint toward love as a concept of central importance to (her) philosophy – in ‘Vision and Choice in Morality’ (1956), reveals to us important features of her philosophical vision for love. These philosophical hints toward Murdoch’s vision of love, brief though they be, shed as much light on our understanding of Murdoch’s first works (for example, those early works on existentialism, as discussed in chapter 1, above), as they do on our understanding of her later philosophy in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970).

5.1 Murdoch's first hint: The 'connection of knowledge with love'

Murdoch's first philosophical hint toward love, in her first piece of so-called 'moral' philosophy, connects love to knowledge:

> I want to now consider whether there are not positive and radical moral conceptions which are unconnected with the view that morality is essentially universal rules. I have in mind moral attitudes which emphasise the inexhaustible detail of the world, the endlessness of the task of understanding, the importance of not assuming that one has got individuals and situations 'taped', the connection of knowledge with love and of spiritual insight with apprehension of the unique. Such a description would in fact roughly fit types of moral attitude in other ways very dissimilar; certain idealist views, certain existentialist views, certain Catholic views.* (VCM, 1956, 87)

> *I regret mentioning without expounding, but to elaborate these themes here would take too long. Miscellaneous examples of the kind of view I have in mind, may be found in [M.] Nedoncelle, *Vers una philosophie de l'amour*; [G.] Marcel, *Etre et avoir*, [J.] Rousselot, 'Synthèse aperceptive et philosophie de l'amour', *Revue de Philosophie* (1910). ([Murdoch's footnote] VCM, 1956, 87)[115]

This is the first time Murdoch says explicitly what she has "in mind" (see main quote above) in terms of a prospective philosophical approach to morality.[116] This kind of approach includes the word 'love' and what she wants to do as a philosopher. The first thing Murdoch does with 'love' is to connect it to knowledge (see main quote above), which is a significant move on her part (as I shall presently discuss). I have argued (in chapters 1 – 4) that Murdoch attempts to generate a love-centred philosophy, and that she has carried this wish with her from her earliest work (her first two radio talks, delivered in 1950). It is not mere co-incidence that

[115] The French titles may be translated as follows: "[M.] Nedoncelle, *Towards a philosophy of love*; [G.] Marcel, *Being and having*, [J.] Rousselot, 'Apperceptive synthesis and philosophy of love', *Revue de Philosophie* (1910)." [my translation]

[116] That Murdoch is clearly moving toward a philosophy of love may be seen in her footnote to the works of other French philosophers, the titles of which I have translated in my footnote, immediately above.

the first time Murdoch hints toward 'love' as a concept of central importance to (her) philosophy, it is (a) in her first piece of 'moral philosophy'; and (b) in relation to knowledge.

In Murdoch's philosophical "connection of knowledge with love" (see main quote above), it is knowledge that comes first. Knowledge (of some kind or other) tends to be the prize, so to speak, for most philosophers. In moral philosophy (as in other branches of philosophy) much of the enquiry involves an assessment of the status of knowledge: for example (in moral philosophy) whether certain types of knowledge are reliable (true), so that one may hopefully make the 'right' choice, based on what is true rather than what is false. We make our choices in accordance with what we know, or what we think we know. The connection of love to that knowledge which is part of one's moral approach, in one way, makes love central to that approach. If all knowledge, which is part of one's moral outlook (how one looks at the world), is connected with love, then love becomes a central concept in one's morality; and this is why the first thing Murdoch does, as she hints toward her own preferred conception of moral philosophy, is to regard (to show us) "the connection of knowledge with love" (see main quote above).

One might say that philosophers tend to pursue knowledge, even in the sense that they love knowledge; but it would seem that not all philosophers pursue love, in the sense that they seek a knowledge of love (and those who do are for the most part moral philosophers and theologians).[117] When Murdoch puts the word 'knowledge' first, she also puts what most philosophers regard as important first. Murdoch, by connecting knowledge to love, prompts

[117] This statement still holds true, even though there are a growing number of analytical philosophers, who concern themselves with a study of love, and who (tellingly) are often keen to emphasise the point that they wish to stay in the analytical tradition. For example, Troy Jollimore, in his 'Preface' to *Love's Vision* (2012), says: "I work in the tradition of analytic philosophy…these [Jollimore's] methods are meant to do what philosophy paradigmatically aims to do, which is to appeal to the reader's reason; but not all of them fall within the narrowly circumscribed bounds of rational proof or rational argument…I have often thought of myself as doing what Wittgenstein suggested philosophers do: painting a picture…I hope that readers will find the picture I offer in this book compelling, enlightening, and true to their own experiences of love." (Jollimore, 2011, xvi-xvii) For other examples of philosophers working on love in the analytical tradition, see, especially: *The Reasons for Love* (Frankfurt, 2004) and 'Love as a Moral Emotion' (Velleman, 1999).

the question: 'What kind of knowledge is connected to love?' Importantly, this "connection of knowledge with love" (see main quote above) is seen by Murdoch as only one of "the moral attitudes" (see main quote above) she has "in mind" (see main quote above). A brief look at the other moral attitudes associated with Murdoch's suggested approach to morality will help us to respond to the above question.

I have shown (above) how Murdoch's first hint toward love makes love a concept of central importance in (her) philosophy, on account of its connection to knowledge. Murdoch also surrounds her "connection of knowledge with love" (see main quote above) with several other "moral attitudes" (see quote above). The first "moral attitudes" to which we are introduced by Murdoch "emphasise the inexhaustible detail of the world" (see main quote above; italics mine) and "the *endlessness* of the task of understanding" (see main quote above; italics mine). These attitudes set the scene for the others which follow, and for our understanding of "the connection of knowledge with love".

Since Murdoch also suggests to us, in this first hint toward a love-centred philosophy, that it is important that we do not assume that we have "got *individuals* and situations 'taped'" (see main quote above; italics mine), let us look at what might happen when love is connected to our knowledge of the individual. Let us also contrast this with what might happen if love is not connected to our knowledge of the individual. The use of an example concerning the human individual, for the purpose of understanding Murdoch's "connection of knowledge with love" is appropriate (as I have implied above). Murdoch introduces us to "individuals and situations" (see main quote above) for the same reason that she introduces us to "inexhaustible detail" (see main quote above) and "the endlessness of the task" (see main quote above): Murdoch encourages us to understand her first philosophical hint about love, the "connection of knowledge with love", in the light of these moral attitudes.

My example will involve a wife (W) who either no longer loves her husband (H), or does not love him as much as she once did. We need to pay particular attention to how W acquires knowledge of H, both with and without love for H. Whether or not that knowledge acquired, both with and without love of the individual, is more or less reliable for moral purposes is another question (although I will touch on this very briefly below). Murdoch's first hint about love (see main quote above) focuses on an approach to knowledge rather than on the knowledge acquired by that approach. Here follows my example to show "the connection of knowledge with love" (see main quote above):

When W first got to know H, she loved him; and as she got to know him more, she even loved him more (which does not always happen). In this period, W wanted to know everywhere H had been, everything H had done, what H thought about this and that, how he felt, what he wanted to do in the future, what he didn't like, what he did, *et cetera*. In short, W wanted to know 'the inexhaustible detail of his world'. W asked a lot of questions, and she always wanted to see H (whenever she could) and to be with H (whenever she could); and, of course, she wanted to know 'the real' H. W, though she wanted to know all of this, was also quite content with the fact that she could not know everything about H. Later, when W no longer loved H (or no longer loved him quite as much), she stopped asking so many questions, no longer wondered what H thought, and no longer wanted to see him, or to be with him as often. In short, she did not really want to know him. Instead, W thought of H as X, Y, and Z. In this sense she had a knowledge of him, but 'the endlessness of her task of understanding' H had ceased. The less W loved H, the less she wanted to know him, and this could be seen in the fact that she did not care to look at him.

In the one case, that where knowledge is connected to love, we keep looking and looking, increasing our knowledge of the individual, understanding more. In the other (sad) case, when love is not connected to our knowledge of the individual, our task of understanding

does not appear so endless (on the contrary: we offer the minimum of our attention); we no longer want to know 'the details', and so we do not concern ourselves to look at them. In this sad case, it may suit one to assume "that one has got individuals and situations 'taped'" (see main example above), and by doing so stop the (at times difficult) task of looking to see—in the case of the individual, seeing who a person really is, which leads to one having knowledge of that person. The focus in the above example involves a positive form of love. Of course people can love each other, and fight while loving each other, and this situation may not lead to the moral effort to know the individual (that kind in which Murdoch interested in the main quote, above). However, the point of my example to provide a concrete illustration of what Murdoch suggests in her first philosophical hint toward love (which is quite abstract).

Whether or not W, who goes to such great efforts to see and know H, when she loves him, thereby acquires a reliable (true) knowledge of H is unsure. The zeal with which W, with love, attempts to know H (asking questions and seeing him as much as she can) perhaps increases the likelihood of true discoveries about H. Additionally, W's continual effort, involved in her loving attempt to know H, possibly provides her with opportunities to correct or alter her knowledge of H. In contrast, not enquiring or looking at H at all (for whatever reason, with or without love for H), perhaps leads to a greater likelihood of what is commonly called 'getting a person wrong', and certainly, one would think, offers less recourse to rectify this situation.

I conclude that Murdoch makes her first philosophical hint toward love about "the connection of knowledge with love" (see main quote above)) in order to connect love to what is traditionally central to philosophical enquiry (knowledge). That Murdoch's first suggestion, in her own philosophical voice, for love's connection with knowledge occurs in her first piece of moral philosophy, is not mere co-incidence. Moral philosophy allows Murdoch to contextualise her philosophical regard for knowledge with what she calls "moral attitudes" (see

main quote above). These “moral attitudes” (see main quote above) suggest in themselves the way one might reflect with love, as an endless task of understanding, with attention to detail (though we can’t see them all). Murdoch then places the individual in close proximity to her “connection of knowledge with love” (see main quote above) in order to suggest an important practical application of this kind of philosophical approach, in which love is as central as knowledge. In her first philosophical hint toward love, Murdoch suggests that we apply such an approach to our regard of the individual. If one looks with love, one just might see more.

5.2 Murdoch’s second hint: Humility, then love

Murdoch’s second philosophical hint toward love appears in the form of a question:

> Why should attention to detail, or belief in its inexhaustibility, necessarily bring paralysis, rather than, say, inducing humility and being an expression of love? (VCM, 1956, 88)

This hint toward love builds upon her first philosophical hint toward love (discussed in § 5.1 above). In Murdoch’s question we immediately recognise “the inexhaustible detail of the world” (VCM, 1956, 87), by which she introduced her first philosophical hint toward love, connecting love to knowledge. The ‘paralysis’ of which Murdoch speaks (see main quote above) may be seen in relation to Murdoch’s observation that we “do continually have to make choices” (VCM, 1956, 88). Murdoch’s question pictures “the inexhaustible detail of the world” (VCM, 1956, 87), one might say, from the perspective of two different characters (people). To understand Murdoch’s question (see main quote above), it might help us to see its content through the eyes of these different characters, whom I shall call character B and character C (or, B and C), in the following example:

Character B pays so much "attention to detail" (see main quote above) that, in the end, he does not know what to do. B knows that there is always something else to be considered, yet puts his choice off. There are so many relevant details! B, who is full of doubts, wants to make the right choice; but he is paralysed by fear of making the wrong choice. Character C pays so much attention to detail that, in the end, he realises that he can only do his best; and that this may or may not be good enough (for making the right choice). C knows that there is always something else to be considered, and accepts this as so. C, who is full of doubts, wants to make the right choice; and he does this (makes his choice) as best he can.

This example pictures two different human responses to the same situation, in that both characters are confronted with "the inexhaustible detail of the world" (VCM, 1956, 87). Each character may be said to apply "attention to detail, or belief in its inexhaustibility" (see main quote above) to this situation in which they find themselves. One might notice an acceptance of one's situation (possibly a form of humility) which results in a positive sense of striving (possibly a form of love) in C, which is absent from B; whereas one might see a fear in B which results that is absent in C. For B, "attention to detail, or belief in its inexhaustibility" renders him unable to act or chose; yet, in regard to C, the same conditions humble him and allow him to act with his doubts (perhaps even with love, though my present discussion has not yet established this).

At this point one might consider Murdoch's long-established interest in character building, specifically in relation to 'the existentialist hero' (which I have discussed in relation to Bernard Rieux in § 1.4, and also in relation to Simone Weil in § 1.6, above). One might look back at Murdoch's observation about T. E. Lawrence (and consider her subsequent question about T. E. Lawrence carefully; as I have discussed in chapter 1, § 1.6, above): "Lawrence is an existentialist hero because he was a man of action who kept his doubts alive. (Compare Rieux in Camus' *La Peste*.) Should he be taken as the model of the 'good man' for this age?"

(BEA, 1950, 124) I have shown how Murdoch is particularly interested in the notion of an existentialist hero who, despite their situation of not knowing and being full of doubts, strives to love whatsoever and whosoever in any case. This accounts for much of Murdoch's interest in – and presentation of – the character and thought of Simone Weil; as discussed in § 1.6 above. Murdoch's question, that is, her second philosophical hint toward love (see main quote above), provides us with a hint not only about the kind of conditions in which we might find ourselves, but also contains a suggestion about how we might respond to these conditions. The suggestion is that we might respond with love.

How might "attention to detail" (see main quote above) be "an expression of love" (see main quote above)? I have discussed this in my example about how the wife (W) is interested in the details of her husband (H) and his life, as an endless task, when she loves him; but when her love for him lessens or ceases, so does her attention to these details of her husband (see § 5.1 above). However, in Murdoch's question (see main quote above), there is also a new development, in that the concept of humility has been added – almost as a pre-requisite, or some kind of co-existent quality – to "an expression of love" (see main quote above). How might "attention to detail" (see main quote above) induce humility and be "an expression of love" (see main quote above)? The suggestion almost seems to be that one first realises humility, and then an expression of love.

Murdoch's question certainly suggests the option that one may simply be humble in the face of what they do not know. The more one looks at the detail, the more one sees, and the more one believes that they cannot see it all; and so the humbler one becomes.[118] The "expression of love" (see main quote above) lies in one's continued interest in the detail, be

[118] Murdoch, a few passages before asking her question (what I take to be her second philosophical hint toward love; see main quote above), suggests: "The are other people whose fundamental belief is that we live in a world whose mystery transcends us and that morality is the exploration of that mystery in so far as it concerns each individual." (VCM, 1956, 88) One such person is the French existentialist philosopher, Gabriel Marcel, whom I discuss in relation to Murdoch's interest in love as a concept of central philosophical importance (with particular attention given to how the concept of 'mystery' relates to that of love), in chapter 2, above.

that the details of a person or the details of the world, despite having been humbled by an inability to know. From a position of humility, one might look at a person or the world with fresh open eyes, simply, wanting to see what is there; and in this sense such an effort to see might be seen as vision with love. When we love someone or something, we really want to see them, or it. In the humble knowledge that we do not know, such an effort to see in order to know may on occasion require little effort (in situations of untroubled love, where a positive form of love seems present in high degree, one is prompted by this love); but one also suspects the effort is often great (without quite so much positive love naturally present). This is what Murdoch suggests in her question (see main quote above), when she wonders about "attention to detail…inducing humility and being an expression of love" (see main quote above).

I have just looked back to Murdoch's early philosophical interest in character building (in this section, above). We have seen that in 1950 Murdoch is already interested in the philosophical possibility of an existentialist hero, as one who has the capacity to love in action despite their doubts, and who might also be seen as the 'good man' for Murdoch's age. To conclude, and to further understand how Murdoch's second philosophical hint toward love can be seen as development of her first hint toward love (see § 5.1 above), I shall now look forward to *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970). I have shown above how the concept of humility has been added to Murdoch's second philosophical hint toward love, as a concept of central importance, for (her) philosophy. I shall conclude by shifting my focus to another Murdochian character, this time looking forward to a philosophical character in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970):

> The good man is humble … And although he is not by definition the good man perhaps he is the kind of man who is most likely of all to become good. (SGOC, 1967, 100-101)

The remarkable thing about "inducing humility and being an expression of love" is that it captures a large part of Murdoch's final sentence in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) (see main quote above). *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) is that piece of philosophy where Murdoch explicitly calls for a philosophy in which the concept of love is centrally important: "We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central." (OGG, 1969, 45) Of course Murdoch does make love central to *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970); but only insofar as it is related to her so-called 'Good'. In short (not to be led away from our current concern), Murdoch is interested in how good love might help us (practically and philosophically). For this reason, Murdoch must looks at ways in which love might be refined into good love. Murdoch wants her existentialist hero not just to love, but to love well (as I have discussed in relation to Rieux in § 1.4, above). In the lead-up to her conclusion of *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), Murdoch asks: "But is there not something about the conception of a refined love which is practically identical with goodness?" (SGOC, 1967, 99)

I conclude that Murdoch's notion of "inducing humility" (VCM, 1956, 88) is a hint which leads us on to a positive "expression of love" (VCM, 1956, 88), for the same reasons as Murdoch suggests in her conclusion to *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970): "The humble man, because he sees himself as nothing, can see other things as they are." (SGOC, 1967, 101) Murdoch develops a philosophical relationship, for moral purposes, between love and humility (as she has in what I take to be her second philosophical hint toward love); and she often presents this through character. Murdoch is philosophically interested in how we might love each other well, so it is not surprising to find Murdoch connecting her "refined conception of love" (SGOC, 1967, 99) to "the humble man" (SGOC, 1967, 101) at the conclusion of *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) fourteen years later.

5.3 Murdoch's third hint: The naming of 'love' as an alternative concept

Murdoch's third philosophical hint toward love develops similar ideas (as those of her first and second hints, as discussed in § 5.1 and § 5.2 respectively, above) about why love should be considered as a significant part of one's (philosophical) approach to moral life; only this time Murdoch names 'love' explicitly:

> There are, however, moments when situations are unclear and what is needed is not a renewed attempt to specify the facts, but a fresh vision which may be derived from a 'story' or from some sustaining concept which is able to deal with what is obstinately obscure, and represents a 'mode of understanding' of an alternative type. Such concepts are, of course, not necessarily recondite or sophisticated; 'hope' and 'love' are the names of two of them. And there are doubtless some people who direct their whole lives in the latter way. (VCM, 1956, 91)

Murdoch puts forward 'love' as a philosophical candidate for the "sustaining concept which is able to deal with what is obstinately obscure" (see main quote above). This is not the only candidate suggested, she also names 'hope'; but I shall come back to this shortly (in that I think that 'love' is the only real candidate suggested, and that 'hope' is mentioned for a different reason). The need for "some sustaining concept" for difficult moral situations, where one cannot see clearly the whole picture (for whatever reason), is again the situation in which we find ourselves (see § 5.1 and 5.2 above). Such a situation, as we have seen, is of a piece with Murdoch's interest in the existentialist-type situation, as being indicative of the kind of problems individuals face (in her day) (see chapter 1). Murdoch has been concerned with existentialist-type problems of love, which seem to occur at least partly on account of the existentialist's response to this situation, which might be phrased: 'One is free to choose, and one must be free to choose' (see chapter 1, § 1.1). Murdoch makes the simple suggestion,

although the background to her suggestion is complex, that love might have a positive moral function (for the individual) in difficult "moments when situations are unclear" (see main quote above).

Whether these "moments when situations are unclear" (see main quote above) are those between two lovers, political decisions, or philosophical problems, thinking with love might help to sustain one's thought for long enough, in the right way (looking with care to see), to produce the best response possible. It may not be the right response, but it may still be the best possible. Such an application of love to moral problems is not in conflict with objectivity, but rather brings in an element of care to objectivity. One cares more (with love) about the facts that they are observing, and so one will continue to look at them, most likely understanding better (and always with a benevolent spirit). With love placed at the centre of moral deliberation in this way, Murdoch thanks that we are more likely to (a) see what's involved in whatsoever problem, and (b) respond to the problem benevolently (humbly: being prepared to change one's view, or to be corrected, and even with compassion, where required).

I intimated earlier that 'hope' was not a real contender for the "sustaining concept which is able to deal with what is obstinately obscure" (see main quote above). When looks back from 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956) to Murdoch's earliest philosophy, and then forwards to *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970), it would appear obvious that Murdoch is interested in 'love' as that important "sustaining concept" (see main quote above). Even the fact that Murdoch puts 'hope' first, in front of 'love' (see main above quote), I ascribe to her philosophical caution on account of love. If Murdoch only says 'love', her suggestion of love becomes stronger and as such more likely to be rejected or attacked, outright, by those philosophers who have a predisposition to do so. Murdoch takes the focus off love in order to keep it philosophically 'safe', so to speak, as one suggestion of two. Murdoch chooses 'hope' carefully for this

purpose, as it neither threatens 'love' as a rival concept, nor detracts from love's potential impact as a philosophical suggestion.

That 'hope' is a philosophical lightweight compared to 'love' might be felt, if one compares the idea of a 'philosophy of hope' to that of 'a philosophy of love'; the latter seeming far more substantial in its scope and robust in its application (to the rigours of the world), than the former. That love is more robust than hope can be seen in instances where one's love might persist, on and on, in the most difficult circumstances; yet one's 'hopes' can be quickly dashed (unless of course they are informed by one's love).

In 'Vision and Choice in Morality' Murdoch also mentions "a fresh vision which may be derived from a 'story'" (see main quote above), as something which might help us in the midst of difficult, 'unclear', 'obstinately obscure', situations.[119] Indeed, such a story might help in a way that "a renewed attempt to specify the facts" (see main quote above) could not. One might think here of how, in moments when lovers are locked in argument (disagreement) about something that 'happened', an exact repeat of the facts involved does not usually help them into moral accord. But looking at the fact differently, or perhaps looking (even with love) at a different story behind the facts, can shift the focus in way that makes an accord possible (without falsifying the facts involved). The so-called 'story' might simply be to imagine (again in the context of the individual lovers) just 'what happened' to that other individual, and one of course could enquire of them to help oneself in this pursuit (if they were present). Love keeps our vision 'fresh' precisely because of our continual attempt to see (which is what we do when we look with love), that helps, to see the "inexhaustible detail of the world" (VCM, 1956,

[119] For a philosophical work full of reflections about love, and which provides an example of the kind of philosophical vision (with love) which Murdoch endorses, see Raimond Gaita, *A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love and Truth and Justice* (1999). This philosophical work is also full of 'stories'; see especially Gaita's story and reflections about a particular nun, and her behaviour toward patients at a psychiatric hospital (Gaita, 17-27). Gaita has worked at the hospital as ward-assistant in early 1960s (when he was seventeen). The "patients were judged to be incurable" (Gaita 1999, 17) and lived in abhorrent conditions (Gaita 1999, 17-18). Gaita reflects: "In the nun's case, her behaviour was striking not for the virtues it expressed, or even for the good it achieved, but for its power to reveal the full humanity of those whose affliction had made their humanity invisible. Love is the name we give to such behaviour." (Gaita 1999, 20)

87); and for this reason Murdoch finally names 'love' as her "sustaining concept" (see main quote above) in moral philosophy and practice alike.

5.4 Murdoch's fourth hint: Deepening the concept of 'love'

Murdoch's fourth philosophical hint toward love is a direct development from her third, and in both these hints Murdoch calls our attention to the word 'love' in inverted commas. This is probably significant, when one considers that Murdoch only uses the word 'love' four times in her paper, 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956).[120] The third time Murdoch mentions 'love' (the third hint) in her paper is when she names 'love' as an alternative concept, by which one might proceed in moral life and philosophy (as discussed in § 5.3 above). Then, in her fourth philosophical hint toward love, Murdoch is again considering her alternative concept; but this time she mentions 'love' in a well-placed footnote:

> …freedom here will consist, not in being able to lift the concept off the otherwise unaltered facts and lay it down elsewhere, but in being able to 'deepen' or 'reorganise' the concept or change it for another one.* On such a view, it may be noted, moral freedom looks more like a mode of reflection which we may have to achieve, and less like a capacity to vary our choices which we have by definition. I hardly think this is a disadvantage.
>
> * In certain cases, whether we speak of deepening or of changing a concept will be a, not necessarily unimportant, question of words. When we deepen our concept of 'love' or 'courage' we may or may not want to retain the same word. [Murdoch's note] (VCM, 1956, 95)

[120] The four times Murdoch mentions the word 'love' in 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956) corresponds to what I have described in this chapter as her four 'philosophical hints toward love'. In her first and second hints, Murdoch says 'love' without inverted commas; but in the third and fourth hints Murdoch puts the word 'love' in inverted commas.

In her footnote (see main quote above), Murdoch employs 'love' as an example of a concept which we may 'deepen' (I shall discuss the context of 'courage' later on), and she also suggests that we can use a concept effectively without retaining the use of the conventional word for that concept. This footnote tells us very little about love; but it tells us a lot about Murdoch's approach to her own philosophical work. This footnote tells us explicitly that, according to Murdoch, one might be discussing – or 'deepening' – a concept (for example, the concept of love) without necessarily naming it by one particular word (for example, 'love'). It also shows us that Murdoch may have a central focus on the concept of love, without using the word 'love'. This so-called 'deepening' of a concept involves attention to detail; it involves a sustained and perhaps prolonged effort to see everything that constitutes that concept.[121] One might discuss the concept of love, for example, without using the word 'love'; and in so doing one might offer a convincing argument (or picture) for how love is of central importance to the human individual. Such a notion has important ramifications for how we are to read Murdoch's earlier philosophy, especially in relation to her expression (and non-expression) of the word 'love', as distinct from her philosophical expression of the concept of love (which may be expressed and 'deepened' by using many different words, without necessarily using the word 'love').

In her third philosophical hint toward love, Murdoch puts forward 'love' and 'hope' (presenting two alternative concepts) as candidates for a "sustaining concept which is able to deal with what is obstinately obscure" (VCM, 1956, 91). I argued that, although there are two apparently arbitrary candidates, Murdoch puts forward the candidate of 'love' as the clear winner (see my discussion in § 5.3, above). In her fourth philosophical hint toward love,

[121] One might expect that 'deepening' a concept, which involves being open to the variety which can meaningfully be included within its scope, may well render that concept more difficult (if not impossible) to define (in the way that words are defined in the dictionary). This is one aspect of what makes Murdoch's philosophical enquiry concerning love, which 'deepens' the concept of love, distinct from the dictionary's definition of love.

Murdoch again puts forward two concepts: ‘love’ and ‘courage’. This might again create the impression of an arbitrary selection, in that consideration of either concept will serve Murdoch’s purpose (to state how one may ‘deepen’ a concept without retaining the conventional word for that concept). However, as was the case in Murdoch’s third philosophical hint toward ‘love’ (where only ‘love’ is a genuine contender for Murdoch’s alternative concept; see § 5.3, above), Murdoch’s selection of ‘love’ remains pertinent to her own philosophical work. In Murdoch’s fourth philosophical hint toward love, ‘courage’ is not presented merely as an additional alternative to ‘love’ (as in the third hint; see § 5.3, above), but partnered with ‘love’ as an example of another concept which we may ‘deepen’.

I mentioned above that ‘deepening’ a concept involves attention to detail; and perhaps for Murdoch part of ‘courage’, especially when partnered with ‘love’, is being able to continue to look at the detail. In her first hint, Murdoch associates love with “the inexhaustible detail of the world” (VCM, 1956, 87), when she suggests the “connection of knowledge with love” (VCM, 1956, 87) (as discussed in § 5.1, above). In her second hint, Murdoch suggests that “an expression of love” (VCM, 1956, 88) could result from one’s “attention to detail” (VCM, 1956, 88), and that this might be a better response than fear which brings “paralysis” (VCM, 1956, 88) (as discussed in § 5.2, above). Perhaps ‘courage’ (for Murdoch) comes in to partner ‘love’ at this point. It takes courage to keep on looking (with love) at all of the details, in one’s particular situation, in order to see that reality (independently of ourselves). This is the kind of courage that impressed Murdoch so much, in 1951, about the moral effort of Simone Weil in relation to the concept of love (see my discussion in § 1.6, above). That Murdoch has clearly ‘deepened’ both concepts (‘love’ and ‘courage’) in partnership with one another, later on in

The Sovereignty of Good (1970), would also suggest that there is nothing arbitrary about their pairing in 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956).[122]

There is also a second suggestion, in this little footnote, about love (see main quote above); and because the suggestion is oblique (even by Murdochian standards) I shall be very brief about it. I shall just present it; for further reflection and to respect the context of the footnote (rather than to affirm or deny that the suggestion is valid, or that it is even present). The main text to which Murdoch's footnote is attached concerns the concept of freedom (see main quote above). This 'freedom' is that of linguistic philosophy which, according to Murdoch, "displays the moral agent as rational and responsible and also free; he moves unhindered against a background of facts and can alter the descriptive meaning of his moral words at will" (VCM, 1956, 77-8). The centrality of freedom in this moral picture, combined with an emphasis on the importance of choice, is comparable to that in existentialism. Murdoch's suggestion about love in her footnote is two-fold (possibly because it is so oblique): (1) Murdoch might hint that one could replace the concept of freedom with that of love as a central concept (the suggestion is partly based on the precision of the footnote's placement at the end of the phrase: "…or change it for another one" (see main quote above); (2) Murdoch might hints that one could "'deepen' or 'reorganise' the concept [of freedom]…for another one [possibly love, given Murdoch's reference to deepening 'love' in the footnote]. This suggestion (either version), concerning the concept of freedom and that of love, might be applied either to existentialist thought or to linguistic philosophy, which, in Murdoch's case, would be part of its appeal.

[122] Compare Murdoch in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970): "…we may be able to learn more about the central area of morality if we examine what are essentially the same concepts more simply on display elsewhere. I mean such concepts as justice, accuracy, truthfulness, realism, humility, courage as the ability to sustain clear vision, love as attachment or even passion without sentiment of self." (SGC, 1967, 86-7) In this respect, one might consider Murdoch's conclusion that Simone Weil "was a very brace thinker" (WG, 1951, 16). In 1951, Murdoch is certainly interested in Simone Weil's "courage as the ability to sustain clear vision" (SGC, 1967, 87), in partnership with Simone Weil's own thought on "love as attachment or even passion without sentiment or self" (SGC, 1967, 87). For these and related reasons, Murdoch presents the character of Simone Weil as a real-life example of an existentialist hero (see my discussion in § 1.6, above).

When Murdoch mentions the word ‘love’ for the fourth time (see main quote above), in ‘Vision and Choice in Morality’ (1956), she offers us a clear hint about how we may read her philosophy in relation to the concept of love. In this light I presently offer a reading of Murdoch’s earlier philosophy (from 1950 – 1956), where I claim that Murdoch is in a sense ‘deepening’ her concept of love, in her attempt to make the concept of love centrally important to (her) philosophy. I offer this reading even in light of the fact that Murdoch makes precious few references to the word ‘love’ in the period from 1950 – 1956 (this fourth philosophical hint toward love being one of those precious few references).

I have argued in prior chapters that Murdoch often elicits the concept of love rather than naming it by use of the word ‘love’. I showed in chapter 1 how Murdoch mentioned the word ‘love’ once in the conclusion to ‘The Novelist as Metaphysician’ (1950) (as discussed in § 1.1, above), in order to point forward to her central area of interest: problems of love experienced by characters in existentialist-type situations (as discussed in § 1.2, § 1.3, and § 1.4, above). Then, in chapter 2, I showed how Murdoch again only refers to the word ‘love’ once, at an important point in her text (as discussed in § 2.1, above); but that Murdoch nonetheless elicits the concept of love – without using the word ‘love’ – as one of central philosophical importance in regard to her own philosophy and to that of Gabriel Marcel (see § 2.2, § 2.3, and § 2.4, above). I also referred to Murdoch’s philosophical treatment of the concept of love – in which the concept of love is at the centre of Murdoch’s focus, despite her infrequent references to the word ‘love’ – as her ‘technique of elicitation’ (see § 2.5, above). In chapter 3, I discussed another single reference to the word ‘love’ made by Murdoch in her first serious philosophical paper, ‘Thinking and Language’ (1951) (see § 3.1, above); and I then showed how Murdoch employed her ‘technique of elicitation’ in order to suggest (‘deepen’) the concept of love, elsewhere in ‘Thinking and Language’ (1951) (see § 3.2, above).

Murdoch's fourth philosophical hint shows us, explicitly, that an infrequent use of the word 'love' does not mean that the concept of love is not of central philosophical interest to Murdoch, or that Murdoch was not already fully engaged in her attempt to make the concept of love central to (her) philosophy (by a progressive 'deepening' of that concept). Indeed, in the light of Murdoch's suggestion – that when "we deepen our concept of 'love' or 'courage' we may or may not want to retain the same word" (see main quote above) – we might add that from 1950 to 1956 Murdoch 'deepened' her concept of 'love', yet often chose not "to retain the same word" (see main quote above).

5.6 Conclusion

In 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956) Murdoch makes her turn to moral philosophy, where she refers to the word 'love' four times. Each of these references to the word 'love' offer us a philosophical hint in regard to the concept of love, and how love might be seen as of central importance to moral philosophy and moral practice. Murdoch hints that a philosophy of love, in which love is connected to knowledge, involves one in an endless task of attention to detail. In moral practice such attention to detail might be made manifest in the kind of attention one offers one's son, or daughter, looking to see as much as possible of their own particular reality (knowing that we cannot see it all, but striving nonetheless to see). Murdoch also hints that 'love' may well be the 'sustaining concept' for moral philosophy (and for the individual) in difficult moments, when one has no clear vision. In her final hint toward a philosophy of love, Murdoch notes that when one 'deepens' one's concept of 'love' one may or may not wish to retain the word 'love'. The implication here is that one may read Murdoch's philosophy, especially her earlier philosophy which appears before 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956) (Murdoch's first piece of moral philosophy) as 'deepening' the concept of love without employing the word 'love'.

In this way, Murdoch lays more groundwork for her attempt to make love a concept of central importance to her philosophy. This latest instalment of her groundwork for a love-centred philosophy, made in her first piece of moral philosophy, also offers her reader a way of interpreting her previous philosophy as a philosophy of love. The fact that Murdoch makes her first explicit suggestions (the four philosophical hints) about the possibility of a love-centred philosophy, in her first piece of moral philosophy, argues the following: That Murdoch made her turn to moral philosophy in accordance with her vision that love is a concept of central importance in (her) philosophy. 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956) clearly sets the scene for her more positive and explicit approach to the concept of love, in moral philosophy, moving forward.

I conclude that (1) Murdoch is still laying the groundwork for her philosophy of love in 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956), and that Murdoch's so-called 'turn' to moral philosophy is of a piece with this purpose; (2) Murdoch's focus on love as a concept of central importance for (her) philosophy is fully developed (otherwise, how could she effectively lay such groundwork, as mentioned above, for her purpose?), even though this vision (of and for love in philosophy) is expressed by philosophical hints rather than explicit statements about love; and (3) that as such 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956) is of a piece with Murdoch's earlier philosophy, where the concept of love may in fact be far more central to her philosophical vision and endeavour than could appear to be the case.

Conclusion

I conclude that Murdoch attempts to make the concept of love central to philosophy, even in her earlier philosophy from 1950 – 1956. This attempt may be seen as part of Murdoch's *raison d'être*, as a philosopher, which is expressed later in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) as her philosophical *dictum*: "We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central." (OGG, 1969, 45) Significantly, such a conclusion suggests that no serious reading of Murdoch's philosophy can afford to ignore the concept of love; even a reading of Murdoch's earlier work, where Murdoch mentions the word 'love' less frequently. Furthermore, I suggest that reading Murdoch's philosophy through this notion – that Murdoch is attempting to generate philosophy in which the concept of love is centrally important – adds coherence to aspects of her work which may seem otherwise disconnected or in academic fields which are far apart (to name but one instance studied in the present thesis: Murdoch's interest in character building, in the context of the existentialist thought, can be connected – by her philosophical interest in love – to her philosophical responses to linguistic behaviourism).

At this point, however, someone might object to this thesis by claiming that I have been 'reading the texts backwards'. They might claim that I have been making inferences about what Murdock is claiming in the early texts based on information from her later texts which focus on love more explicitly. They might continue from this to claim that there is an alternative interpretation of the early texts, which does not claim that finding a place for love in philosophy was Murdoch's main concern early on. They might claim that the focus on love as the central concern was not present in its full form in the period of 1950-56 but was developing more slowly. Perhaps during this period, she didn't see love as having the central importance as she

did later on, or perhaps she did see it as important but had not yet developed her mature account of love.[123]

My response to this concern, firstly, is that my claim is not that Murdoch's earlier philosophy from this period contains her mature account of love, nor that Murdoch's earlier philosophy should be regarded as mature philosophy. My claim is merely that in Murdoch's early philosophy from 1950 – 1956 we can clearly see that love is already of central importance to her, a concern which she continued to develop in her later works. Further, in light of the remarkable cohesion with which Murdoch presents her earlier philosophy, in relation to her philosophical interest in love, I think it is far more likely that Murdoch was 'letting out' (so to speak) her philosophical thought on love slowly and with intent, rather than working more vaguely with love without a clear focus, in which love is seen as centrally important. As we have seen throughout this thesis, many of Murdoch's early pieces are interconnected by Murdoch's passing allusions, which provide hints toward a philosophical development in regard to love. My claim that love is of central interest to Murdoch as a philosopher, and that Murdoch already aims to present a philosophy wherein the concept of love is central, holds true even if Murdoch develops this position in her mature philosophy (which she surely does). Something that could perhaps devalue my claim – that Murdoch attempts to make the concept of love central to her earliest work – would be if love were not central to her mature philosophy, but this is plainly not the case.

That love is very important to the mature expression of Murdoch's later philosophy is even recognised by the primary objection, under the umbrella of which all of these alternative interpretations fall. None of these alternative interpretations claim that Murdoch does not present love as a concept of central importance in her mature philosophy. Indeed, the primary objection, that I have been 'reading the texts backwards', asserts that the opposite is true, in

[123] I am thankful to Dr Iain Law and to Dr Tony Milligan for this objection.

that Murdoch's focus on love is even more explicit in the later work (and with this I agree). What I do not agree with is that because a philosopher's focus on love is more suggestive – or one might say more 'implicit' – in her earlier work, than in her later work, we are *ipso facto* led to infer that Murdoch's interest in love as a concept of central importance to (her) philosophy is diminished. There could be numerous reasons for why Murdoch, as a philosopher, would be cautious (suggestive, indirect, circumspect), at the beginning of her career, about putting love forward explicitly as her central point of philosophical interest.

Some of these reasons are related to the philosophical climate in which Murdoch worked, at the beginning of her career, between 1950 and 1956. In this period there were various strains of philosophy, popular at Oxford, which were either hostile to or uninterested in love, the inner life, or the meaningful moral expression of emotions; instead privileging a scientifically-styled assessment of facts and data. If Murdoch lets out her interest in love slowly and subtly, then she may remain, at least initially, untouched by philosophical hostility toward the idea that love should be central to philosophy. Murdoch might also have less chance of simply being ignored, as she was by R. M. Hare,[124] or not taken seriously. Murdoch develops her interest in love as a concept of central importance through the course of her career, and as such her position on love could not be fully formed in the 1950s. However, despite her sustained philosophical caution toward love, Murdoch nonetheless keeps love at the centre of her focus (even if, and often, with subtle reminders) in her early work. Such caution might even indicate the high degree of importance Murdoch places on her task (to re-introduce love to philosophy). That Murdoch may further develop this focus, and become more explicit in doing so, does not conflict with my thesis: that Murdoch attempts to make love central to her

[124] Justin Broackes, who perceptively considers that "Murdoch's style—allusive, all-embracing, non-aligned in the cold war of analytic and continental philosophy, and, quite simply, *hard*—was going to be appreciated by few without the help of a teacher" (Broaches, 2012b, 7), also makes the observation, when discussing the reception of Murdoch's early philosophy in the 1950s, that Murdoch was ignored by R. M. Hare: "Hare made no reply in print to the criticisms in Murdoch's 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956) and he seems in his publications entirely to have ignored them." (Broackes, 2012b, 8)

philosophy in her earliest work (1950 – 1956). Indeed, if it were the case that Murdoch had sustained a philosophical focus on love as a concept of central importance, from the beginning to the end of her career (as I would argue she has), one would not only expect to see many developments in her thought and expressions about love, but such a focus would render these developments more probable.[125]

Murdoch also, on account of her philosophical caution about presenting love as a concept of central importance (at the beginning of her philosophical career), attempts to promote or contextualize her own work on love through that of other writers. That a writer uses their own articles and reviews on other authors to promote their own area of interest is not an unusual phenomenon. However, that Murdoch does this in relation to love in her earlier philosophy is particularly evident. Murdoch builds on what she has previously said in earlier work, with an allusive style by which she refers to earlier key concepts (usually related in one way or another to the central concept of love). Murdoch's earlier reviews, articles, and radio talks, consistently point her audience toward aspects of love in contemporary contexts of thought. Indeed, Murdoch often discusses is completely fresh material in regard to her English speaking audience, perhaps meaning there will be less prejudice toward its content (love), and more of an open view toward it. Murdoch's work on Gabriel Marcel and Simone Weil involve bringing new English translations to the attention of her audience for the first time; in the case of Simone Weil it was the first time that any of Weil's thought had appeared in English.

[125] We should not forget that it is only 1956 when Murdoch says the following: "There are, however, moments when situations are unclear and what is needed is not a renewed attempt to specify the facts, but a fresh vision which may be derived from a 'story' or from some sustaining concept which is able to deal with what is obstinately obscure, and represents a 'mode of understanding' of an alternative type. Such concepts are, of course, not necessarily recondite or sophisticated; 'hope' and 'love' are the names of two of them." (VCM, 1956, 91) My argument is that Murdoch cautiously – yet with full application of her focus on love as a concept of central importance – presents love through other thinkers from 1950 – 1956, in order to create for herself a context from which she may (confidently) make this kind of claim. Murdoch names 'love' as her candidate for the "sustaining concept which is able to deal with what is obstinately obscure" (see main quote above). For the reasons I do not think Murdoch considered 'hope' a serious candidate, see my discussion of this passage in § 5.3, above. In this early period from 1950 – 1956, Murdoch is cautiously laying the groundwork for such claims about love, rather than discovering such claims closer to the moment of their publication.

Murdoch's book on Sartre, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953), was the first book-length philosophical study of Sartre to appear in English.

This points to a philosopher who is highly selective about who they wish to discuss. My view is that Murdoch's high level of selectivity is of a piece with her deliberately subtle and pointed allusions (typically concerning aspects of love) to her own previous work in this period (1950 – 1956). Murdoch is cautious about what she chooses to publicise in this early period. However, these pieces (mainly on existentialists) are clearly written by an emerging philosopher and novelist with a strong interest in love, and a corresponding sense of purpose, which extends coherently across several texts—the development of which argues against interpretations which assert that love is not so centrally important to Murdoch's earlier work (as it is in the later work).

Murdoch's early focus on the central importance of love can be seen, for instance, when she presents the thought of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone Weil, in the context of existentialist thought. Murdoch did not require Jean-Paul Sartre or the existentialists to see that most people around her were depressingly self-centred, and that this led to problems in love relationships.[126] However, Sartre was very useful to Murdoch in bringing this to the public attention, in the form of philosophical reflection (on both philosophy and literature). It makes sense – on account of her focus on love as centrally important – that Murdoch wrote the first philosophical book on Sartre, *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist* (1953), which was quite critical of Sartre's thought in relation to human love relationships. Murdoch did not require Simone Weil to think that we

[126] Compare Murdoch in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970): "I assume that human beings are naturally selfish....That human beings are naturally selfish seems true on the evidence, whenever and wherever we look at them, in spite of a very small number of apparent exceptions. About the quality of this selfishness modern psychology has had something to tell us. The psyche is a historically determined individual relentlessly looking after itself. In some ways it resembles a machine; in order to operate it needs sources of energy, and it is predisposed to certain patterns of activity. The area of its vaunted freedom of choice is not usually very great. One of its main pastimes is daydreaming. It is reluctant to face unpleasant realities. Its consciousness is not normally a transparent glass through which it views the world, but a cloud of more or less fantastic reverie designed to protect the psyche from pain. It constantly seeks consolation, either through imagined inflation of self or through fictions of a theological nature. Even its loving is more often than not an assertion of self. I think we can probably recognize ourselves in this rather depressing description." (SGC, 1967, 76-7)

should try as much as possible to see the reality of other people, which involves really looking at them as independent beings and merely based on our self-centred concerns, in order to love them better. However, Simone Weil was very useful to Murdoch in providing a fresh philosophical context in which to publicise this kind of idea. It makes sense – on account of her focus on love as centrally important – that Murdoch introduced Simone Weil to an English-speaking public for the first time, and that Murdoch was positive about presenting Weil's thought: where love involves continuous attention to and acceptance of reality, as independent from oneself, even in the face of one's extreme personal affliction.

That Murdoch lets out her own thoughts about love slowly, in an often implicit manner, through her presentation of other thinkers – or that she does not write *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970) in the 1950s – does not conflict with my thesis that Murdoch attempts to make the concept of love central to philosophy, even in her earlier philosophy from 1950 – 1956. This is my response to the objection that I am 'reading the texts backwards' (as mentioned above), that is, that I am reading Murdoch's mature philosophy – where Murdoch is explicit about her wish to make the concept of love central to philosophy – into the earlier texts; with the implication being that I am not seeing the earlier texts for what they really are. I have answered this objection by recourse again to the texts themselves (the main method of this thesis), and by suggesting that Murdoch is quite understandably cautious about love early on in her career, which results in a far more implicit treatment of the concept of love by her (than is the case in her later philosophy).

However, Murdoch's cautious philosophical approach to love does not preclude its importance, nor its status as a concept of central importance to Murdoch. Quite the opposite, this cautious philosophical approach to love argues for that concept's importance for Murdoch (as mentioned above), rather than the other way around. My main claim throughout this thesis has been that from 1950 – 1956 (viewed as the earliest period of Murdoch's philosophical

career), Murdoch attempts to make love a concept of central importance in her philosophy. In this period Murdoch attempts to promote philosophical reflection on love as a serious response, especially to that existentialist-type situation which, according to her, typified the situation of her day.

In light of the above, my response to alternative interpretations (such as those I mentioned above: that in this early period from 1950 – 1956 Murdoch might not have had her later focus on love as a concept of central importance, but this focus was developing slowly; or that Murdoch simply didn't see love as quite so important early on, like she did see it in her later work; or, if she did see love as very important, she had not yet developed her interest in love – as a concept of the central importance – into her mature account of love) is: in regard to Murdoch's so-called 'focus' on love, it is helpful to make the distinction between the idea that Murdoch was 'letting out' (as I mentioned above) her philosophical interest in love slowly, as distinct from developing this interest slowly. The former implies that Murdoch may have a similar focus on love as a concept of central importance, like she has in her later philosophy; but that she holds back much of what she thinks about this, preferring to release her ideas slowly. This means that Murdoch may already have an interest in love as a concept of central importance, but does not wish to declare it as such early on in her career; and so she does not make it fully visible. This is what I take to be the case, as distinct from the idea that Murdoch developed her focus on love slowly, if this were to imply that Murdoch did not yet think of love as a concept of central philosophical importance. My view is that Murdoch did not wish to have her central interest in love known as such; rather than the view that Murdoch did not have such an interest in love, and then arrives at that point of interest later. Of course this does not mean that Murdoch's thought on love did not develop and change during her career. Such developments were the result of her consistent focus on love as centrally important to philosophy; rather than part of a later discovery that she was very interested in love.

In this respect, Murdoch's early interest in existentialism is as integral to her interest in making love a central concept in her philosophy as is her use of Plato in *The Sovereignty of Good* (1970). These two areas of Murdochian interest (existentialism and Plato) can be seen as two different methods by which Murdoch attempts to approach love as her central area of philosophical interest (that is, with a comparable philosophical focus on love). Existentialism provides Murdoch with a general philosophical target area, whereas Plato is employed by Murdoch more as a philosophical supporter (of her ideas about love). I am not suggesting that Murdoch, at the beginning of her philosophical career, exclusively seeks to define herself against existentialism, rather than falling in behind Plato. Murdoch did discover Plato later, and she also had some good things to say about existentialist thought in relation to love. However, people (and philosophers) often tend to find what they are looking for; in Murdoch's case: a target area at the beginning of her career, or a philosophical supporter later on. There is little doubt that Murdoch, early on, is more of a lonely philosophical figure (like Simone Weil) in what might be called 'the good fight for love', than she is later on, when she positions herself as one who is fighting (the same fight) under Plato's "banner".[127] In this sense, in her earlier work, Murdoch almost resembles an existentialist character, or even 'the existentialist hero' whom she is so interested in promoting (see my discussion in §1.4 and §.6).

That Murdoch becomes a humble foot-soldier in Plato's army, as distinct from the existentialist hero, both of whom fight for love as a central concept in philosophy, does not mean that she was less interested in love at the beginning of her career. Murdoch needed to use different methods in each of these campaigns (existentialist and Platonic); and when she found herself, as a philosopher, more alone at the beginning of her career (and not under Plato's protection), she was more cautious and her philosophical tactics were different. In her

[127] Compare Murdoch: "The metaphors which I myself favour and the philosopher under whose banner I am fighting I will make clear shortly." (SGC, 1967, 76) The 'philosopher' to whom Murdoch refers is Plato.

existentialist campaign for love (from 1950 – 1956), cautious and more alone, Murdoch concealed much of her central area of interest in love; she preferred to offer hints and suggestions about this area rather than explicit statements. Murdoch may well have intended to reveal the full extent of her commitment to love as a concept of central importance later, under more favourable philosophical conditions (so that her thought on love may thrive, and be influential); and part of this approach certainly involved developing or finding (discovering) those conditions (as she did, later in her career). In contrast, under the so-called 'banner' of Plato, later in her career, Murdoch is understandably more explicit about her philosophical commitment to love as a concept of central importance. What is important for my thesis is that, in both these cases (Murdoch's earlier philosophy from 1950 – 1956, and her later so-called 'mature' philosophy), Murdoch's focus is fully trained on love as an area of central philosophical importance.

Existentialism provided Murdoch with the perfect opportunity by which to make her first public sorties in this direction. Murdoch used existentialism as both an ally and as a target. As an ally, existentialism offers Murdoch a wider terrain on two fronts, both inside and outside the philosopher's study. In the 1950s existentialism had become a popular philosophy, outside of academic philosophy, the exponents of which regularly wrote philosophy (and novels) about love. Existentialism allows Murdoch to partially escape from the philosophical strictures of her 1950s Oxford environment, dominated by strains of linguistic philosophy (where love was not generally admissible as a valid subject for philosophical enquiry).

For the academic philosopher who sought to make love a central concept in philosophy, working on the existentialists presents a timely choice. After all, one did not have to agree with them, and Murdoch didn't. Existentialism, especially in the forms offered by Sartre and Marcel, provide Murdoch with an easy target; public disagreements with existentialist thought could even endear Murdoch to her philosophical peers. Murdoch could

make use of the existentialist treatment of love as a subject, but at the same time distance herself from their work by critiquing, for instance, their philosophical technique (this is where her training in linguistic philosophy at Oxford helped her).

Murdoch's interest in linguistic philosophy is for the most part a pragmatic interest. This pragmatic interest is two-fold: (1) To make the concept of love central to philosophy requires that she understand language, as the medium for her philosophy, in depth (by a rigorous form of study); (2) linguistic philosophy was the popular philosophical fashion of her time in Oxford (after the war through to the mid-1950s), and so it was not only in her interest but also natural to be part of this philosophical group (especially while making a name for oneself among other philosophers). In terms of her philosophical quest to make the concept of love central to philosophy, Murdoch's experience of linguistic philosophy at Oxford is primarily about (a) forming for herself a philosophical position on language which leads to its best use (a rigorous philosophical enquiry into love as central concept in morals); and (b) knowing her enemy (those aspects of philosophy that would censor such an enquiry).

Murdoch's book *Sartre: Romantic Rationalist (1953)* effectively presents everything that I have referred to above, but to a greater extent. What better way to make a name for oneself – with the intention of reaching an audience of professional and amateur philosophers – than to publish the first book in English on Sartre? Sartre presents himself (his philosophy) as Murdoch's prefect subject for three main reasons, all of which relate to Murdoch's philosophical project to make the concept of love central to her philosophy: (1) he puts forward a conception of love which Murdoch could criticise; (2) he provides Murdoch with access to a larger mainstream audience than Oxford academic philosophy could provide; and (3) he provides justification for the expression of philosophy in the form of the novel (literature being strong-hold for the concept of love).

Murdoch already has the concept of love in mind when she makes her turn to moral philosophy in 1956 with 'Vision and Choice in Morality' (1956). I conclude that Murdoch makes the turn to moral philosophy for precisely this reason: to provide us with a philosophy in which the concept of love is central. Murdoch's statement that "existentialism is not, and cannot by tinkering be made, the philosophy we need" (OGG, 1969, 46) should not be misread to mean that Murdoch dismisses existentialism as irrelevant to her philosophical enterprise. Rather, Murdoch was so impressed by existentialism's capacity to enter mainstream society, while not giving up its philosophical pedigree or status, that she decided to make whole-sale changes to that philosophy. Such changes – the primary example of which is replacing the self-centred concept of freedom (which is central to existentialism) with the other-centred concept of love (which is central to Murdoch's philosophy) – lie at the heart of Murdoch's mature philosophy.

So it is more the case that these Murdochian changes to existentialism are so great, and so strongly pronounced, that her resultant mature philosophy is properly seen as completely new. Murdoch's love-centred mature philosophy is so far away from 'existentialism' – for the most part deflating the concept of freedom to a more humble de-centralised concept among others – that it could not possibly be characterised by its name (in the way that Marcel's philosophy, for instance, is). This, I conclude, is the correct way to read Murdoch, when she says that "existentialism is not, and cannot by tinkering be made, the philosophy we need" (OGG, 1969, 46).[128]

I conclude that Murdoch's earliest philosophy is of a piece with her latest philosophy, and whatever lies in-between, in that Murdoch seeks to make the concept of love central to her own philosophy. Existentialist philosophy gave Murdoch hope that philosophers could

[128] In 1968 Murdoch reflected: "I think love is my main subject. I have very mixed feelings about the concept of freedom now. This is partly a philosophical development. I was once a kind of existentialist and now I am a kind of Platonist. What I am concerned about really is love, but this sounds very grandiose." (FTC, 2003, 25)

indeed become popular enough to have influence in society, and it also provided Murdoch with the model by which this could be achieved: the philosopher had to also write novels. In effect, to be heard as a philosopher in mainstream society, Murdoch had to be an engaging novelist which, in a sense, made her project twice as difficult. Murdoch's highly ambitious project is: to provide people with an accessible philosophy by which they can guided to love others, and be loved by others, in a good way. For this, the concept of love must be made central to the philosophy in question.

This project required that Murdoch not only learn philosophy, but that she learn how to write novels; and in both forms she had to be good enough to be convincing. Murdoch's philosophical and literary ambition, her search for a good way of loving, in the end (after her moral turn in 1956) is supplemented by Plato. Murdoch's *raison d'être* – which is to make the concept of love central to philosophy – accounts for Plato's presence in Murdoch's work as much as it does for the presence of existentialism. Existentialist novels and Platonic dialogues are written by literary philosophers who take love to be a serious subject for discussion.

I conclude that no serious reading of Murdoch's early philosophy (1950-1956) can afford to ignore the concept of love, even though the word 'love' is rarely mentioned. A close reading of Murdoch's early philosophy reveals that her philosophical *raison d'être* – to provide philosophy in which the concept of love is central – is not merely present as part of her turn to moral philosophy in 1956, but is clearly there in her philosophy from the beginning.

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