Envisioning the Good: Iris Murdoch's Moral Psychology

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All power is sin and all law is frailty. Love is the only justice. Forgiveness, reconciliation, not law.

—Iris Murdoch, *The Nice and the Good*

Introduction

"The author's moral judgment," Murdoch once remarked, "is the air which the reader breathes" ("Literature" 28). It is at least true that if a reader engages properly with a novel or other literary work, and if the work is any good, then he will to some extent inhabit, albeit only episodically, the author's ethical perspective, his evaluative point of view.[1] This being so, it is natural for the reflective reader to attend to the values implicit in a work—to ask, for instance, whether it embodies any specific moral principles. Should he identify some such principles, he may be tempted to impute them to the author, and if the author happens also

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to be a moral philosopher, as was Murdoch, this temptation could be especially difficult to resist. Are her novels, *inter alia*, veiled expressions of a philosophical moral theory? Do they betray her commitment to some normative system, some set of ethical convictions that she has elsewhere articulated in specifically philosophical terms?

Novels that address specifically moral concerns often provoke such questions with respect to their authors. In Murdoch's case, however, the temptation to pursue them would be misguided, and for two reasons. The first reason is that Murdoch's literary efforts were typically (if not exceptionlessly) informed by an "absolute horror of putting [into them] theories or 'philosophical ideas' as such" ("Literature" 19). She was committed to the view that, while both philosophy and art are in a general sense "truth-seeking" activities, their strategies and standards of success are—or at least should be—radically different. She conceived of philosophy as being, like science, objective, detached, abstract; philosophical style should be guided by the aim to say exactly what one means as directly, literally, and clearly as one can, without "rhetoric or idle decoration" (4). In philosophy (again, as in science) "one tries to say something that is *impersonally* true" (8). Philosophical writing, she insisted, is not concerned, or not primarily concerned, with pleasure or novelty or beauty or emotional engagement. In practice, of course, philosophers and scientists often rely on such charms to engage their readers, but Murdoch believed that they are no part of that at which philosophy should properly *aim*, nor of the standards by which it is to be judged as succeeding or failing *qua* philosophy. In principle, a first-rate philosophical work can be homely, lumbering, dull, repetitive, and even unoriginal; a first-rate novel must be none of these things. Philosophical efforts, like scientific ones, finally stand or fall in virtue of stating claims that are rationally supportable and exceptionlessly true (or at least very widely true), while literary efforts stand or fall for many and highly various reasons. Murdoch held, moreover, that the philosopher's impersonal truths seldom provide the substance of a successful piece of literary fiction. (She mentions Sartre's *La Nausée* as an exception.) In keeping with these views, she made every effort to exclude from her novels her own and others' philosophical theories.[2]

It does not follow, of course, that Murdoch succeeded in wholly segregating her philosophical from her literary persona. Indeed, I shall

argue later that the former very much shines through in the latter. But what shines through is no identifiable system of substantive normative principles—no first-order morality as such. For Murdoch endorsed no developed moral theory in the traditional sense of that phrase; she even claimed that there was none to be had. (This is the second reason that the reader tempted to interpret her novels as "literary philosophy" will be disappointed.) Her philosophical works offer no settled formulas for living and acting well, no general principles for determining the moral standing of one's own and others' actions, no well-defined criteria for distinguishing good from evil, right from wrong. It is simply not possible to draw from Murdoch's theoretical texts any fixed rules for judgment and conduct: she offers the reader no algorithms by means of which he can decide the truth-values of his moral beliefs or the propriety of his individual actions. Indeed, from her earliest essays of the 1950s through her last philosophical work, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, Murdoch consistently criticizes those who would reduce the ambiguous and enigmatic matter of moral judgment to a set of clearly defined prescriptive principles. While other philosophers continued to debate the virtues of this or that modification of Mill's principle of utility, or struggled to construct workable versions of Kant's categorical imperative, Murdoch's thought was attuned to the ways in which the diversity and complexity of ethical experience defy systemization. "The insistence that morality is essentially rules," she wrote, "may be seen as an attempt to secure us against the ambiguity of the world [. . .]. If I am right, however, this cannot properly be taken as the only structural model of morality. There are times when it is proper to stress, not the comprehensibility of the world, but its incomprehensibility [. . .]" ("Vision" 90). I do not wish to suggest, of course, that Murdoch herself endorsed no ethical beliefs, held no fixed moral convictions. Readers will be aware, for instance, of her repeated condemnations, in the political sphere, of totalitarianism, and of her unwavering defense of the virtues of compassion and forgiveness. But these are specific, substantive convictions concerning specific, substantive cases. The absence of an explicit normative *theory* need not prevent one from endorsing and condemning particular modes of conduct and character on a case-by-case basis. If it did, most of us would be even more at sea in the moral universe than we now are.

But what, one may wonder, can moral philosophy be if it abjures the project of constructing general, action-guiding, normative principles? What else is there for a moral philosopher (as a opposed to either a moralist or a philosopher of some other kind) to do? The philosophical tradition provides at least two clear alternatives. First, moral philosophy can be an exercise in "meta-ethics" (what once was called the metaphysics of morals)—that is, an enquiry into the epistemic credentials of moral claims and the ontological standing of moral states of affairs. The central questions of meta-ethics are "What, if anything, determines the truth of moral judgments?" and "How, if at all, are those truths to be discerned?"[3] Secondly, a philosopher may aim to articulate a naturalistic moral psychology—a largely descriptive (rather than prescriptive) enterprise concerned accurately to characterize the ethical dimensions of human experience.[4] Moral psychology can of course be experimentally based, as it is in the contemporary disciplines of developmental and social and cognitive psychology. But it can also proceed from the armchair, as it were, resting its claims on the observations and intuitions of the theorist—a basis of evidence that is tested out by its agreement or disagreement with the observations and intuitions of his readers. (This characterization may make philosophical moral psychology sound more disreputable an enterprise than it is, but one should bear in mind that its past practitioners have included Aristotle, Spinoza, Hume, Nietzsche, and Freud.) Because philosophical moral psychology is concerned principally with pure description, and because, further, it often proceeds from a subjective point of view (describing the nature of moral experience as presented to the subject or subjects whose experience it is) it is sometimes aptly dignified with the label "moral phenomenology."

Murdoch's writings in moral philosophy are almost exclusively occupied with meta-ethics and philosophical moral psychology. Very often these are integrated to form an account of moral experience in which the latter supports the former. In the pages following, I will first elucidate some key features of Murdoch's meta-ethics. I then turn to her moral psychology, not only to provide an exegesis of its principle theses, but with a further aim in view: I hope to show how Murdoch's conceptions of moral experience and of the moral reality that is its object implicitly recommend a departure from traditional philosophical method—and how, at the same time, they serve to vindicate the novel (and perhaps

other literary forms) as an especially apt instrument of moral understanding. I have noted that Murdoch's own novels are not typically didactic in their content; they are not, for the most part, concerned with promoting prescriptive principles supported by an independently given normative theory. But I hope to show that their *form*—the form of detailed, imaginative narrative—manifests a way of thinking about moral experience that her philosophical writings both recommend and vindicate.

A Different World: Fact and Value

> [T]he image which I am offering should be thought of as a general metaphysical background to morals and not as a formula which can be illuminatingly introduced into any and every moral act. There exists, so far as I know, no formula of the latter kind.
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> —Iris Murdoch, "The Idea of Perfection"

David Hume claimed that while "beauty and deformity" may seem to be sensible properties of things, they are in fact "nothing in the objects themselves" ("The Skeptic" 163). Rather they are, he argued, propensities that certain objects have to elicit sentiments of pain and pleasure. In evidence of this view he cites the peculiar sensibility of a man in love: he finds his beloved full of charms and graces and attractions that no other perceives. With this illustration Hume certainly hits his mark, for love does have the power to illuminate in its object qualities not otherwise evident. It is unclear, however, what conclusions we ought to draw from this familiar fact. Certainly it does not follow that Hume's broadly non-cognitivist and irrealist account of aesthetic (and moral) properties is correct, for it does not follow from the fact that a property can only be seen from a certain point of view that it is "nothing in the object itself"—that it is unreal.

The thought that there are aspects of reality that can only be discerned from some specific perspectival viewpoint is pivotal to Murdoch's meta-ethics from start to finish. Values are like that, she argues, and yet it is a mistake to conclude that values, unlike facts, are nothing more than a projection of sentiment, rather than something "there to be seen." In one of her earliest essays, "Vision and Choice in Morality," she presents this idea in the context of a wider critique of the then-pervasive view

that fact and value are clearly distinguished arenas. According to that view, the facts include, and perhaps are limited to, those states of the world that are in principle verifiable by observation and describable by our best natural sciences. Values, by contrast, are as Hume supposed them to be: features of our subjective inner lives, and in particular of our inner passions, which we mistakenly take to inhere in the things to which we direct them. Hence facts are genuine features of the mind-independent world, awaiting our discovery, while values are not discovered but *invented*—we create them by coloring the objects of our sentiments with the sentiments themselves. Correlatively, only facts can be proper objects of belief and judgment, while values lie in the province of preference and desire. These claims were thought to entail, *inter alia*, that evaluative concepts (beautiful, good, wretched, and so on) could not be defined in terms of naturalistic, non-evaluative ones; to attempt to do so was to fall prey to a fallacy (the "naturalistic fallacy," as G. E. Moore referred to one version of it). Values should instead be understood in terms of choice and will—as constituted by our freedom to assign merit and demerit to things according to our propensities to find them pleasing or repugnant.

But the distinction between fact and value, Murdoch points out, is itself "a kind of moral attitude," by which she means that it constitutes a substantive evaluative thesis concerning the (metaphysical) nature of moral reality. The distinction expresses an attitude which we *may* adopt, but it is not one forced upon us as a point of logic. We might instead, for instance, embrace the idea that our concepts of value fall upon fully real, evaluative states of the world, albeit states that we are only able to discern through a special kind of attention and reflection. In this case,

> fact and value merge in a quite innocuous way [. . .]. If moral concepts are regarded as deep moral configurations of the world, rather than as lines drawn round separable factual areas, then there will be no facts "behind them" for them to be erroneously defined in terms of [. . .]. On this 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 [. . .]. ("Vision" 95)

What, exactly does Murdoch mean by "deep moral configurations of the world," and what has this to do with morality being a matter of reflec-

tion rather than choice? In subsequent essays (and in particular the essays collected in *The Sovereignty of Good*) these ideas are elaborated further, and a picture begins to emerge both of the nature of moral states of affairs (of moral reality) and of the kind of psychological orientation by which it is illuminated. Let us look more closely at its principal contours.

In "The Idea of Perfection" Murdoch works with a now-famous example concerning a mother-in-law who finds her daughter-in-law common and unworthy, but who struggles to form a more just and accurate conception of her. Murdoch there describes the achievement of moral understanding as a matter of coming to perceive, through an effort of disinterested attention, certain aspects of reality. On her account, an appreciation of values is effectively a matter of appreciating some *facts*—evaluative facts—that exist alongside the facts endorsed by natural science. The mother-in-law (who is, presumably, uncorrupted by philosophical theory and its scientistic prejudices) legitimately considers herself to be trying to achieve new and more correct beliefs; she is not just aiming to realign her preferences and desires, but to acquire *knowledge* of who and what her daughter-in-law actually is. The mother-in-law's "independence of science, and of the 'world of facts' which empiricist philosophy has created in the scientific image, rests not simply in her moving will but in her seeing, knowing mind. Moral concepts do not move about *within* a hard world set up by science and logic. They set up, for different purposes, a different world" ("Idea" 321). The "different world" to which Murdoch refers is one in which reality includes values—and yet it is not an ideal world, independent of this ordinary phenomenal one. Neither is it a world wholly constructed by the rational mind or will (as for Kant). Rather, Murdoch's "different world" is of a piece with the mundane, prephilosophical world that we all inhabit. We need not even think of it as "non-empirical"—or not, at least, if by "empirical" we mean "detectable by observation and perception." If we allow that the terms "observation" and "perception" as applied to values are not mere metaphors, then we can also allow that their familiar use in moral contexts reflects our experience of kinds of objects and properties which, while only discernable from a human and moral perspective, are as legitimate as the objects and properties discernable from the perspective of science. In this respect Murdoch's value-imbued world is one populated by ordinary, familiar ethical and aesthetic facts.[5]

Skepticism about the fact/value distinction is today nothing novel, much less revolutionary. In fact it has, in some circles, come to be embraced almost as casually as once was the distinction itself. Nonetheless, its motivations and implications are not, I believe, always very clearly understood, and the "evaluative reality" which it wishes to reinstate does not always enjoy a well-defined metaphysical profile. The profile Murdoch provides is, by contrast, a vivid and lively one; it deserves our respect, especially in view of the philosophical climate in which it was first presented. Nonetheless, many philosophers (myself included) agree that she relies overmuch on the rhetorical force of terms such as "vision," "reality," "knowledge," and the rest. So perhaps it will not be out of place if I attempt to set out more precisely what I take to be the most prominent features of the metaphysical picture in question. In particular, I hope to present a clearer answer to the questions: What exactly is the nature of the "different world" of facts described by our moral concepts? and How should we interpret the meaning of terms such as "vision," "perception," and "observation" in moral contexts? In the remainder of this section I will address only the first of these; the second strictly falls within the remit of the section following.

To keep things simple, let me speak only of properties (rather than objects and events). This will cause no special problems, as my main concern is with evaluative states of the world which can be named by predicates and predicate phrases: "kind," "just," "dignified," "elegant," "malicious," and so on. Let me also introduce a term of art—"aspectual properties" (or, more simply "aspects") to name the controversial kind of property in question. Rather than defining aspectual properties in the abstract, however, I will elucidate them by examining some particular cases. This will require, in the first instance, what may appear to be a digression. The point of the digression will become clear in due course.

Aspects of Value

It is a familiar fact that there are properties such that, if one is to essay a judgment about them at all, that judgment must arise by way of some kind of experiential sensitivity to other "base" properties on which they depend. Colors are like this: they can only be seen by those whose optical and cognitive systems are sensitive to the reflectancy properties

of visible objects. Let us call the properties that are presented directly in experience (for example, colors) "supervenient," and the base properties on which they depend (for example, reflectancy properties) "subvenient"—terms which, I'm sure, are not unfamiliar to the reader. Many of our everyday judgments of observable properties concern supervenient properties in this sense—properties detected by way of an experiential sensitivity to the subvenient bases on which they depend. Consider, for example, pictorial or depictive properties—the properties which one targets when one judges that a portrait depicts its sitter, or that a still life depicts a bowl of apples and pears.[6] Clearly, we arrive at these judgments by way of seeing the lines and colors on the canvas; the pictorial properties are visible *aspects* of the marks on a canvas's surface. Were the lines and colors invisible to us, so too would be the pictorial aspects we find in them. It would be wrong, however, to say that we detect those aspects by way of some kind of *inference* from our experience of the lines and colors. (Likewise, we do not infer the colors of things from their reflectancy properties; we just see the colors.) When we look at a painting, we experience it directly as organized into intelligible coherent patterns, "configurations" which we experience as presenting items in the visible world (the sitter, the bowl of fruit). Hence when we say that someone is able to discern pictorial aspects—that he possesses "pictorial competence"—we are not imputing to him any special visual faculty; we just impute to him a wholly ordinary capacity for pictorial seeing-as—for discerning the pictorial aspects by looking at the properties on which they supervene. Now, it would be possible to generate something like pictorial judgments in other ways. For instance, a person who is unable to perceive a two-dimensional image as a depiction of a three-dimensional object could learn to "read" simple images by calculating geometric relations. Hence it is not too far-fetched to imagine that a subject who lacked pictorial competence might, in principle, generate pictorial judgments by referring to a "picture-reading" rule book that listed the visual-field properties of various familiar objects, for example, trees and flowers and bowls of fruit, described in terms of locations on a grid of Cartesian coordinates. It would, to be sure, need to be a very long book if he were to use it to interpret more than a few very standard images, but the possibility of some such rule book is all that matters here.

Pictorial judgments made in this way would be paradigmatically inferential ones. By contrast, a normal pictorial judgment—call it a basic pictorial judgment—is noninferential, or direct. Like the inferential one, it arises by way of one's responses to the subvenient, nonpictorial features of the canvas, but in the basic case one responds to those subvenient features very differently. In both instances, one is, of course, looking at a surface that has those features, and one's experience is caused by them. But in the basic case, the content of one's experience is an organized, pictorial aspect—the content of one's visual experience is not of a mere array of lines and colors, but of, for instance, a tree-depiction or a flower-depiction or a face-depiction. In the inferential, rule-book case the content of one's perceptual experience would not go beyond the subvenient lines and colors; put differently, rule-book generated judgments of pictorial aspects would not be perceptual judgments as such: they would be based upon and inferred from perceptual experience, of course, but not perceptual experience of pictorial aspects. And there is a further difference. In both the inferential case and the basic case, the subject's experience provides him with reasons for thinking that the surface has certain pictorial properties. But only in the basic case does it also cause him to see those properties.

Now consider judgments of another kind of aspectual property: musical aspects such as the melodic, the rhythmic, the dissonant, the harmonious. We arrive at judgments of these aspects by way of hearing sequences of sounded tones. Again, however, the supervenient aspects are not inferred from the subvenient bases on which they depend. If one is broadly familiar with the musical forms in questions, one will simply organize the sounded tones into coherent configurations or patterns, patterns directly experienced as melodic, rhythmic, and the rest. Moreover, just as "pictorial competence" does not require any special visual faculty beyond a quite ordinary capacity for pictorial "seeing-as," so "musical competence" does not require any special aural faculty; it issues from a quite ordinary capacity for aural "hearing-as"—for discerning the aspectual properties of sounds by hearing them.

Of course, one might generate something like musical judgments (judgments of musical aspects) in other ways. For instance, a person who is unable to perceive a major triad as consonant (and, unfortunately, there are such[7]) could be taught a rule: when the tonic, third, and fifth

are sounded simultaneously, the combination of tones is consonant. And as any student of composition knows, it is not too far-fetched to imagine that a subject who lacked musical competence might, in principle, generate musical judgments by referring to a "tone-reading" rule book that listed the musical properties of different combinations and sequences of notes. It would, to be sure, need to be a very long book if he were to use it to interpret more than a few very standard musical features, but it would be in principle possible. Musical judgments made in this way would be paradigmatically inferential ones. By contrast, a normal musical judgment—call it a basic musical judgment—is noninferential, or "direct." Like the inferential one, it arises by responding to the subvenient, nonmusical features of pitched sounds, but one responds to those subvenient features very differently in the basic case. In both instances, one is, of course, hearing pitched sounds, and one's experience is causally explained by one's ability to be affected aurally by sound waves. But in the basic case, the content of one's experience is an organized, musical aspect—one hears a lilting melody, or a pounding bass beat, or a rich and harmonious sequence of chords, whereas in the inferential, rule-book case the content of one's experience does not go beyond the sounds themselves. (Put differently, rule-book generated judgments of musical aspects are not *perceptual* judgments as such: they are based upon and inferred from perceptual experience, of course, but not perceptual experience of musical aspects.) And there is a further difference. In both the inferential case and the basic case, the subject's experience provides him with reasons for thinking that the sounds heard have certain musical aspects. But only in the basic case does it also cause him to hear those aspects. If a subject is musically competent, hearing the pitched tones does not merely justify his judgments that they are melodious, in 3/4 waltz rhythm, and so on; his hearing also features in their causal history. He discerns the musical aspects *because* he responds as he does to the sounds heard.

What has any of this to do with moral understanding? It seems to me that something analogous—although not exactly parallel—holds for judgments of value generally and for moral judgments in particular. When small children first begin to acquire a moral vocabulary, their assertions are very often a matter of reiterating the verdicts they have been taught by adults: "This is naughty; that is nice." Notably, while a child may have learned that these are the right things to say, that knowledge does not

always translate into an understanding of what to *do*: the verdicts do not on their lips always carry the normative force which is part of their full import. He is simply echoing some familiar phrases. But as the child's command of moral concepts develops, he normally proceeds to something like a rule-book stage, and is able to venture genuine judgments of novel situations. For instance, he is able to judge that an act should be called right or wrong because it has certain standard features: it annoys father, or it makes the baby cry, or it creates a frightful mess. At this stage the child, like the tone-deaf judge of musical properties, may *infer* that something merits a certain moral predicate because it satisfies some other, nonmoral description. But is he making a genuine moral judgment thereby? And if not, what is missing? Is there not some missing *experience* that parallels the ability to perceive musical patterns or to see colors?

There is of course no discrete *faculty* of moral perception to parallel the visual faculty by way of which we see pictures, or the aural faculty by way of which we hear melodies and harmonies. Nonetheless, there surely is a kind of responsiveness that is absent in the case of the child who knows how to label a range of actions with moral predicates—who knows the rules—but who applies them, as it were, merely compliantly. Admittedly, even in the fully developed, morally literate adult it sometimes happens that nothing more than a kind of rule-book calculation lies behind particular moral assertions; that is, it sometimes happens that one is simply echoing learned platitudes, as in condemning dishonesty and cruelty and commending charity and courage. (Just think of the moral rhetoric of politicians: it is not for nothing that we often call it "empty.") We sometimes have no need to reflect on such claims; they are the canonical claims we have learned in the course of acquiring the concepts in question. But it is crucial that not all of one's moral assertions are of this kind. Genuine participation in moral life requires that at least some of our assertions express basic moral judgments—judgments which, like basic pictorial and musical judgments, arise from our experience of configured aspects of value (Murdoch's "deep moral configurations of the world"), and occur by way of our responsiveness to the subvenient features on which those aspects depend. What, in the moral case, might those subvenient features be? Surely, among the best and most obvious candidates are persons' concerns and interests—the wants, needs, and purposes of other subjects of experience, others who, like

oneself, inhabit a world of values. We discover what we ought to believe, ethically speaking, and how we ought to act in part by attuning ourselves to the claims of other human beings. (To moot this suggestion in Murdoch's terms, attunement to the Good is of a piece with learning to love other individuals.) Certainly, if a suitably sensitive, properly attuned moral subject attends to the evaluative perspectives of others (to their hopes, fears, needs, and the rest), and if he sees them clearly and correctly, he will be caused to regard certain acts as manifesting moral aspects (as just, loving, malicious, disloyal). And then, all things being equal, he may essay a basic moral judgment.

How do these observations help us to interpret Murdoch's conception of moral reality and moral knowledge? In the passage quoted earlier from *Vision and Choice*, Murdoch referred to our moral concepts as marking out evaluative facts. I am suggesting, of course, that these are facts about a particular kind of aspectual property, a kind analogous to pictorial aspects and musical aspects. Moreover, the analogy between moral (and other evaluative) aspects and aspects of other kinds suggests some specific characteristics that distinguish them all (*qua* aspectual properties) from the objects and properties that concern the natural sciences—but do so without impugning either their reality or the claim that we detect them (rather than invent them), and do so by looking and attending, rather than willing and choosing. First, the analogy suggests that evaluative aspects are supervenient ones; the moral features of a person's character, for instance, supervenes on other nonmoral facts about him—his aims, interests, intentions, attitudes, and actions. At the same time, moral aspects are not fully analyzable in terms of their base properties. In the musical case, the property of being melodic depends on temporal relations and pitches of sequential sounded tones, but what it is for certain sounded tones to *be* melodic cannot be fully stated or explained in terms of these subvenient base ones. Likewise, what it is to be, say, cowardly or unkind or courageous or just cannot be fully analyzed in terms of some other, nonmoral properties. But this is not because they fail to be genuine "facts" on par with with natural ones. Rather, it is because they are, *qua* aspectual facts, only directly evident to those who possess the requisite experiential sensitivity. Hence the analogy also suggests that moral aspects are perspectival: whether or not one detects them depends on one's experiential capacities and point of view.

Just as one's ability to hear a certain melody or to see a certain image depends on both one's position and constitution, so too does one's capacity for moral understanding. Finally, the analogy suggests that aspects are "configurational" or organizational properties. As Murdoch once put the point, values are *gestalt* properties: they are not sensible "simples" like colors and odors, but are organized forms that emerge within the sensible world. When, for instance, Murdoch describes the mother-in-law as coming to see her son's wife as vivacious rather than bumptious, or as unpretentious rather than common, this is a matter of seeing one *pattern* rather than another, of configuring her observations in accordance with different categories and concepts.

Conceiving of moral values as aspectual properties will, I hope, encourage us to regard them as did Murdoch—as candidate facts that are neither metaphysically queer nor epistemically suspect. Indeed, this conception locates moral facts in the ordinary world alongside other unexceptional ones, such as the fact that the Frick Collection includes a Holbein depicting Sir Thomas More, or the fact that Brahms's music is more melodic than Berg's. But at the same time the analogies with pictorial and musical aspects can only take us so far, for "moral vision" is in certain respects *sui generis*: it is a unique mode of experience that cannot be wholly assimilated to any other. So although there is more that could be said about Murdoch's metaphysics of value, let me now turn to the distinctive modes of attention and inattention by which moral aspects are revealed and obscured—to her phenomenology of moral experience.

Envisioning the Good

> "I want now to return to the beginning and look again at [. . .] the system of the self-defensive psyche in light of the question, "How can we make ourselves better?"
>
> —Iris Murdoch, "The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts"

The Sea, the Sea is perhaps Murdoch's best known and most favored novel. It also provides one of her most vivid illustrations of the difficult project of "turning towards the good" in the person of its protagonist, Charles Arrowby. Arrowby is an actor and theater director who has retired, as he thinks, from both work and society to find peace

and reflection in a remote seaside house on an isolated stretch of the Dorset coast. His plans are diverted, however, by the intrusion of various former lovers and friends, and in particular by the discovery that his sometime first love, Hartley, who had abandoned him nearly a half-century before, is living with her husband in a nearby village. Arrowby devises a plan to revive this old affair and, as he sees it, to "rescue" Hartley from her circumstances; he dreams of presenting to her a new life of happiness and beauty and love. This plan is less a reflection of reasonable hope, however, than of outrageous fantasy, and it ends, inevitably, in confusions and disasters—a conclusion that the reader, but not Arrowby, is largely able to foresee. (The novel invites the reader into a relationship with the narrative that is reminiscent of classical tragedies: the spectator of a tragedy always knows that, for example, Oedipus's guilt will be exposed and he will be ruined, or that Creon's arrogance and Antigone's willfulness will bring doom to all.) But there is redemption of a kind in the novel's denouement, for Arrowby is at last brought to see, or at least to glimpse, some of the realities to which his life-long fantasies had blinded him. For instance, he comes to see that his cousin and childhood rival, James, so far from being the dull, smug, and artless civil servant of Arrowby's imagination, is in fact an exceptionally wise, subtle, and good man from whom he has much to benefit. (Indeed, James saves his life, a fact that, as Arrowby's cloaks of self-deception begin to fall away, he is able to acknowledge.) Even with respect to the "beloved" Hartley, the centerpiece of his favorite and most carefully cultivated fantasy, Arrowby eventually confronts his self-serving illusions:

> When did I begin to relax my hold upon Hartley, or rather upon her image, her double, the Hartley of my mind? Have I relaxed my hold, did it happen before, or is it only happening now, when I can look back over the summer and see my acts and thoughts as those of a madman? I remember Rosina saying to me that her desire for me was made of jealousy, resentment, anger, not love. Was the same true of my desire for Hartley? Have I indeed relived my love simply in order to explain to myself that it was a false love, compounded of resentment stored from long ago and the present promptings of mad possessive jealousy? *Was* I so resentful long ago? I cannot remember [. . .]. (491)

Later, Arrowby takes these thoughts even further, at last able to approach the truth:

> When Hartley said she had to "protect herself" by thinking I hated her and blamed her, she added that she "always felt guilty." When she said she had to feel sure it was all over and to "make it dead in her mind," I imagined that this angry, hostile image of me was designed to numb her old love and the attraction which I might still exercise, because such an attraction would be too painful for her to live with. But perhaps the fundamental bond was not love at all, but guilt? [. . .] After all, it had been very hard to leave me and she must have had very compelling motives. It had required great courage to run away to her auntie at Stoke-on-Trent. Why did she go? Because I was in love and she was not; because she simply did not like me enough, because I was too selfish, too dominating, as she put it "so sort of bossy." I had deluded myself throughout by the idea of reviving a secret love which did not exist at all. (498)

The Sea, the Sea is a very complex novel, and I am no literary theorist.; however, even the untutored reader cannot but find in it a tale of self-serving illusion masked as love, and the emergence of authentic love from envy and resentment. This is why I say that it serves to illustrate Murdoch's conception of what it is to turn toward the good, for this process is, as she once put it, a matter of reorienting the attachments that characteristically go by the name of love, and reorienting them toward their true object and master, the Good:

> Of course Good is sovereign over Love, as it is sovereign over other concepts, because Love can name something bad. But is there not nevertheless something about the conception of a refined love which is practically identical with goodness? [. . .] Good is the magnetic centre towards which love naturally moves. False love moves to false good. False love embraces false death. When true good is loved, even impurely or by accident, the quality of the love is automatically refined [. . .]. Love is the tension between the imperfect soul and the magnetic perfection which is conceived of as lying beyond it.

> (In the *Symposium* Plato pictures Love as being poor and needy.) 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. Love is the general name of the quality of attachment and it is capable of infinite degradation and is the source of our greatest errors [. . .but] its existence is the unmistakable sign that we are attracted by excellence and made for the Good. ("Sovereignty" 384)

This passage contains perhaps the briefest and best expression of Murdoch's answer to the question: How can we make ourselves better? We can do that by learning to love and to let "love [go] to its object *via* the Good to be [. . .] made unselfish and just." It is not impossible to appreciate what this might mean, at least at an intuitive level. Murdoch's essays, however, provide some explicit signposts for the path leading to the Good, so we need not rely on intuition alone. In the remainder of this essay, I will discuss just three of these signposts—three theses that I regard as pivotal to her moral psychology and that make repeated appearances in her work. The three theses are that moral knowledge is ineliminably first-personal and perspectival; that moral judgments are, or should be, particularistic; and that moral vision is in part a matter of an attentive imagination overcoming illusion and fantasy. I will discuss briefly each of these in turn, drawing attention to the way in which each can be reflected in the form of fictional narrative.

Thesis 1: Moral Knowledge Occurs within a First-person Perspective

In my sketch of the nature of moral aspects, I characterized them by analogy with pictorial and musical properties. I noted that these could only be detected by way of the requisite modes of visual and aural experience; they can be described to a point, but descriptions, like musical scores, only provide a set of directions for recognizing or reproducing aspectual properties—the properties themselves are irreducibly experience-dependent. One of Murdoch's chief objections to alternative philosophical moral theories (and in particular utilitarianism) is that they suggest that these sets of directions might suffice to reveal the moral properties of things and to guide one toward morally proper conduct. Against this

suggestion, Murdoch argues that apprehension of moral facts is, as it were, something that each man must do for himself: like having a headache or bearing a grudge or becoming infatuated, it cannot be achieved from an impersonal and purely theoretical point of view. But why should this be so? The simple answer is that moral vision, as she conceives it, is not solely a matter of grasping the truth of certain propositions, but is crucially also a matter of *experiencing* the reality that makes those propositions true, and experience is by its very nature a mode of an individual, conscious subject. Moreover, the experiences in question are ones that involve not only thought but affect: one does not observe that something is good and valuable (or evil and bad) in just the way that one observes that, say, the proof of a theorem in logic is valid, or that the second law of thermodynamics is true. In recognizing the values and disvalues of things, one becomes subject, however inchoately, to the motivational force that these properties exert.[8] (One cannot be said to genuinely appreciate that it is cruel to torture small animals, for instance, unless such torture elicits in one *some* motivational aversion.[9])

If recognition of values and disvalues is a matter of *experiencing* them as valuable or disvaluable (rather than, for instance, merely noting that they conform or fail to conform to a certain principle or rule) then this is, obviously, something that each subject of experience must do for himself. The importance of this point, however, is perhaps not so obvious. In Murdoch's example of the mother-in-law's efforts to view her daughter more justly, it is clear that the just and unprejudiced view she aims to achieve is something which will involve a shift not just in how she permits herself to think of the girl, but how she experiences the detail of her behavior:

> M *looks* at D. She attends to D. She focuses her attention. M is engaged in an internal struggle. She may for instance be tempted to enjoy caricatures of D. in her imagination [. . .] M stops seeing D. as "bumptious" and sees her as "gay", etc. [. . .] M's activity is peculiarly *her own*. Its details are the details of *this* personality; and partly for this reason it may well be an activity which can only be performed privately.

The highly individual, perspectival nature of such moral "revisioning" is also, of course, a ubiquitous theme in literature. As Murdoch notes, "In-

numerable novels contain accounts of what such struggles are like" ("Idea" 317). Her own novels provide example after example, of which the case of Charles Arrowby is but a particularly successful one. *The Sea, the Sea* is written in the first person, and in the form of a diary. As such, it brings the reader directly into a first-personal point of view. But it is not so much the novel's first-personal voice that makes it work so well as a guide through the labyrinths of moral struggle: the form of the novel is traditionally one that attends to experiential detail, reports on the unobservable inner lives of its characters' thoughts and feelings, and compels the reader to conceive of the events it narrates as from this or that particular point of view. The novel is, as it were, tailor-made for the recording of human subjectivity, and in this respect it is also a form well suited to recording the detail of moral experience.

Thesis 2: Moral Judgments Are, or Should Be, Particularistic

In the *Critique of Judgment* Kant argues that aesthetic judgments are necessarily singular in form, never universal. If we are judging the beauty of a thing, he says, then that thing must be perceptually present to us (or at least present to us through the remembering or imagining of a perceptual state). This is because what it is to judge that a thing is beautiful is to *respond* to its sensible presentation in a particular way, and to express that response in words. If that is not what one is doing when one says of some item "X is beautiful," then one is not essaying an aesthetic judgment proper. Hence one cannot properly judge that, for instance, *all* roses are beautiful (for one cannot perceptually engage with and respond to all roses); one can only judge that *this* perceived rose is beautiful. Murdoch holds a very similar view of moral judgment: universal claims about kinds of characters or actions largely miss their mark, for *what it is to judge* that a thing is fine or wretched or noble or base requires that one respond to it as such, and categories and kinds are not apt objects for the requisite responses. (Her point differs from Kant's in that she is only claiming that if one is to judge correctly one should do so on a case-by-case basis; she does not claim that universal judgments fail to be moral judgments at all.) Hence Murdoch appears to endorse a version of what moral theorists sometimes call "particularism"—very roughly, the view that ethical properties are properties of particular ac-

tions and persons rather than of classes or kinds. A correlate of this view is, of course, that general principles and codifiable rules will often mislead us in ethics; we do better always to consider the context and detail of the specific case. "False conceptions are often generalised, stereotyped and unconnected. True conceptions combine just modes of judgment and an ability to connect with an increased perception of detail, as in the case of the mother who has to consider each one of her family carefully as she decides whether or not to throw auntie out" ("Sovereignty" 379). For Murdoch, scrutiny of the relevant phenomena, alertness to specifics, sensitivity to subtle differences—these are the characteristics of proper attention that must underpin reliable moral judgment. While rules are stable and reiterative, human experience is chancy and never exactly repeated in each detail. Of course, rules have their place: we could scarcely survive without them. As Murdoch notes, we need to know why and when to pay the bills. But we need not deny this to appreciate that countless occasions for moral judgment cannot be addressed seriously by way of a simple and straightforward appeal to general normative principles—not least because these principles so often will conflict. In real dilemmas in real life we need, as she says, to return to the beginning and inspect the details of the case.

> Should a retarded child be kept at home or sent to an institution? Should an elderly relation who is a trouble-maker be cared for or asked to go away? Should an unhappy marriage be continued for the sake of the children? Should I leave my family in order to do political work? Should I neglect them in order to practise my art? The love which brings the right answer is an exercise of justice and realism and really *looking*. ("Sovereignty" 375)

Murdoch's particularism is closely related to her experience-based conception of moral understanding (and also to her view of moral vision as a reorientation of love). For if we can only properly understand the moral nature of, say, an act of betrayal by thinking it through and experiencing its character from within, then this kind of understanding will seldom apply to universal types or kinds of betrayals; indeed, we arguably cannot even be confident that a particular action *counts* as a betrayal in advance until we have inspected and internalized the details of the case.

Here again it is not difficult to see how the *form* of moral vision might be mirrored more effectively in the form of the novel than in that of the philosophical treatise. The novel typically follows specific characters and events as these inhabit specific times and places; the reader is not merely introduced to various such particulars but, if the novel is any good, he comes to know them in some detail, and may even be able, with the aid of his imagination, to engage with this detail in a quasi-experiential way. Certainly we develop strong sentiments for well-drawn fictional characters: who does not detest Tolstoy's Countess Lydia, or feel charmed by Kitty? (Or indeed, in *The Sea, the Sea,* few readers cannot feel some contempt for Arrowby's egoistic vanity, and some pity for Hartley's bewilderment.) As Murdoch says, "Literature could be called a disciplined technique for arousing certain emotions [. . . G]ood literature does not look like 'analysis' because what the imagination produces is sensuous, fused, reified, mysterious, ambiguous, particular" ("Literature" 11).

If, as Murdoch claims, we "become better people" by attending to particulars, by observing and loving individuals, by doing our best to understand the phenomena before us, then it is not easy to think of an art form that can better emulate this phenomenology than the form of the novel. Indeed, it is in some respects easier for us to look carefully at the complexity and uncertainty and imperfection of human nature when this is presented in a fictional narrative than when it figures in our own lives. Why should this be? The answer lies in part in the way in which fiction engages the imagination.

Thesis 3: In Accurate Moral Vision, Imaginative Attention Overcomes Illusion and Fantasy

Schopenhauer, whom Murdoch much admired, identified moral excellence with the defeat of illusion, and in particular the illusion that the self, with all of its pressing demands and desires, is the only—or at least the paramount—locus of value. One need not embrace Schopenhauer's rather extravagant, neo-Kantian metaphysics to find some truth in this claim; after all, when human relations come to grief, when they are driven by anger, avarice, and malice, this is very often because individuals fail to recognize the reality of others' concerns and interests—fail to acknowledge the claims of alterity. (Schopenhauer was at

every point a better psychologist than metaphysician.) Moral vision is attuned to reality, and is in that respect objective. But how can the ever-present claims of the subjective self be transcended? How is one to step outside of the "locus of value" that for each of us typically constitutes nothing less than the very center of reality? How are we to see that we are *not*, ourselves, that centerpoint? Murdoch's short answer to these questions is "love," but love can be false: it can be, for instance, as in the case of Arrowby's obsessive love for Hartley, merely an intensification and perversion of self-serving desire. Genuine love, by contrast, is a matter of looking out and beyond the self; and when one looks lovingly, one sees not only the empirical reality of what lies beyond, but its value and significance. It is an achievement of the imagination, in a particular sense of that term which names an activity in which we all engage to some degree:

> I should like to use the word [imagination . . .] to describe something which we all *do* a great deal of the time. This activity, which may be characterised by a contrast with "strict" or scientific" thinking is (like so many totally familiar things) not easy to describe, but one might attempt a description as follows: a type of reflection on people, events, etc., which builds detail, adds colour, conjures up possibilities in ways which go beyond what could be said to be strictly factual. When this activity is thought to be bad it is sometimes called "fantasy" or "wishful thinking." ("Darkness" 198)

Imagination (in Murdoch's sense) is the ability to see beyond what is given directly to one's subjective and self-centered point of view. This use of the term nicely complements her metaphysics of moral facts if, as I've suggested, we conceive of these as aspectual features. Recall that I presented moral (and other) aspects as fully real features of the world. At the same time, truths about aspects are perspectival truths: any given aspect of an item will present only a partial dimension of that item as a whole. This is easy to appreciate in the case of visual aspects. Suppose, for example, that you are standing in a fixed position before a solid, white cube, suspended just in front of you. You can only see one side of the cube completely; the other sides will either be viewed obliquely, or wholly obscured from view. But if you are asked how the cube *would*

look from other positions, say to the left or the right or across from where you stand, you could, by using your imagination, offer at least an approximately correct description of it in its entirety. (In fact, your very belief that the object you are seeing is a cube at all, and not just a peculiar arrangement of planes, reflects a simple exercise of your perceptual imagination.) Thus your visual imagination liberates you from your limited perspective; it permits you to conceive of a more complete, objective reality that lies beyond what is immediately before you. The "moral imagination" of which Murdoch speaks is a close relative of this ability, and it too can guide you to a more objective conception of different objects of attention.

For Murdoch, as for Schopenhauer, the greatest obstacle to imaginative attention is egoism—the disposition to orient the whole of value around one's own concerns. (The term "self-centered" is not a metaphorical one.) Our concerns are typically many and various; we are, as Schopenhauer puts it, creatures condemned to "endless striving" (164), compelled from one goal to another, satisfying one desire only to move immediately on to the next, unsatisfied one, often without any sense of a larger point or purpose behind it all. Murdoch too appreciates how difficult it is for us to leave this egoistic striving behind:

> By opening our eyes we do not necessarily see what confronts us. We are anxiety-ridden animals. Our minds are continually active, fabricating an anxious, usually self-preoccupied, often falsifying *veil* which partially conceals the world. Our states of consciousness differ in quality, our fantasies and reveries are not trivial and unimportant [. . .]. And if quality of consciousness matters, then anything which alters consciousness in the direction of unselfishness, objectivity and realism is to be connected with virtue. ("Sovereignty" 368–69)

The falsifying veil of egoism not only prevents us from seeing the objective world for what it is; it also constructs illusions designed to satisfy our psychic needs. (The passage quoted above from Arrowby's diary notes an explicit case of such desire-driven constructions.) But we are not wholly without resources for overcoming these tendencies, and some of the most successful strategies—such as turning our attention to the beauties of nature—are utterly common and familiar:

> I am looking out of my window in an anxious and resentful state of mind, oblivious of my surroundings, brooding perhaps on some damage done to my prestige. Then suddenly I observe a hovering kestrel. In a moment everything is altered. The brooding self with its hurt vanity has disappeared. There is nothing now but kestrel. And when I return to thinking of the other matter is seems less important. And of course this is something which we may also do deliberately: give attention to nature in order to clear our minds of selfish care. ("Sovereignty" 369)

Another familiar means by which we may overcome illusion—a means that occupied Murdoch in both theory and practice throughout her life—is art. Not all art, of course, for much of what is presented under that name merely panders to our desire to escape, rather than confront reality. "A great deal of art, perhaps most art," Murdoch acknowledges, "is self-consoling fantasy, and even great art cannot guarantee the quality of its consumer's consciousness" (370). Nonetheless, great art characteristically encourages what Murdoch calls "objective vision," and in two ways. First, great art reaches out toward truths that are, if not universal, then at least more pervasive, more timeless, less bound to a particular person and place than the "familiar rat-runs of selfish day-dream" (371). (Schopenhauer likewise argued that works of art express "Ideas" that transcend the individuals they might represent. This seems correct: Michelangelo's *Creation* does not merely present one particular occasion for awe before the infinite; it expresses awe before the infinite *itself*, in its general form, and we see it as such.) When we engage with a fine work of art, we attune ourselves to concerns and conditions that are enjoyed and suffered by humankind quite generally; we are compelled to contemplate realities that surround us every day, but to which our selfish concerns so often blind us. In doing this, moreover, we come to care about interests beyond our own: we learn to feel with and for others—and so satisfy, however episodically, a wholly traditional requirement of morality. "Art transcends selfish and obsessive limitations of personality and can enlarge the sensibility of its consumer. It is a kind of goodness by proxy. Most of all it exhibits compassion. The realism of a great artist is not a photographic realism, it is essentially both pity and justice" (371).

It is not only in virtue of its more comprehensive content, however, that art invites us to regard the world more realistically. Murdoch argues that artistic form, too, promotes objective vision. This thought is somewhat more difficult to elucidate, but it helps to bear in mind (what seems to be) the intrinsic appeal of beautiful forms generally. Plato claimed, in this vein, that beauty is "the only spiritual thing which we love by instinct" (qtd. in "Sovereignty" 370). This is perhaps true, but Murdoch also wishes to advance a somewhat different, and deeper, claim for artistic form, namely that artistic form organizes into an intelligible unity what is arbitrary, chaotic, and multifarious in human experience, and does so without abandoning details and distinctions. Moreover, it does not do so to any *end* save the end of showing forth reality as clearly and vividly as possible. In this sense artistic form is also a kind of perceptible model of moral virtue; for virtue, Murdoch points out, is not a means to anything beyond itself. It is an instrument to nothing—and yet supremely valuable:

> [L]iterature and painting [. . .] show us the peculiar sense in which the concept of virtue is tied on to the human condition. They show us the absolute pointlessness of virtue while exhibiting its supreme importance; the enjoyment of art is a training in the love of virtue. The pointlessness of art is not the pointlessness of a game; it is the pointlessness of human life itself, and form in art is properly the simulation of the self-contained aimlessness of the universe. Good art reveals what we are usually too selfish and too timid to recognise, the minute and absolutely random detail of the world, and reveals it together with a sense of unity and form. This form often seems to us mysterious because it resists the easy patterns of the fantasy, whereas there is nothing mysterious about the forms of bad art. [. . .] Good art shows us how difficult it is to be objective by showing us how differently the world looks to an objective vision. We are presented with a truthful image of the human condition in a form which can be steadily contemplated; and indeed this is the only context in which many of us are capable of contemplating it at all. ("Sovereignty" 371)

I said earlier that it is in some respects easier for us to look carefully at the complexity and uncertainty and imperfection of human nature when

this is presented in a fictional narrative than when it figures in our own lives. There is, of course, one quite mundane reason why this should be so: we are not ourselves either threatened or called to action by the characters and events in fiction. You can do nothing to rescue Antigone from her terrible death or to help Hamlet out of his despair. You can only watch their fates unfold; you are unable to intervene and, when the play concludes, your own fate will be untouched by theirs. In consequence, you have no vested interest in distorting and veiling the true nature of what you observe; here your desires need not drive your beliefs as they may do in respect of the twists and turns your own fate, or that of your friends, children, lovers. But Murdoch's comments also suggest a more profound account of why the great novel, and other works of art, enable us to better achieve an "objective vision": its very form reconstructs the hapless and often senseless world of human affairs into a reality that is both beautiful and intelligible—and does this without falsifying its complexity and terror. It transforms our experience into something we can love without illusions. And surely this is no small part of what it is to perceive the Good: for, as Murdoch claims, "no love is entirely without worth, even when the frivolous calls to the frivolous and the base to the base. But it is in the nature of love to discern good, and the best love is in some part at any rate a love of what is good" (*The Nice* 333).

Notes

1. I shall use the masculine forms of personal pronouns throughout. If moral excellence depends either directly or indirectly on a capacity for imaginative empathy with perspectives independent of one's own, as Murdoch suggests, then such excellence might be promoted by the following practice: male writers shall make use of the feminine pronominal forms, and female writers of the masculine ones. Present social arrangements being as they are, this practice will prejudicially favor the appearance of female pronouns; but as I am myself female I am not inclined to press this objection.
2. This conception of philosophy's proper methods and aims is of course now unfashionable. One should bear in mind that Murdoch's work was largely informed by the milieu in which she was trained and subsequently

taught, namely the milieu of postwar Oxbridge philosophy. The key protagonists in that milieu were paradigmatic "analytic" philosophers, so-called: Gilbert Ryle, R. M Hare, Stuart Hampshire, and A. J. Ayer, all of whom were much impressed by Wittgenstein's linguistic approach to philosophical analysis. These influences mattered to Murdoch's own view of philosophy, but in saying that I do not wish to suggest that we should dismiss that view as parochial: it is also a view that reflects over two thousand years of philosophical practice from Plato to the present day. Moreover, Murdoch enjoyed some acquaintance with German and French post-Kantian philosophy, and took a particular interest in Sartre. She also familiarized herself with some of the writings of Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. Thus, Murdoch was not ignorant of alternatives to the conception of philosophy noted above; immersed as she was in classical ancient philosophy, however, it is unsurprising (and in my own view no bad thing) that she remained in sympathy with mainstream traditions.

3. A few paradigmatic exercises in meta-ethics (beyond Plato's dialogues) are sections I and 3 of Kant's *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*; the introduction to Mill's *Utilitarianism*; Book IV of Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation*; G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*; and Hare's *The Language of Morals*. More recently, meta-ethics has been represented by the neo-rationalism of Alan Gewirth, Michael Smith, and Christine Korsgaard, and by the debates between realists and anti-realists in which have featured, among others, Bernard Williams, John McDowell, Crispin Wright, and Simon Blackburn.

4. Here, Aristotle and Hume provide the classical and modern paradigms, followed by Schopenhauer's *On the Basis of Morality* and Nietzsche's *A Genealogy of Morals* (and to a lesser extent *Beyond Good and Evil*); contemporary exemplars are Alan Gibbard, David Gauthier, and, perhaps less obviously, Bernard Williams.

5. So Murdoch's different world is in this respect the ordinary world which was exiled from reality in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, and which he later tried to reinstate in his *Philosophical Investigations*.

6. That is, the portrait features the property named in the predicate phrase "depicts so-and-so," and the still life possesses that named in the predicate phrase "depicts a bowl of apples and pears."

7. Neurological injury (for example, that resulting from some kinds of encephalitus) can leave a person musically "deaf," unable to discern the patterns in series and simultaneous soundings of tones that constitute musical patterns for the normal subject.

8. This view of moral motivation is sometimes referred to as "internalism," for it holds that what it is to understand some moral statement is inseparable from the motivational force associated with it; that force is internal to the act of understanding.

9. Similarly, some have argued that the appreciation of musical aspects necessarily involves some affective and motivational engagement on the part of the listener; this is not a claim that I can defend here, but it may serve as a useful analogy.

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