

The Evolution of Female Selfhood in  
Iris Murdoch's Fictions

# 艾丽丝·默多克小说中 女性自我的嬗变研究

徐明莺 著

外国文学研究丛书

海外  
文学



厦门大学出版社 国家一级出版社  
XIAMEN UNIVERSITY PRESS 全国百佳图书出版单位

# 艾丽丝·默多克小说中 女性自我的嬗变研究

徐明莺 著



厦门大学出版社  
XIAMEN UNIVERSITY PRESS

国家一级出版社  
全国百佳图书出版单位

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

艾丽丝·默多克小说中女性自我的嬗变研究:英文/徐明莺著. —厦门:厦门大学出版社,2016.10  
ISBN 978-7-5615-6299-4

I. ①艾… II. ①徐… III. ①艾丽丝·默多克-小说研究-英文 IV. ①I561.074

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2016)第 260421 号

出 版 人 蒋东明  
责任编辑 孟令娟  
封面设计 李夏凌  
责任印制 许克华

出版发行 厦门大学出版社  
社 址 厦门市软件园二期望海路 39 号  
邮政编码 361008  
总 编 办 0592-2182177 0592-2181406(传真)  
营销中心 0592-2184458 0592-2181365  
网 址 <http://www.xmupress.com>  
邮 箱 [xmupress@126.com](mailto:xmupress@126.com)  
印 刷 厦门集大印刷厂

开本 720mm×1000mm 1/16  
印张 10.25  
插页 2  
字数 220 千字  
版次 2016 年 10 月第 1 版  
印次 2016 年 10 月第 1 次印刷  
定价 49.00 元

本书如有印装质量问题请直接寄承印厂调换



厦门大学出版社  
微信二维码



厦门大学出版社  
微博二维码

本书由

大连市人民政府资助出版

The published book is sponsored  
by the Dalian Municipal Government

## 前言

艾丽丝·默多克是二战后英国文坛颇具影响力的小说家和哲学家。有别于同时代的女性主义者，她在文学创作上偏爱男性的叙事视角，刻意回避自己作为女性作家的创作身份，崇尚低调女权运动。这使她对女性人物的塑造和对女性问题的思考具有迥异于其他女性作家的写实性与客观性。二战后，随着传统的理性和道德价值观念的摧毁，作为二元对立系统中的弱势群体，女性面临着如何在新的语境下重塑女性自我身份的困境，这也是默多克在她的作品中探索的重要内容。本书结合默多克的哲学观点及其创作的时代背景，通过基于她不同创作阶段作品的文本分析，对作品中女性人物的自我身份的解构和重构进行了整体性研究，揭示了女性在丧失了传统语境下的自我之后如何通过自我意识觉醒和自我身份建构来重建自我，并最终达到默多克追求的终极目标——“善”的境界。导论部分介绍了默多克的主要文学成就以及针对女性和女性问题的哲学观点，梳理了中西方学界对默多克作品及其作品中女性人物的研究现状。除了导论和结语部分之外，本书主体部分由四部分组成。

第一部分阐述了默多克小说中女性的自我解构。通过对《逃离巫师》中的三位女性境遇的对比分析，从女性自我意识、女性身份和女性自我三个方面分别展示女性自我身份缺乏所呈现出的整体碎片化状态：在以男权为主导的社会中，即使良好的家庭出身也无法保证年轻女性摆脱成长过程中必将遭遇的自我意识危机和自我意识的破碎状态；在战争灾难中，女性难民更承受着由性别和政治决定的双重边缘化困境，经济上的独立不足以摆脱来自于政治特权与男权的控制，女性身份的建构更是难以实现；此外，默多克还塑造了女性自我处于分裂状态、拒绝关注他人和周围的真实世界的知识女性形象，通过描写女性在利用政治和种族优势构建以女性为主导的权力体系时的失败，进一步揭示了男权在两性关系构建中的绝对主导地位。

第二部分着重研究了《相当体面的失败》中女性人物所面临的女性自我缺失的困境及她们寻找自我和探索生活意义的过程。默多克把形式和偶合的概念运用于女性人物塑造，在此作品中女性人物摇摆于形式和偶合之间，并试图将固定不变的世界的形式与生活的琐碎和不确定性结合起来。这种变化表现出默多克笔下的女性人物已开始自我反思并逐步拥有思辨能力，



初步形成了女性意识。然而，摩根和希尔达两姐妹的境遇对比表明女性逐步建立的自我意识并未被男权主导的意识形态所接纳。摩根代表了受教育的现代女性，但其混乱落魄的生活与对男性非议的承受与传统女性希尔达享受优越富足的生活和来自于男性的赞美都形成了鲜明的对比。默多克藉此表明教育虽然可以改变女性的命运，但如果这种改变不被男权世界接受，仍会沦为女性获得自我意识的障碍。

第三部分全面论述了《黑王子》中女性自我的建构。默多克在这部小说中再次关注年轻女性的成长并探讨了女性在拥有相对于传统女性更多的自由之后，该如何对男性视域中的女性地位重新思考以及如何按照自我的意志对人生进行重新定位。默多克通过三个女人不同的人生观和婚姻观及其由此引发的不同境遇表明：接受教育并不能必然使女性拥有健全的女性自我，女性自我的完整性在于经济层面和精神层面的双重独立。默多克在小说中采用了男性第一人称叙事的方法，并在小说结尾以四个当事人的后记对布拉德雷叙事文本的确定意义进行了解构，完成了女性个体与女性间从失声到发声、从沉默到沟通的叙述主线，重塑了女性建立女性身份的过程。

第四部分探讨了小说《善的学徒》中女性自我在真实世界中的重新建构以及在爱与善的影响下与外在世界达成妥协的过程。这部小说中，默多克笔下的女性人物不仅具有强烈的自我，而且还意识到外在于自我的他人及世界的存在，并在善的指引下，逐渐消解意识中的“自我”，通过“关注”他者进而发现“他性”世界的实在性。此外，默多克还鲜见地刻画了女性权利人物，反奴为主并占据家庭的统治地位，对长期遭受的男权控制和压迫进行反击和报复。但二元对立的打破与主导地位的获取却未能使得女性获得完整的自我。同时，默多克也探讨了女性如何在充满偶在的真实世界中重新定位自我身份的问题以及如何在爱与善的帮助下与偶然世界达成妥协。默多克指出，只有通过关注外在于自我的他人及世界的存在，女性才能在树立女性自我意识、确立了自我身份、进而建构女性自我之后走上向善之路。

本书以对默多克主要创作阶段的典型作品中女性人物的分析为框架结构，关注其中女性人物自我的解构状态和重构过程，进而深化对于默多克关于女性自我和女性问题的哲学思想的理解。以默多克的哲学观点为视角，通过对其小说进行文本细读和女性人物分析，可发现默多克对女性处境和女性问题不但一直持续关注，而且其笔下女性的自我身份还历经了从解构到重构的嬗变。她对女性问题的思考，对女性境遇的刻画以及她对于女性独立、女性教育的关注都渗透了她关于自我、关注、善、爱等哲学观点。女性人物塑造中体现的渐进变化也体现了默多克本人在女性问题上的认识论发展，其中体现的见解深化并拓展了她的哲学思想。

本书由大连市人民政府资助出版。

# Contents

## **Preface /1**

## **Chapter One**

The Fragmentation of the Female Selfhood in *The Flight from the Enchanter* /12

I . The Disruption of Women's Self-Awareness /13

II . The Marginalization of Women's Identity /22

III . The Disintegration of Female Self /28

## **Chapter Two**

The Growth of Female Self-Consciousness in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* /36

I . Quest for the Female Self-Awareness /37

II . Attempt to Unite Form with Contingency /47

III . Self-Liberation from Androcentric Fantasy /58

## **Chapter Three**

The Establishment of Female Identity in *The Black Prince* /63

I . Reorientation of Self-Identification with the Freedom of Choice /66

II . Completeness of Female Individuality by Achieving Independence /71

III . Empowerment through Feminine Narrative in the Male Supremacy /80



## Chapter Four

Integration of Female Self in *The Good Apprentice* /90

I . Decentralization of the Patriarchal Household /94

II . Reconciliation with the Real World /107

III . Self-Actualization on Women's Pilgrimage to Goodness /114

Epilogue /120

Bibliography /127

附 录 /133



## Preface

Dame Iris Murdoch (July 1919–February 1999) was a renowned Irish-born British novelist, distinguished philosopher and respected literary theorist. Murdoch was a prolific writer who has published many literary works, including twenty-six novels, six plays, five books of philosophy, a short story, two volumes of poetry, and many essays on philosophy and aesthetic. As a significant figure of post-war British life, Murdoch has been critically acclaimed for her achievement in literature. She received the Black Memorial Prize for *The Black Prince*, the Whitbread Literary Award for Fiction for *The Sacred and Profane Love Machine* and the Booker McConnell Prize for *The Sea, The Sea*. Moreover, she was named Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1987, made a companion of Literature by the Royal Society of Literature in 1987, and awarded the National Arts Club's (New York) Medal of Honor for Literature in 1990. Her first published novel, *Under the Net*, was selected in 2001 as one of Modern Library's 100 best English-language novels of the 20th century. And, in 2008, *The Times* named Murdoch among their list of "The 50 greatest British writers since 1945".

Without a doubt, Murdoch is one of the most celebrated writers of the second half of the twentieth century for her creation of philosophical works and novels. Her novels are so complex and challenging that "of all the post-war English novelists she has the greatest intellectual range, the deepest rigour" (Conradi, 2001: 595). Implanting her philosophical views in her novel writing, Murdoch highly concerns about political and social issues of good and evil, male-female relationship, power manipulation, the inner lives of individuals, and the problem of morality in a godless or post-god age. Among all her originalities, the original understanding of "self" in the philosophical sense and the unique viewpoint to approach women's problems in the fiction distinguish Murdoch from the contemporary writers.

Aware of many women's situation as being "caged and exploited" (Khogeer, 2005: 222) and conscious of the unfairness of a world in which a married woman



is just “a subdivision of her husband’s mind”(Khogeer, 2005: 168), Murdoch fiercely objects to any form of feminism which is a form of separatism: “The point of liberation is not, and this is to differ with certain views of women’s lib, to say we’re better, or we’re special, or we’re wonderful, but just to be equal, to be ordinary, to join the human race, to be people, just people like everybody else” (Dooley, 2003: 83). Furthermore, women “should join in all human activities including those previously enjoyed only by men” (Khogeer, 2005: 222). As far as her portrayal of women in the novels is concerned in the interview with Afaf Jamil Khogeer in 1989, when asked about what helps her to “explore the options of contemporary women” in her novel, Murdoch replied that she just “write[s] about people and their dilemmas [and] ... see[s] the problems of women and of men” (Khogeer, 2005: 223) while she views her heroines as “individuals” rather than “symbols of civilization” (Khogeer, 2005: 223). As Margaret Moan Rowe puts it, “Murdoch asserts that men and women are the same. ... Then she goes on to suggest there is a great difference: somehow men are already there. Their presence defines the human race. Women have to join the human race and a principal route to that connection is education” (Rowe, 2004: 80). As a result, Murdoch seldom addresses gender issues and is even averse to partiality towards the depiction of gender in her novels.

Annoyed at the idea of a separatist movement for women, Murdoch differentiates herself from contemporary feminist writers and doesn’t get involved in the battle directly against social exploitation and suppression of women. However, the scarcity of her writing on female subject matter does not necessarily imply an absence of any interest in gender issues. Instead of direct and specific depiction of women’s inequitable lives, Murdoch illuminates women’s problems and plights as they actually are, while considering those of the human being as a whole. She lets facts speak for themselves. She even prefers to use the first male-narrator to conceal her status as a female writer. Her comparatively objective viewpoint makes her illustration of the political status of women and the marginal positions in which women are controlled, enslaved or imprisoned by males more reflective and introspective. The other factors that set Iris Murdoch apart from her contemporary writers are her emphasis on personal growth in morality and her philosophical thinking in her novel writing. Thus, regardless of her unwillingness to admit the consideration of women’s issue in her novels, Murdoch’s interest in

the themes of gender and sexuality could be found throughout her fiction.

In her novel creation, Murdoch explores deeply the female selfhood from destruction to reconstruction and expresses her view of female selfhood, through composing female characters, that the real way to reconstruct the destructive female selfhood is the dignity and security of economic independence, spiritual freedom and self-improvement, instead of self-pity and the attachment to men. Furthermore, Murdoch also points out that the establishment of female selfhood is not to overthrow the male authority and replace it with the female authority, but to pay more attention to others and complete female self with love. In order to better understand her fictional representations of the establishment female self, one must fully consider the author's moral stance, especially her interpretation of the philosophical term "self" since it is "a central interest of Murdoch's thought for forty years, and ... perhaps the greatest source of her influence on ethical inquiry" (Antonaccio, 2000: 86).

The concept of the self is the starting-point for Murdoch's broader philosophical vision, which depends on the capacity of the individual to have meaningful inner experience and to recognize and experience different levels of consciousness. What Murdoch wishes to establish, the necessary concept around which her philosophy is constructed, is a robust understanding of the self, which includes an active inner life and a substantive conception of consciousness. (Widdows, 2004: 21)

For Murdoch, self is composed of "an active inner life and a substantive conception of consciousness" (Widdows, 2004: 21). "To deny the self, consciousness and the inner life is, for Murdoch, to deny the reality of the individual and to ignore an important source of knowledge, particular moral knowledge" (Widdows, 2004: 21). Beside, "[t]he moral philosophy of Iris Murdoch presents an important challenge to current ethical inquiry: the effort to reclaim a notion of the self as individual and to preconceive its relation to an idea of moral value or the good" (Antonaccio, 2000: 3). Obviously, Murdoch relates an idea of the good to the self that conceives consciousness and inner life.

Considering the importance of "self" in Murdoch's philosophy and the issue of women's problems in her fiction, the book is expected to contribute to a certain line of reflection on the reconstruction of female selfhood in the destructive era and the way for women to achieve goodness in a godless or post-god age,



which are of great importance to women's recognition as a free and independent human being through the analysis of the representative novels in her different creation stages. Spanning more than forty years, her fiction depicts a broad range of female characters who endeavor to reconstruct their women's selfhood and survive their own plights where their selfhood is not only systematically subordinated, diminished, and belittled as it is traditionally but also deconstructed by the changing sociocultural conditions and even by the women's liberation movements in modern society. Considering Murdoch's philosophical ideas and the sociohistorical background, the book conducts a comprehensive study and analysis on the female characters to illustrate the progressive changes in the deconstruction and reconstruction of female selfhood in her fiction from the growth of female-consciousness, to the establishment of female identity, and to the integration of female self on the pilgrimage to goodness.

The criticism on Murdoch's philosophical work and novels progressed from the argument on her status as a philosophical novelist or as a realistic novelist and the in-depth interpretation on her philosophical essays, interviews and novels to find the answer in the 1960s and 1970s, to criticism on her importance in philosophy and reexamination of her philosophical thoughts and fiction writing under the influence of Conradi's view of her as moral psychologist in the 1970s and 1980s, to the most recent phrase of criticism on Murdoch's relation to postmodernism and other new schools of criticisms.

Although Murdoch dodges to being included as a feminist writer and tries to conceal her gender in her literary creation, the feminist interpretations of her novels are flourishing in recent years from a cautious start when Gary Goshgarian argues the reflection of the stereotyping of women prevalent in western culture in Murdoch's novels in his book *From Fable to Flesh* and suggests Murdoch's feminist concerns in "Feminist Values in the Novels of Iris Murdoch" as

Her novels explore not the forthright belief in female inferiority but the subtler effects of men building fantasies around women who are turned into objects for men's romantic projections.  
(Goshgarian, 1972: 519)

In 1979, Carol Seiler-Franklin analyzed some female figures in Murdoch's novels

in his exploration on how women writers portray various female characters in his book *Boulder-Pushers: Women in the Fiction of Margaret Drabble, Doris Lessing, and Iris Murdoch*, concluding that the men's disdain for women stems from "women cannot accept themselves as women and this is the basic problem. Because they are afraid of their femininity, they are incapable of being men's equal partners" (Seiler-Franklin, 1980: 203).

In the second period appeared the first recognized feminist study, Deborah Johnson's *Iris Murdoch* (1987), which applies the feminist critical theory to the evaluation of Murdoch's fiction to explore Murdoch's relationship both to modernist writing and to "female Gothic" and her unique handling of love and sexuality with the conclusion that

There remains an undeniable split in Iris Murdoch's writing, a split between cerebration and emotion, mind and body, philosophy and poetry, "masculine" and "feminine" spheres of experience and attainment. It reflects faithfully enough the divisions in our traditional Western culture.... (Johnson, 1987: 112)

And another notable study is Gabriele Griffin's book *The Influence of the Writings of Simone Weil on the Fiction of Iris Murdoch* (1989) which considers how the concepts like "selflessness" "knowing the void" and "attention" in Weil's moral philosophy find expressions in Murdoch's novels and further influence the development of character, especially that of female figures.

These early studies on the women's problems and the characterization of female figures in Murdoch's fiction and her attitudes to women in her philosophical writings have made considerable contributions to the interpretation and appreciation of Murdoch's work. When it comes to the end of the twentieth century, the studies concerning gender and sexuality in her works appear to be diverse and flourishing. Among these works, four are singled out for their special perspectives: Tammy Grimshaw's *Sexuality, Gender and Power in Iris Murdoch's Fiction* (2005), Elizabeth Mary Tomazic's *Ariadne's Thread: Women and Labyrinths in the Fiction of A.S. Byatt and Iris Murdoch* (2005), Afaf Khogeer's *Women in the Fiction of Iris Murdoch and Margaret Drabble* (2005), and Sabina Lovibond's *Iris Murdoch, Gender and Philosophy* (2011). Tammy Grimshaw explores the homosexuality and feminism in the representative works of Murdoch's fiction, the Foucauldian reading of her major novels, as well as



gender freedom such as bisexuality and transvestism reflected in her works. What the critical accounts of Mary Tomazic and Afaf Khogeer on gender as an issue in Murdoch's writings have in common is that both of them make a comparison between Murdoch and another famous female writer to study their disparities and similarities while Mary investigates the journey toward a sense of identity through the appreciation of the lives of others and Khogeer concerns about the socio-psychological study of human relationships of the female characters. Claimed as "the first thorough exploration of Murdoch and gender", Sabina Lovibond's work explores Murdoch's stance towards gender and feminism in her novels as well as in her moral philosophy and then reflects on what philosophy can be and what women might be as public intellectuals.

Although late in getting started, the studies on Iris Murdoch in China are abundant in content and involved in an extensive range from the theme study, to the appreciation of her novels from various perspectives, and to the interpretation of her views in morality, religion and philosophy. The most prominent and comprehensive research result is He Weiwen's *Art and Morals: Iris Murdoch's Fictional World* (2012), which elaborates on Murdoch's writing ideas, theory of fiction and artistic style through an exhaustive analysis of her major novels. Besides the introduction, definition and elucidation of the relevant philosophical and ethical conceptions, he delineates and sorts the ideological inheritance between Murdoch and some other philosophers. The other notable full-length studies, by Ma Huiqin (*Reconstruction as a Writing Strategy: An Ethical Study of Iris Murdoch's Fiction*, 2008) and Fan Lingming (*Path to Goodness: Ethical Interpretation of Iris Murdoch's Fiction*, 2010), provide, with different emphases, detailed expositions of the novels in the light of Murdoch's philosophical writings. Besides, Xu Jian (2010) focuses on the study of Murdoch's philosophy from the perspective of quasi-existentialism in *Free Existence and Existent Belief: Quasi-existentialist Study on Iris Murdoch's Philosophy* and Yue Guofa (2008) concerns about the rhetoric of type and ethical narration in Murdoch's fiction in *Types of Rhetoric and Narrative Theories: Studies on Iris Murdoch's Novels*.

Very few existing studies pay close attention to criticism on Murdoch's changes in the characterization of female characters, especially their self-improvement and self-growth, in her writing career as a whole and her notions of feminism reflected in her fiction.

Although Murdoch's novels have been widely studied and evaluated from various perspectives, none of the existing studies deal with the changes in her portrayal of female characters in her different creation stages from the deconstruction of the traditional female selfhood to its progressive reconstruction. Considering women issue and self are two important concerns in Murdoch philosophy and fiction, the lack—especially in studies dealing with Murdoch's treatments of female self in different periods—urged the illumination of the shadowed corners of this aspect. For a full appreciation of her fiction, one should understand the importance of “self” to Murdoch in her philosophy and perform a careful analysis of her treatment of female figures in her fiction.

This book aims to contribute to a better understanding of Murdoch's depiction of women's fragmented selfhood in the deconstructive era and their reconstructive endeavors to obtain female consciousness, female identity and finally complete self through the analysis of the female characters in the novels *The Flight from the Enchanter* (1956), *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* (1970), *The Black Prince* (1973) and *The Good Apprentice* (1985). Furthermore, it attempts to supply a new angle of view to appreciate Murdoch's fiction and illustrate Murdoch's views on women's selfhood through her portrayal of female characters. Murdoch's philosophical ideas and concepts, as the best index and explanation to her own novels, will provide theoretical basis for this book. Meanwhile, some concepts will be redefined and some ideas will be reinterpreted for the consideration of the particularity of women's situation. The focal point of the study is that in the process of establishing female selfhood, Murdoch's characterization of women characters reveals a progressive change in women's ongoing exploration of female selfhood and reflects the author's views on the women's problem that are not mentioned in her essays.

As the analysis will be performed mainly under the framework of Murdoch's moral philosophy, the interpretation of some key concepts appears to be necessary. The starting point for such an investigation is a review of the author's theories of self, which have been published in essays, articles and interviews. “For Murdoch, this picture of the self as an individual with active inner life is fundamental for any moral philosophy” (Widdows, 2004: 21). And considering “the individual self as a primary concept of human experience” (Widdows, 2004: 35), the viable concept





of self “depends on the capacity of the individual to have meaningful inner experience and to recognize and experience different levels of consciousness” (Widdows, 2004: 21), that is, “an active inner life and a substantive conception of consciousness” (Widdows, 2004: 21). As far as the analysis of the establishment of female selfhood is concerned, being self-consciousness refers to the ability to introspect and examine one’s inner self, desires and feelings in order to know oneself as an individual while inner life could be interpreted as the continual process of self-cognition that makes an individual definable and recognizable in interpersonal relationships. The inner life is important for identity formation that is the process of the development of the distinct personality of an individual because it deals with the individual in relation. And self is the substantial nature of an individual that enable him/her to have a full understanding of oneself with self-consciousness and to be definable and recognizable in the relations with self-identity on the reception of reality. Moreover, selfhood refers to the fully developed self-achievement by the connection to others through “attention” (Murdoch, 1997: 327).

The impossibility to examine all twenty-six novels in detail in the book of this length necessitates a certain amount of selection. I prefer to classify Murdoch’s fiction into three chronological periods, which are the early period (1935-1966), the middle period (1968-1985), and the later period (1988-1996), for the virtue of simplicity and the conviction of the change and growth as it is seen in the novels over the whole of her career. In a close analysis of four novels that typically represent the stages in her literary career and particularly apt to illustrate my argument, her treatment of female figures provides a precise means of describing and assessing women’s growth from the fragmented female selfhood finally to the integrated female selfhood with growing female consciousness and established female identity. Besides the introduction and conclusion, the book contains four chapters.

Chapter One presents Murdoch’s depiction of the fragmented female selfhood in *The Flight from the Enchanter*. In the early period of her writing, Murdoch concerns herself more with the disintegration of the long-established female selfhood as “the Angel in the House” after the social and political unrest. Still marginalized and disparaged in the patriarchal culture and discourse, women in this novel are respectively faced with the plights of disruptive self-consciousness, marginalized identity and disintegrated female self, though they



are provided with more opportunities for job and education. For Murdoch, the process of the disintegration of the female selfhood is irreversible, and the roots of this disintegration are formulated at a much deeper level than the roots of the disintegration of the male selfhood in contemporaneous texts. The young protagonist Annette, though born in a wealthy and decent family, is dominated by the androcentric fantasy and takes every effort to make herself more self-conscious to build up some kind of relation with the male and prove her own existence by their treatment to her. Unfortunately, all of her efforts to be self-conscious prove to be a dead end because of her failure to recognize herself as her own real savior. As a woman refugee under the dual oppressions, Nina has great difficulty in voicing herself and building relationships with the people around to improve her marginalized identity. Nina's aphasia state as a refugee for the land of her birth and her enslavement as a woman for the gender of her birth make her autonomy establishment impossible. She chooses the self-destruction as her final struggle against the social and patriarchal suppression on her. Aware of her own needs and being successful in building identity in the relationships, Rosa is Murdoch's main concern in this novel as the one with the disintegrated self for her personal weaknesses in specific and female limitations in general that obstruct the building of her in-relation self, which is reflected in her disposal of three pairs of relationships: Rosa and the Lusiewicz brothers, Rosa and Mischa, and Rosa and other female characters in the novel. This chapter will demonstrate women's fragmented state without a complete selfhood in this novel and then analyze Murdoch's intention with the fact that all of these women are eager to flight from male enchanter who usually imposes physical confinement as well as mental and spiritual confinement.

Chapter Two examines the growth of female self-consciousness in *A Fairly Honourable Defeat*. In the middle period, Murdoch's depiction of the female characters reflects these social changes accordingly as these women's views on marriage and career are consistent with opportunities increasingly available to women in the 1970s. Murdoch uses this powerful theme of a changed and revised world as the social context where the female undergo the growth of female consciousness through the quest for the female self-awareness as an individual, liberation for androcentric fantasy controlled by men and attempt to unite form with contingency in their life. In this novel, Murdoch depicts Morgan Brown's career and a seemingly independent life which Murdoch's previous female