

Existential Despair in Old Age: An Analysis of Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea*

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Approval

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Abstract

This thesis explores the notion of existential crisis represented in the self-told story of the character Charles Arrowby in *The Sea, The Sea* by Iris Murdoch. It delves into the challenges one faces in changed reality such as the retirement even if the changes were planned beforehand. The paper aims to focus on Arrowby's situation through existentialism by highlighting how true authenticity can be achieved, how the navigation of human relationships is affected by it and how understanding of the past experiences can change a person. One of the major aspects of the novel is being delusional, therefore, this paper will focus on delusion through existential lenses. The purpose of this paper is to show that the characters are the reflections of modern men who overcome vanity. It aims to show how the dissatisfaction of the twentieth century modern man can be turned into satisfaction with the acceptance of imperfections. One of the many aspects of the research is that the purposeless characters survive through the meaninglessness of life and overcome the delusion, jealousy, arrogance, and vanity after letting themselves be their authentic selves. It will discuss how some people may achieve authenticity earlier than others and how it may take some a long time before being able to attain it. Moreover, it will also express the possibility of attaining authenticity even for the person who lived inauthentically for the most part of life through the protagonist of the novel. This thesis will focus on how through finding the authentic self, a modern man without purpose can annihilate despair. It will show how the author's view on moral philosophy comes to play in the novel in relation to existentialism.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of living has always been a topic of interest for human beings. People often question whether there is a meaning to life or if it's meaningless why one should continue to live. It is the core issue that existentialism delves into. After the horror WW2 caused and the way it affected individuals, existentialism became a central topic for the philosophers and it emerged as a philosophical movement during the 20th century. It is relevant to today's world because of the existential crisis people experience now. Many factors are the cause behind this crisis including the economical and social system that only lead to vanity and alienation. In existential literature, writers often demonstrate the struggles of being disconnected from others, the inability to accept the consequences of one's free actions, the difficulty in understanding freedom and they express the complex existence of human beings through the characters. This thesis demonstrates the effect of existential struggles on modern men with their individuality, moral dilemma and social relationships and expresses the way to achieve authenticity in life through dismantling the life events of a literary character, Charles Arrowby. He is the main character in Iris Murdoch's novel *The Sea, The Sea*. He is a representation of the supposedly successful modern man who has spent youth in gaining fame, is filled with vanity and is unable to maintain relationships. The paper will express how with the right understanding of life and of himself, he can overcome the struggles in the existential light.

This thesis will demonstrate how authenticity and transcendence can be achieved through James Arrowby and Charles Arrowby's characters, how attaining authenticity contribute to providing better relationship with people and the importance of confronting the past in it through Charles Arrowby and his relationships with his surrounding people and

past, and express the significance of memory in changing one's perception through Arrowby's reminiscence of past events.

1.1 Background

Though it was during the 20th century that existentialism became fiercely incorporated in the philosophical field, the existential thoughts could be traced back to the 18th century. The Genevan-French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1788) touched on some existential thoughts when talking about social inequalities. But the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) is often referred to as the earliest existentialist thinker. The basis of his existential thought was living authentically. Then the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) expanded the existential thoughts. He is known for the famous quote about God being dead. He criticised the religious practices and described the 'Übermensch'. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), another German philosopher also contributed enormously in existential philosophy. He emphasised free-will, responsibility and factual attributes of human beings. French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) expanded Heidegger's factual attributes and talked about authenticity, freedom and responsibility. He is famous for his contribution with his description of 'bad faith' in existentialism.

The Booker Prize winner novel *The Sea, The Sea* by Iris Murdoch (1919-1999) was published in 1978. Iris Murdoch was an Irish born British writer and philosopher. She incorporated her philosophies in her novels. During her time, existentialism as philosophy was at its peak. She expressed existential elements in her novel but she had a complex view on existentialism. She prioritised moral value, genuine love and relation with others more than the free will and responsibility that existentialists emphasise on. The main character Charles Arrowby from *The Sea, The Sea*, exhibits the existential crisis in his old age that

Murdoch shows can be overcome through her views on love and human relationships. This thesis will examine Arrowby overcoming his existential crisis through existentialism and show that people never lose their chance to find authenticity that makes living worth to them as Arrowby found it in his old age and continued to live despite the events he went through. It will express how authenticity can be achieved and how it chases away the negative human emotions like jealousy, vanity etc.

1.2 Overview of the Text

The Sea, The Sea mainly focuses on the character Charles Arrowby, a famous retired director who willingly left the glamorous world of theatre and decided to stay at a house near the sea. Murdoch presented the character as self-absorbed from the beginning; and the genre of memoir writing and diary writing are used for Arrowby's self-assertion. Throughout the novel Arrowby is seen as a manipulator who only cares about his desires, yet he is always unhappy. However, at the end of the novel he comes to understand his issues and sets himself free. This journey to freedom initially starts when he re-encounters his childhood love Hartley after a long period and it ends with him understanding his obsession with his youth. The major turning point for his character comes from the deaths of Titus, the adopted son of Hartley and of his cousin James. James was the only surviving member of his family whom he was always jealous of and badmouthed about, but never could cut off from his life.

The existential elements are present in the novel from the beginning as Charles left his glamorous life of theatre and gave up the materialistic view of life and wanted to find authenticity in life. Charles always lived in self-deception as he thought himself to be an unforgettable figure of the theatre industry who reached the top only through hard work. However, as the memoir progresses, we learn that he indeed received help from a famous actress of that period named Clement whom he claimed to love and to be loved by her. The

self-deception becomes very clear when he encounters Hartley. He proceeds to live in the illusion that Hartley is unhappy in her marriage and still loves him despite her rejection each time he tries to make her confess her love for him. In his illusion of Hartley being in an abusive marriage and her still loving him, he ends up kidnapping her. Love is problematized here. It is a valid question whether he really loved her. He claims that he always loved her; yet, he was the one who left her and forgot about her for more than forty years. He only remembered her when he met her after his retirement. Kidnapping Hartley and making things up about her supposedly abusive marriage are the prime examples of his living an inauthentic and self-deceptive life, even though he claimed he wanted to find authenticity in his retirement. He finally finds authenticity at the end of the novel when he comes to terms with his past and is able to set him free.

1.3 Research Objectives

The thesis aims to explore the navigation of relationships in a modern man's life, how the dynamics of the relationships are affected by achieving authenticity, how memory can lead to both self-deception and growth, how understanding one's self and individuality lead towards authenticity and the roles grief and loss play in one's life through examining Charles Arrowby's character and the events he described in his memoir.

1.4 Methodology and Research Questions

To conduct the research, I have used the qualitative method. I have searched for articles where existentialists' like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre's notion of existentialism are talked about.

I have searched for their views on authenticity, their perspectives on the individual's relationship with others in society and on the individual's memory. I have found their perspectives on bad faith, self-deception, freedom, responsibility along with similarities and dissimilarities that the thesis explores. This thesis will investigate how the modern man can still achieve authenticity in old age and how complexities of life in old age like isolation, grief and loss help in that notion. It will also explore the complex relationship of human beings and how it affects one's identity. It will express the formation of individuality and identity and its effect on how one lives his life through describing authentic and inauthentic ways of life. For this paper I have prepared some research questions that will be answered through analysing the characters of the novel.

1. How does individuality assist to live authentic life and how does authenticity help overcome vanity?
2. How can modern man establish authentic human relationships?
3. How does memory contribute to self-deception and growth?

1.5 Rationale

In the modern world, people often suffer from a crisis in identity and with the complexities of relationships with others. The novel touches these aspects of human life in a significant manner. It also portrays the position of memory in self-deception and its impact on human relationships and identity. Iris Murdoch not only provides a scope to understand the complex relationships of people, its relation with memory and identity but also an opportunity to understand it with existentialism through exploring freedom, accountability and consequences.

1.6 Literature Review

This chapter of the thesis is sectioned into four parts which are named portrayal of authenticity, human relationships in existentialism and memory and deception. The sections mostly refer to the talks about different existentialist thinkers including Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Søren Kierkegaard, Simone de Beauvoir, Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel's existential philosophies regarding authenticity, relationships and memory. In the last section, Iris Murdoch's moral philosophy and its relation to the novel are referred to.

1. *Portrayal of Authenticity*

Existentialism aims for people to embrace the fact that even if they find life as inherently meaningless and full of uncertainty, they should live authentically and find meaning of life in their own ways which in turn ensures an authentic life. Existentialists emphasise a person's free will and the freedom to choose which bear connection to one's ability to live authentically. "The first principle that all existentialist thinkers establish is that existence is the foundation of all possibilities and that human beings are free" (Igwe and Ekemezie 94). Many existentialists have described how one can live an authentic life and avoid inauthenticity.

Martin Heidegger in his *Being and Time*, says Dasein or human beings actualizes existence through living. Our existence might be without a reason but we can make the existence meaningful with the way we live our life. The meaning of human existence comes "by virtue of how and what he authentically makes out of it" (Igwe and Ekemezie 92-93). For Heidegger, human reality is that we exist with others and their reality puts the meaning to the individual existence. The individual reality is meaningful because others like him exist.

However, in understanding the reality of others, one cannot forget his individual reality and stray from authenticity. The individual must understand that there is nothing collective about his existence because his life is dependent on him and the way he chooses to live. He must remember the fact that just as he came to life alone, he will die alone too. Finding an authentic existence only re-enforces this notion about life. Heidegger suggests that living an authentic life means taking “ownership of action and inaction” (Igwe and Ekemezie 94). For an individual to live authentically in an existentialist sense, would impose him to have his own values and principles that help him to freely and consciously choose without yearning the public approval. This freedom of choice holds one responsible for their actions in life and makes life an authentic one. Heidegger says that an individual who lives inauthentically lets “himself to be swallowed up by the cares of the world” whereas, an authentic individual is able “to attain self-realization” (Igwe and Ekemezie 96). The individual living inauthentically gets lost in living collective life which does not occur in case of the authentic existence because here the person acknowledges his freedom and lives through it. Heidegger acknowledges that Dasein may be expected to accept being born but he has his own individuality. There are certain conditions of human life that are beyond his control like the fact that he is born without his consent. These conditions may seem limiting but they do not take away the freedom to act on one’s will. Heidegger advises that authenticity means “the existential call for self retrieval from the „they“ world” (Igwe and Ekemezie 97). It is possible for people to become lost in living in a collective form but they also have the ability to choose to avoid it as well. To avoid living the collective life a person must understand his individual self and take the decisions at his individual will rather than letting his surrounding people influence his decision.

Heidegger emphasises that Dasein is more than just what is at present because he can “project himself in his possibilities and live towards his projected self” (Agu 991-992). It is

the possibility aspect of him and there is another aspect for an individual where he just falls behind. An individual lives in the present with the possibility of the future but he can also fall behind this notion of possibility if he gets lost in living with others. Here he loses his ability to understand the self in his own terms, rather learns the self in regards with others. It only makes him lose the authenticity of himself.

Sartre describes that if a person meets “certain criteria” to be accepted as a Jew, he completes “someone else’s idea of what it is to be a Jew” (Baugh 477-478). It involves being inauthentic as here the person does not assume freedom and make the criteria for himself rather he denies his freedom by relying on others’ ideas and incorporating them in his personality. On the other hand, an individual can only be authentic if he takes responsibility for everything in life regardless of any situation or time. A person has the ability to choose and it is within his ability to decide where he should put a meaning to and what he should value. Sartre agrees with the belief of people having full freedom which in turn implies that people must be responsible for their choices too. They are responsible for their existence as a whole, even if there are some things in life that one cannot control or change such as one’s physical attributes. They should accept these uncontrollable attributes as their own and assume responsibility for their choices.

Sartre introduces bad faith in *Being and Nothingness* and shows the “inescapability” of it through the actions of both homosexual man and his friend where he suggests that the friend’s demand is an “exclusion of his transcendent capacity” as it contradicts the belief “what one is not (yet) but might be” (WEBERMAN 883). A strong presence of bad faith in a person denies him from living authentically, but it is also not possible to escape bad faith entirely. The homosexual man does not acknowledge himself as a homosexual though he acknowledges his activity in the past as one. He is certainly in bad faith because he deceives himself and contradicts his identity with past activity. His friend urges him to acknowledge

himself as one. The issue here is that the friend fails to acknowledge that the homosexual man might no longer stay homosexual in future. Thus he denies his friend's transcendence. This inescapability from bad faith makes one question if one can ever possibly get close to attaining authenticity. Sartre thinks one's intention of self-recovery from the earlier corruption might lead to the authentic living of the person. People may not fully escape the bad faith or from deceiving themselves but they can certainly take steps towards it with their intention of recovering from the corruption committed in the past and it would lead towards authenticity.

In *Being and Nothingness* and in *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Sartre brings examples of a waiter embracing "his group identity as if it were his very essence" and the conflict of a Jew with denying his factual attributes like abandoning the "naturally dark and curly beard" subsequently which results into contradiction (WEBERMAN 884-886). Both situations lead to inauthentic living. The cafe waiter embraces the attributes of waiter in describing group identity which too is a form of bad faith. The issue in this case is that the waiter limits himself as waiter and nothing else. He does not consider the possibility of a future where he might be something else, just like the friend of homosexual man not considering the possibility of his friend acquiring the activity of something other than being homosexual. Thus he too denies his transcendence. A person is different from others but whenever he tries to understand himself in a group identity, a constitution is bound to occur. So, it jeopardises the authenticity of the said person. Here his action also expresses bad faith. The conflict with the waiter's situation and the Jew's situation is that if the Jew assumes being Jew as his personality then he commits the same bad faith as the waiter but if he denies the Jewish attributes like having Jewish hair and beard, then it can be seen as denying his facticities. After all, accepting factual attributes is a must for authentic living. Then again admitting to being a Jew would constitute to limiting himself as Jew and thus a denial of the transcendence occurs. In this

situation, the conflict between facticity and transcendence is apparent and undoubtedly prevents leading an authentic life. Sartre does recognise this conflict and suggests understanding freedom in accordance with the facticities that are beyond our control. We have to recognise our circumstances and accept our factual conditions entirely while acknowledging our freedom. It is only after the complete acceptance of the facticities that we would be able to use them in an appropriate way and in accordance with freedom which is the only way to achieve authenticity. Therefore, in the Jew's case, he can identify as a Jew while accepting the factual attributes in a way he finds authentic like he can keep the dark and curly beard or he can shave it off. Also, instead of identifying with the group of Jews, believing in myths and practising in a universal manner, he can realise his circumstance, understand what being Jew means to him and practice in that regard.

Sartre specifies that one cannot simply avoid bad faith to live authentically because it would lead to one constituting himself to avoid bad faith which is a bad faith itself. The difficulty in escaping bad faith entirely leads one to question whether it is possible to gain authenticity with limited bad faith. The two examples of bad faith from Sartre that can justify the presence of limited bad faith in authentic life are of violence and lying. For Sartre, those who understand their own freedom, maintain "other's freedom" indicating that a violent person is not free himself and thus both remain in bad faith (Horton 84-85). Yet, Sartre acknowledges violence as sometimes necessary and a legitimate strategy identifying a bad faith as legitimate. Lying as a bad faith is also justified by him which indicates him accepting "the idea of a limited bad faith" (Horton 85). In politics, a leader may lie to his party members for reasons understood by both where they recognize their freedom and responsibility. As one has the freedom to lie with the understanding of the other, while the other has the understanding of being lied to with their choice, they both ought to take responsibility. Thus an authenticity with limited bad faith can occur. It is the same with the

violence because it may become important to use violence to gain freedom from an oppressor. Here, though violence is a bad faith, it can lead to authenticity due to the freedom of choice in conducting bad faith which can limit the notion of bad faith to an extent. The oppressed people recognise their freedom by rebelling with violence. But people must remember though bad faith can be limited, it cannot be eradicated. The important thing here is taking responsibility because without it, the bad faith would become limitless.

Friedrich Nietzsche deems Overman as someone living authentic life because Overman not only realises “the temporality of its possibilities” but also follows practices “self-elected by the means of a finite existence” (Simon 5). Overman refers to an ideal Christian man who practises self-appointed values rather than practising the values appointed by the church. The Overman gains authenticity because he does not succumb to the social influence of other men. Moreover, these values and ethics set by the church or Christian society are not established by God, but by the others and so following them only leads towards inauthentic life. The Overman makes rules and practices in his own terms with the understanding of the self while acknowledging his morality. It indicates that Overman accepts the facticity, the freedom of choice that comes with responsibility and understands the limits to which he can transcend. Thus he attains authenticity.

Heidegger emphasises “time to be the fundamental groundwork” and acknowledges the “existential void” of Dasein (Simon 4-7). People are responsible for the decisions they freely make and they take time in consideration during making a decision. People are consciously and subconsciously considerate of time while making the decision for action. Like we are aware of the facticity about death and this awareness leads one to achieve the fullest possibility and live authentically. Heidegger acknowledges the feeling of dread of an individual where he feels that he is valueless and his life is purposeless. Nietzsche and Heidegger both put a lot of emphasis on value because without it Nihilism takes place. Most

existential thinkers including them think that this void feeling in individuals is unavoidable but overcomeable. Heidegger views this feeling of dread in a positive light because it confirms our inward existence in the world. The way an authentic self overcomes the dread is through choosing a purpose in life. Here, he acknowledges the freedom of choice despite his situation and finds a purpose for himself. He also chooses the purpose that takes him to his fullest possibility while being conscious of the existence of others.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau thinks that “man relates to oneself through others” but socialisation makes one lose freedom and vanity is “only indirectly back onto oneself” (Turčan 6-7). Due to socialisation, people become alienated from human nature that leads to inequalities in society. Rousseau differentiates living with living for oneself and living for society by describing vanity and self-love. Self-love is a part of human nature and vanity is a product of society. Self-love is preserving oneself, on the contrary, vanity leads to people doing evil things for honour. Vanity directly relates to others unlike self-love that is directed on the self. People lose their true self and live in relation to the others because to gain supremacy they try to be best in things which are socially accepted and are products of socialisation. Thus they move further from authenticity and towards inauthenticity.

Søren Kierkegaard thinks the aesthetic stage confirms the limitations of life which makes one focus on the “immediacy of the world”, leads to losing oneself and “one’s own sense of life” where an individual “identifies himself in comparison” to others (Turčan 9). There are two opposite margins of the equation where one side is about all the limitations that Kierkegaard mentions, while the other is about the limitless opportunities like necessity and freedom. People choosing the aesthetic stages choose limitations that lead to alienation as the individual finds himself alienated from the self because people voluntarily adapt to follow the social rules and move further from oneself. The aesthetic stage is similar to Rousseau describing the supremacy approach of inauthentic people. Here the individual completely

loses individuality and associates himself only in comparison to others while following the rules set by others without taking any responsibility for his actions.

Kierkegaard suggests the blend of the equations to “overcome the aesthetic determination”, regards “God as the absolute transcendence” and emphasise his belief that one can gain freedom “by relating oneself to God” which becomes “the freedom of spirit and at the same time is an authentic self-realization” (Turčan 10). To him, faith gives meaning to life because through faith individuals learn the truth of the universe, of himself and gain identity. He emphasises the relation aspect of human beings. We exist in relation to others and in relation to our individual self but the existence does not become full unless the individual’s relation with God is complete. It is the individual who has a relation with God as himself, not as part of a group and the understanding of self comes from freely relating to God, while losing the self ends up creating distance from God. He, like Sartre, also believes in transcendence of the self but where he differs is that he considers relating to God as the last stage of transcendence. To prevail over the limitations set by aesthetic stage a person must accept the differences while acknowledging the freedom he has and taking accountability for his actions which requires the person to notice the limitlessness of life as well. It would lead one to achieve an authentic existence.

2. *Human Relationship in Existentialism*

Existentialists view the relationship among people in society in a positive manner because the nature of it is reciprocal but they also think capitalism brings evil to it and makes the relationship hostile. Since the relation is reciprocal, the possibility of making each other as means to attain goals can be perceived as welcomed to a particular stretch. Gabriel Marcel and Karl Jasper consider sympathy to be “the last human desire” because it leads to a love where people “force each other to fall in love” or try to “assimilate each other” and Sartre finds individuals’ transforming “into an object” for others (Van Dung 79). People live in a society with others and these others in an existential sense not only refer to the other people but also the entire environment they live in. The relationships individuals construct with the social environment is the relation of an individual with the others. The relationship among people is complicated. Sartre thinks that when individuals learn about other people he becomes the object of others' eyes. Marcel and Jasper also find the awareness of individual's loved ones as harmful because it brings harm to him pursuing his true self. The lovers perceive themselves through the beloved's eyes and shape themselves in the desired manner of the beloved. They also want to shape the beloved through their perception as well which jeopardises their possibility of getting transcendence. The relationship between individual and others can be explained with the subject-object notion because at first, an individual thinks of himself as the centre where he becomes subject and after becoming aware of others he learns the centre to be the others which makes him an object. Thus the focus shifts from him pursuing his true self to others' perception of him. But to gain authenticity in life and to pursue one's transcendence in full, one must focus on one's own being and not follow the lover. Ultimately, individuals existing with others is beyond their control but we are required to recognise and pursue our true self despite the harms the existence of others bring in it. In an existential sense, an individual is as unnecessary to the others as they are to him.

In *L'Être et le Néant*, Sartre suggests that “consciousness has a desire to be”, that individuals become conscious of how “the other sees” them and when in love, individuals try to highlight “that I (individuals) am the way he (the other) sees me” and that the relation with the other is “characterized by conflict and alienation” (Heikens-Berenpas 7-10). It gives authentic love with the certainty to fail. An individual sees himself as the object and others as subject. The individuals become conscious of how others view them. It leads to being dependent on others which comes with the inescapability of an individual from how others perceive him and takes away his freedom, thus succumbing to bad faith. It leads to losing freedom and ultimately leads to alienation from self. However, Sartre does not deny the possibility of authentic love. One can attain authentic love if he learns to be himself rather than focusing on what his beloved wants him to be because if he shapes himself in the way the beloved perceives him, then he escapes from pursuing his true self and tricks the beloved to love him which makes it inauthentic. He also has to accept that his beloved may not love him the way he does. Thus love can trigger conflict in relationship and alienation of the true self. It is our duty as individuals in love to maintain and pursue the true self even when being in love with others. Simon De Beauvoir specifies in *Pour une morale de l'ambiguïté*, that individuals must recognise the other “not as the person that needs to love” him back but as someone that has his own self (Heikens-Berenpas 10). An individual can only authentically love the other when he understands that the person is not an extension of himself but is an entirely free entity.

Sartre believes that people in love “chooses nonthetically to enter a magical realm” and describes three reasons for failure in authentic love where the first reason being the consciousness and subject-object relationship between individual with the other, the second being that the lover is not the only other in an individuals’ life and the third being the awareness that the lovers are objectified by others or when another person comes because

then they are “forced to see each other no longer as absolute transcendences” (Lee 513-514). Sartre distinguishes two modes to describe the individual’s awareness throughthetic and non-thetic forms. In simple form, thetic form refers to the ability of objectivity and logicity, whereas, non-thetic form refers to one being subjective and in some cases unreasonable unintentionally. Being in love involves both being subjective and emotional that can lead to being illogical. The lovers might initially view each other as the source to get the full transcendence through the other but this knowledge declines once there is a presence of a third person. Being conscious about the subject-objectness of their relationship also makes their effort to become whole together unsuccessful. When the individual meets other people than his lover, he might start seeing that there are many more people or objects in the world that can replace his lover as the object of his focus. Desire plays a vital role for being in a magical place while in love. Here the person in love only sees his desire to love and to be loved that causes one to transform the reality and makes love inauthentic as well. In all cases, individuals lose their freedom in love and act in bad faith.

In *The Second Sex*, Beauvoir clarifies that she took ideas from “Sartrean existentialism”, especially from his *Being and Nothingness* (McCall 209-210). In describing the relationship between man and women, Beauvoir claims that man views himself as the Self and woman as the Other. In her theory, Beauvoir corroborates Sartre’s notion of other’s existence being a threat to the individual’s freedom. This threat leads to man deciding himself as the main sex while making women take the second place. Man becomes the subject or the self and woman is placed as the object or the other. It is similar to the existential thought that individuals see others as a mode to obtain their goals, rather than acknowledging their freedom which creates complicated relationships between individuals and others in capitalist society. In the case of women, men as a group view them as means to satisfy their needs. Also, women being secondary or subordinate to men is not an old or new thought, rather it

was always accepted. Beauvoir analyses that it is not the men that think this but but the women of the society also internalised this notion “that man is the essential, woman the inessential” (McCall 210). In existentialism, the existence of others poses a threat for the individual’s freedom because individual’s become conscious of how the others view him which makes him initiate changes within himself, whether consciously or unconsciously. Here, the individual starts to depend on the others and becomes the subject of objectification. It can be said that there is a matter of power as the others hold the power to change him. It is similar in the case of the relationship between men and women. Here, women get objectified by the men willingly because of the internalisation process regarding the essentiality of man which only occurs due to the power men hold over them.

In talking about the societies where women are given higher positions than men like the position of Goddess, Beauvoir again emphasises that this situation is also created to benefit man because in any case “political power remains in his hands” (McCall 210). Thus women get treated as the Other in all cases, due to the power men hold. The existential thinkers talk about the facticities or the givens that individuals often use to reject freedom like the physical traits. This notion of givens can be found in Beauvoir’s theory too as she describes that one of the reasons women's freedom is taken is due to these givens. As women have less physical strength than men in regards to muscle strength and their bodies are biologically manufactured to produce children, the society imposes restrictions by taking advantage of their situations. It limits them to their maternal duties. Men surely take advantage of the givens of women to dominate but women too agree to let go of her freedom after being promised security. Beauvoir agrees with Sartre’s idea that human beings have a conscious yearning to dominate others. The yearning brings evil in society and in the capitalist system, it can become vicious. It can only be prevented if people lean towards authenticity. In the case of men and women, men also satisfy this yearning to dominate by

using the givens of the women. It can be said that it is one of the reasons for the presence of misogyny in societies. If one wants to find a solution to this existing problem in society, then it would be to pursue authenticity in life because people living authentic life recognise their own freedom along with others' freedom.

Beauvoir does not negate the possibility of men and women sustaining and complementing each other, rather she thinks of it as "an achievement" (McCall 211). She perceives authentic love as a possibility through acknowledgement of "two liberties" that provides the chance to "manifest values" (Lee 517). In this situation, the lovers can possess their transcendence by acknowledging each other's freedom. They can come up with values and go forward in life which results in love leading to self-revelation. Men and women find obstacles when they try to maintain the love relationship while maintaining authenticity because it threatens their freedom, yet they also have the chance to preserve both. However, that depends on how they act and perceive each other. If they choose to acknowledge their own and each other's freedom, then it takes them towards achieving authenticity in their relationship and in life.

Sartre describes jealousy as bad faith because here the individual "seeks to be the supreme value" from the lover, thus, he avoids his "responsibility of striving to realize value" (MCMULLIN 109). People constitute and hold onto public identity which depends on how others perceive the individual. The individual's acting on his own values lead to that perspective. But in jealousy the individual declines responsibility for his public identity and tries to control the beloved. The public identity of the individual is not a constant but changeable. The individual can change it through realising the values but in jealousy he holds the beloved accountable for it and he affirms his identity by controlling the beloved's evaluation about himself which leads to bad faith. Though Sartre thinks that love between individuals often results in bad faith, he does not deny the possibility of genuine love. He,

like Beauvoir, thinks of it as an accomplishment. It is certainly an accomplishment when people in a love relationship maintain their freedom and recognise the other's. It takes one to be confident in their understanding of the authentic self.

3. *Memory and Deception*

Sartre in *Transcendence of the Ego* discusses memory being a form of reflection and thinks that if an individual is focused on a deed "consciousness" becomes "impersonal" and gets "wholly directed to objects" (Levy 104). In this case, the person remains selfless when experiencing the action but he constitutes the self when he reflects his actions. As a result, through the construction of self, memory gets altered. Here the reflection itself modifies the past rather than representing it. Sartre talks about reflection in his *Being and Nothingness* as he says that consciousness is based on some memories which get altered by reflection. A personification of the memory takes place in this case. For example, if a woman encounters a man while jogging alone and later reflects on this event, she would see it from a certain point of view. She might later think of him as someone suspicious because she then remembered seeing something suspicious. Here she experiences the event differently than when she actually encountered it. The man might not have been suspicious but her bias could have altered the reflection. When one reflects, he re-encounters the past from a certain perspective and re-encounters the event from a viewpoint through memory. When one looks on the past events through a certain perspective, it changes the experience on its own, it gets personalised and the self comes to play. Here, the past which was impersonal gets personalised. In *Being and Nothingness*, there is an implication of the projection of memory and reflection and though reflection as a memory twists the past events, it puts "meaning to past facts, locating them in relation to the self" and to the emotions and personality (Levy 104-105). In producing the self, the memory ties past events together where some attributes get

highlighted while others get annihilated. In case of reflection Sartre deems self as an imagination. Here memory and reflection weave a fulfilled story with meaning through the self. Memory can also project the past event both on the existing moment and on the upcoming future. There is a projection aspect of memory that sets precedent for both present and past events.

People often participate in self-deception though there is no truth about deception. There are many reasons why human beings participate in deceiving themselves. Both Sartre and Heidegger talked about it in their existential philosophies and Sartre elaborated Heidegger's notion of transcendence in his philosophy. Sartre insists that the immense freedom, responsibility and the potentiality that comes due to the notion of transcendence, create anxiety for the individuals which in turn makes deceiving himself tempting. He regards freedom as "an enormous burden" (WEBERMAN 880). Heidegger in his *Being and Time*, talks about Dasein being beyond what it already is. Individuals run towards the possibilities of what they can be. Here, an individual does not accept and apply the behaviour of an entity, rather through the freedom he finds out his potentiality. However, in this case, a huge burden falls upon the individual's shoulder because reaching to the greatest possibility and transcending demands accountability for actions. So, most often it is seen that individuals reject this notion of potentiality and deceive himself. It leads to inauthentic life filled with bad faith due to the self-deception aspect. Until individuals overcome their anxiety and deny succumbing to the temptation of self-deception, they cannot reach their full potentiality and transcend. It requires them to be responsible for their freely taken actions, otherwise they would live in self-deception.

While talking about the deliberateness of bad faith, Sartre talks about the paradoxes bad faith raises which "arise from the fact that deception is not an honest mistake: the deceiver deliberately inculcates in the deceived a false belief", thus, it deals with the

deceiver's "awareness of the unpleasant fact" that is to be concealed and his "awareness of the intention to deceive" himself (Webber 4). In case of bad faith as a whole the individual participating in it intentionally hides the displeasing reality from the self which does not occur due to an error. It causes self-deception. In case of the first paradox, one must be aware of the truth to attempt to deceive but the deceiver has to be unaware of it for the deception to succeed. For the latter case, one must be aware of the deception for it being a deliberate one, however, for the deception to succeed there remains a requirement for unawareness. One of the prime examples of self-deception is believing that individuals have no freedom leading one to not take any responsibility for his actions. There are also several instances in regular life that express deceiving ourselves but people ignore them. For example: a working person thinks that he needs to improve his communication skills but he never practises them and blames it on them being an introvert. It is possible that being an introvert makes it difficult for him to socialise but it is also true that introverts can have excellent communication skills. The person needs to practise them but he deceives himself by saying that his introvertedness does not allow him to communicate well.

The only possible way for the continuous motivation to deceive oneself can continue is when one identifies "two senses" where the deceiver becomes "aware of the truth and of one's intention" which Sartre callsthetic and non-thetic awareness because unlike the conscious and unconscious senses they provide unity (Webber 5). They make it possible for the deceiver to be aware and unaware at the same time. It is the continuous motivation to deceive the self that keeps individuals involved in self-deception and so, the discontinuation would allow the deception to dissolve. People succumbing to self-deception have little self-understanding. Those who understand themselves can also understand their need to face the reality even if it seems displeasing which provides authenticity. Therefore, those who yield to the temptation of self-deceiving to protect themselves from unpleasant reality, must initiate

learning about their true selves by facing the displeasing situation. It would take them towards an authentic life.

4. *Moral Philosophy and The Novel*

Iris Murdoch views Good as the “centre of reflection”, thinks that evaluation depends on an individual's past experiences and “our struggles for increased precision of our moral concepts” and implies that Good is “the ideal endpoint of those hierarchies of value” (Ruokonen 212). She discusses Good and its relation to the self in her moral philosophy. People’s ability to evaluate creates unity in experience. Good as the central reflection in people’s life guides them in certain directions that unifies the experience. For a person to be integrated, he must evaluate and that evaluation depends on an individual's past experiences and the struggles one faces with concepts regarding moral views. Thus, people are inclined to move towards the Good which is conditional to the individual’s experience that requires the individual acquiring the self. Murdoch also emphasises the significance of unselfing in her philosophy. Unlike her contemporary existential philosophers, Murdoch views values as conditional to be rational beings. It suggests that it is not within people’s ability to create value in things rather it's the opposite and it makes the Good transcendental. In this case Good becomes the absolute transcendence where the spectrum of value is conditional because the transcendence only comes when one obtains the highest value. For people to morally improve by moving towards the Good requires them to be attentive to understand life from a selfless perspective which results in unselfing where individuals take account of others before conducting actions.

Iris Murdoch views goodness as ultimate “basis of morality” and thinks that ethics and religion both place “goodness and virtue at the highest point” which is why when WW2, most existentialists promoted “absolute freedom” with the loss of faith, she focused on the

moral philosophy (Chen and Lai 207). She finds goodness necessary for establishing value in an individual's life because it is through goodness that people acquire knowledge. She also thinks that novelists should promote goodness in their novels. So, in her novel *The Sea, The Sea*, her advocating for goodness is evident through the events of Charles Arrowby's life. Murdoch showed through Arrowby that once a person stands to comprehend goodness, he starts stepping towards the highest possibility of moral excellence. It is true for people doing evil activity too, which was the case for Arrowby as well because Murdoch thinks that the people conducting wrong, misinterprets the goodness. Therefore, it is changeable and the person can change through the understanding of goodness and by having values.

Murdoch believes that love promotes goodness and implies that people are able to understand the truth behind goodness. She expresses two kinds of love in the novel which are "unadvanced form and advanced form" of love which are expressed through Arrowby's "right and possession" and his longing towards "knowledge and God" (Chen and Lai 209). One can only acknowledge and learn the truth behind goodness if he first understands the self and then acknowledges that reality does not rely on the self because it is neutral. The unadvanced form of love can be directed in Arrowby's love for young Hartley and the advanced form could be directed from latter part of his life when he comes to understand himself and acknowledges the reality which all came after several major events of his life. In Arrowby's case, he attained self when he understood the reality about his love that it is for the young version of Hartley, rather than for the person herself. Then when he finally discontinues his desire to pursue Hartley. Here he could let go of his human desire because he came to understand the truth of the self, the reality and the goodness. He attains moral excellence through his knowledge.

To conclude, the existentialists' find free will, taking accountability for one's actions and facing the consequences even when they are unpleasant, essential for a person to attain

authenticity in life. To them maintaining an authentic relationship is often found to be difficult because of the difficulty in recognising other's freedom but they do not negate the possibility of authentic love-relationship. Moreover, they often find memory to be deceiving due to the notion of reflection in that and think self-deceiving to be tempting for human beings. Lastly, though Iris Murdoch agrees with the existential thinkers to a certain extent, she finds the goodness in human beings more important than their acceptance of complete freedom.

Chapter 2

Identity and Individuality

From the beginning of the novel, it is emphasised that Charles Arrowby took pride in being able to walk away from the glamorous life of the London theatre. In his mind, it was very difficult for a famous person to sever relations with fame. Since he was a well-known figure, he believed that he had accomplished something that people of his circle were unable to do and it made him unique. He thought that it was a reflection of his choice being uninfluential to his surroundings. But does that really make him unique or is his choice really a unique one? Arrowby moved to a secluded house named Shruff End by the sea, near a village called Narrowdean, where he initially planned to live for the rest of his life. He viewed the move as departing from materialistic life and a step towards an authentic life. In reality, neither was his choice to move near the sea a unique one, nor was he able to leave materialism behind. People in old age often become eager to move by the sea after retirement to lead a peaceful life near nature by being away from the noises and busyness of regular life. By the time Arrowby moved to Shruff End, he was sixty which suggests that he might be near the end of his career. Though he never accepted that in his memoir, the evidently unreliable narration of his life events implies the possibility. Therefore, like most old people he too wanted to live near the sea after his retirement. Besides, even though he claimed that he had left materialism behind when he departed from London theatre life, his actions spoke otherwise. His fancy food habit is one of the prime examples of it: "For lunch I ate the kipper fillets rapidly unfrozen in boiling water (the sun had done most of the work) garnished with lemon juice, oil, and a light sprinkling of dry herbs . . . I like a variety of those crackly Scandinavian biscuits which are supposed to make you thin (Murdoch, 39).

Arrowby did not even entirely leave the theatre life and his letter Lizzie Schere is a proof of it. It is not his continuous contact with his old friend that raises the question of his true intention, but it is the way he provoked Lizzie with his letters. He could not leave behind the drama of theatre life. Arrowby knew that by insinuating that he had romantic feelings for Lizzie, he would destroy the balance of Lizzie's life. Yet he still did so to play with her feelings, without the intention of truly being romantically involved with her. He viewed Gilbert and Lizzie's relationship dismissively. He knew that he could break their relationship because he had power over them and he liked it. His arrogance about his ability to leave theatre and him liking the power in Lizzie's relationship only showed his vanity. A prime example of his vanity was expressed when he stated: "If absolute power corrupts absolutely then I must be the most corrupt of men" and found his "ruthless" reputation to be handy (Murdoch 50).

Arrowby's existence was severely affected by his surrounding people. He had made having power over others a crucial part of his identity. He thought that his rough nature with direction in theatre helped the actors and actresses in showing their full potential. According to him, he was known for making the actors and actresses cry and it supposedly brought them success. In reality, it is far from the truth as Gilbert revealed in a conversation with him: "You always had such a bloody bad temper and it didn't help any of us ever. I know you thought it did, but that was an illusion" (Murdoch 102). Arrowby thought he gained the public approval by leading them to success by motivating with his unpleasant nature. There is no doubt that how people perceived him had a great impact with how he lived his life. Clement Makin was one of the people who had substantial influence in his life. Arrowby did not shy away from giving Clement credit for her influence in his life. But he only did so in terms of theatre where he talked about the admiration he had for her and the love he received from her. He did not admit that she had an impact on how he led his life. Arrowby's move to

a house near the sea was a direct influence of her. He did so because he heard Clement talk about it. Arrowby also imitated how Clement lived. Just as Clement had many lovers, Arrowby had such too. Lizzie took the same place in Arrowby's life that Arrowby had in Clement's life. In her old age Clement entertained young Arrowby romantically without clear intention, he did the same with the much younger Lizzie. When Arrowby met Clement, she was at the peak of her career and success. He was greedy for the glamorous life Clement had. In understanding Clement's success to gain it for himself, Arrowby got away from understanding his individuality. Rather than living his life with his own understanding of himself, he imitated Clement. The values he chose were affected by Clement and by the fact that he wanted glam. He yearned for public approval which he thought he had, though it was an illusion. He thought that all his friends were true friends who never held any grudge over him which was a false conception as well. It shows how he lived an inauthentic life. To live an authentic life, it is crucial to take responsibility for one's own actions and admit the complete freedom one has over his choices. In the beginning Arrowby never took any responsibility for his actions. It became clear when he received Lizzie's answer to his letter and wondered "what do I want? Oh why do women take everything so intensely and make a fuss!" (Murdoch 60). Though he found Lizzie's question about his intention to be reasonable, he thought that she was unnecessarily making a mess of the situation. He refused to take responsibility that it was his letter that gave the ambiguous signal. He could not decide what he wanted Lizzie to be for him, yet he expected Lizzie to understand whatever it was he would want. He knowingly sent the letter to provoke Lizzie without providing a commitment. In the whole situation, he was the one who kept giving mixed signals. Yet, he wanted Lizzie to take the responsibility: "Why can't Lizzie be intelligent enough to understand?" (Murdoch 60). He questioned Lizzie's intelligence for something that he did not even have thought

about rather, was just then exploring the options as he stated that perhaps he wanted “an ageing ex-concubine in a harem who has become a friend” (Murdoch 60).

To be authentic, a person not only needs to take responsibility for his actions and acknowledge his freedom, but he also must have his own values and principles that he consciously chooses without being influenced by public opinion. For Arrowby’s case, it is difficult to say he acted upon his own principles. When he was still a theatre director, he assumed the role he thought a director must have. An authentic person chooses his own values rather than assuming a role fit for his profession. However, he chose a role to fit in that he expressed saying: “A theatre director is a dictator” (Murdoch, 50). Charles Arrowby as a director took the role of a dictator and made it into an aspect of his personality. The values he chose were the values of a dictator. Just as the dictator did not care whether the subjects of his cruelty were suffering or not as long as his wants were accomplished, Arrowby too did not care whether he made the actors cry as long as their performances brought success. His characteristics were similar to those Jews and to the waiter’s characteristics that Sartre finds acting on bad faith. Sartre finds that the waiter had assumed the general characteristics of a waiter to become successful as a waiter. Here, the characteristics are unoriginal because they are not set by the values that individuals choose but rather they are set by others. The Jews Sartre talks about were also following certain sets of rules made by others to become ideal Jews. They both acted in bad faith, just as Arrowby was acting in bad faith when he assumed a dictator’s characteristics to become a successful director and thus acted on the values and principles set by the others. He did not freely choose the values rather acted upon how the public wanted a director to act which he found was like a dictator. Existentialists acknowledge that people have some given attributes but think that they must assume those attributes and believe in complete freedom. Charles Arrowby was born to poorer parents than his paternal cousin James. Rather than understanding the existentialists’ suggestion that he

accept this facticity that he had no control in and move towards his transcendence, throughout his life he mulled over the fact that James was richer and it caused him to be jealous. Even when James tried to keep up with him by sending letters, he found faults in it: "James's letter to me contrived to be slightly patronising, as if he were an elder brother, not a younger cousin" (Murdoch 68). Arrowby could have found James's letter to be patronising because he recalled the facticity about his life that as a child he was born less economically secure than James. This unacceptance was seen in many cases from his childhood like when he became jealous that his mother gave James his favorite biscuits as parting gift and when he assumed that James caused his uncle to not extend an invitation to join their family vacations: "It only much later occurred to me . . . that they did not ask me because James vetoed it!" (Murdoch 70).

As a grown man at sixty, he neither could accept that fact about the past, nor could he move on from the past issues. It shows that he had issues about the existential suggestion on the transcendence towards the future. Existentialists emphasise individuality, especially on its significance for one to transcend while acknowledging that individuals live among other people. Other than Arrowby imitating Clement in his old age, his eagerness to live like his aunt also separated him from understanding his individuality in his childhood. "Although my aunt was for me a symbolic figure, a modern figure, even a futuristic figure, a sort of prophetic lure to my own future. She lived in a land which I was determined to find and to conquer for myself" (Murdoch 71). It shows that where Arrowby should have been transcending towards the projected future with his own understanding of his individuality, his surrounding people had great impact in it which made him inauthentic. Charles Arrowby lived an inauthentic life for the most part of his life which gradually started to change as his memoir or diary progressed. His identity was based on his surroundings as he could not

acquire individuality and refused to take responsibility for his chosen actions for the longest period.

The inauthentic life that he led, only added to his vanity. His understanding of success came through aunt Estelle's and Clement's glamorous lifestyle which he achieved and it made him vain. His behaviour with Lizzie and James is proof of it. He expected everyone to make him the centre of their lives just because he achieved the success he wanted and yet, his understanding of success derived from others' perspective. It was also a reason for making him vain. Had he experienced success through his own understanding of the self and its need, he would not become so vain. It is proved through James's character who lived with authenticity.

Though the protagonist of Murdoch's novel was Charles Arrowby and it is written as him writing his memoir or diary, it had been shown in the novel that the character who had achieved authenticity in life was his cousin James Arrowby, even if his life events were portrayed through his cousin. James was born as an only child to his rich American heiress mother Estelle, and his adventurous father Abel. Like the existentialists' suggestion, he had accepted his factual attributes of being born to a certain environment at a certain time and he did not view the attributes to be limiting his freedom or ever refused to take responsibility. He lived among others, acknowledged others' presence but he was able to attain his identity which he acquired through understanding his individuality. He was able to transcend to the projected future. Arrowby only learned about James when he sent letters and through the friend, Toby Ellesmere that James kept in contact with. Arrowby spoke about James having an in-depth character since childhood as he mentioned James finding his things that he lost but could not find when James came to visit Arrowby's family. Arrowby also talked about his intelligence as he mentioned that James perfected several languages in his childhood though

he stated it as an opportunity he never had. Nevertheless, from Arrowby's narration, it shows that James was his own self since childhood. The choices he made in his life were hardly influenced by his surrounding others. He chose to join the military against his parents' wishes and their lifestyle had minimal impact on him. He did not come under the influence of his mother's glamorous life like his cousin did or of his father's lavish life or of others' lifestyles such as his aunt's orthodox Christian life. He understood his individual needs and led an authentic life through it. Unlike most of his surrounding people he converted to Buddhism and Arrowby's description implied that he became like Nietzsche's 'Overman' who had established his own set of rules and values in practising the faith. Arrowby mentioned that when James had gone to Tibet, he found the religion for himself. In a conversation with him, James explained that he did not think of Tibet as "Buddhist paradise" rather he found the Buddhism there as "corrupt" though he acknowledged that it bore remembrance of the "ancient world" and that the deliberate destruction is "a matter of regret" despite the "subsequent advantages" (Murdoch 425). It reflects that as much as James admired Tibet and regretted its destruction for adjusting to the new advantages, he knew that the practices of the religion were corrupted which is why it can be said that he followed his own values and ethics, established through his individual understanding. As Sartre has suggested that it might not be possible to completely escape bad faith, James might not have completely escaped it either. Arrowby pointed out the mystery man he saw in James's apartment while visiting him once, whom James brushed off. His lack of acknowledgement suggests that there could be presence of bad faith in James's life too but James could still find authenticity with minimum presence of bad faith, just as Sartre also has suggested. Arrowby did imply that there was always some mystery around James. However, it could get linked to his transcendence. Arrowby had mentioned that in their childhood James could find his lost things easily when he visited, which Arrowby was unsuccessful to find despite several attempts. Then again in

the event of drunk Arrowby getting pushed into the deep sea, James was able to find him and bring him back to the shore from the place where Arrowby was sure of the impossibility of anyone being ever found after a fall. Just as James mysteriously used to find Arrowby's stuff, he found Arrowby too. It expresses that the childhood James had transcended into the projected future without letting anyone influence him. James also always took responsibility for his actions. It is no doubt that only due to James's insistence he and Arrowby had a relationship since as much as Arrowby was eager to learn about events of James's life, he was not keen in keeping a relationship with his cousin. James knew that the discovery of him meeting Lizzie without Arrowby's knowledge after their break up would cause jealousy and could impact the relationship with his cousin, yet he did not shy away from confessing that they had met. It is also the same with Titus. He tried to find Titus for Arrowby. James realised that his cousin was thinking about searching for Titus and knew Arrowby well enough to understand that he would not like the fact that James found him first. Regardless, he never denied the allegations and was ready to accept the consequences. Upon learning about the meeting Arrowby angrily confronted James saying: "I daresay you knew Lizzie before I ever met her, you were the first, you were before me, as you were with - as you were with - with aunt Estelle and - and with Titus - you'd met Titus before, he said he'd seen you in a dream" (Murdoch 392). James was thoroughly aware that Arrowby could have such an outburst after the discovery, yet he accepted the consequence. It implies that James was someone who acknowledged his freedom and accepted responsibility for his actions.

Another example of authenticity in James's life through the transcendence and facticity was Arrowby's description of how he died. James had accepted the facticity of death and he had visited Arrowby sometimes after he was kicked out with the outburst from Arrowby. It implies that he was preparing for his death. The letter Arrowby received from James's doctor P. R. Tsang also suggests that James felt his imminent death long before he

died. The doctor implied that James called him knowing he was going to die and wrote to him: “There are some who can freely choose their moment of death . . . It was so with him” (Murdoch 452). It could be seen as James transcending to the projected future with his death.

To conclude, unlike Charles Arrowby, James Arrowby lived an authentic life by embracing his facticity and freedom, by being responsible for choices without the fear of consequences, by following his own principles and values and by being able to transcend into the future with his individual understanding of himself. He had created his identity with his understanding without coming under the influence of others. All these qualities were absent in his cousin because he lived in vanity, yearned for public approval, imitated others’ lifestyle, created complicated relationships and overall chose a role for himself to live accordingly.

Chapter 3

Authentic Human Relation

3.1 Relationship and Authenticity

In the novel, with the progress of his memoir, the protagonist Charles Arrowby gradually came to find an understanding of his existence through realising his true identity. One of the main elements that led him to find his true identity was the relationship he had with the people in his life. Arrowby had several romantic relationships which were all messy to some extent. His relationship with his friends was also complicated. The only family he had left in his life was his paternal cousin James with whom he had kept contact. When he started writing his memoir, he was forced to reevaluate the relationship because to write a memoir he had to remember and write about the relations in his life. He was forced to re-encounter the choices he made in life, understand the reason behind the choices and the consequences for them. When he decided to leave the theatre life, he thought that he would find a meaning to his life in solitude by being alone in the house near the sea. He thought that he had left the materialism behind along with all the messy relationships and that he would find understanding of self and peace in solace and isolation. Though retirement in isolation did not provide the authenticity he yearned, it gave him the opportunity to think about how he spent his life and starting to write the memoir was the first step that later led towards self-understanding and awareness. It gave him an opportunity to re-encounter his past relationships and understand how he spent his life with vanity. Arrowby thought that he would thrive when living alone with nature, but in reality he struggled with the changes in his life. He went from being a part of the loud life in theatre to living alone. His struggles were the reason for sending letters to Lizzie knowing that it would definitely provoke her and she would end up coming to his house. Existentialists claim that the love relation among people could be a catalyst to achieve authenticity in an individual's life but misunderstanding it

would lead one further away from the authentic self. Rather than setting one free, it leads one to be entangled and Arrowby was completely entangled in his relation with others. He never took responsibility for his actions affecting the relations in any way.

Arrowby was always jealous of his loved ones' relation with others, and was controlling with his loved ones. Being in control led him to become arrogant and to live in vanity. His relationship with Lizzie could be seen as a prime example of it. Arrowby liked Lizzie being completely in his control. Lizzie spent a better part of her life loving Arrowby and yearning for his acceptance, knowing that he would not commit to her. In this relation, Arrowby had the power and control which is why he was arrogant enough to disrespect Lizzie's arrangement or relationship with Gilbert. He made Lizzie promise to tell him if she ever got involved in any serious relationship when they broke up which was another way to be in control and he made each woman he was ever with make this promise He expressed: "I cannot take the stuff about Gilbert Opian too seriously . . . he is a man of twigs, I could crush him with one hand and take Lizzie with the other" (Murdoch, 60). He was also jealous when he learned that Lizzie had met James after their break up. The jealousy stemmed from understanding that he was no longer the centre for others and was no longer in control of others. His understanding of his inability to control the ones he loved later led him to focus on himself, rather than on what others thought of him and eventually he set himself free like the existentialists' implication. Being forced to face the consequences of his actions also led towards setting himself free because then he had to recognize his responsibility as well. His relation to Rosina could be used as an example here. Arrowby made it very clear in the novel that he disliked Rosina and her involvement in his life. However, it was a consequence of the promise he took from all the women he was involved with in theatre. Here, he had to acknowledge his responsibility for Rosina's involvement. He especially regretted it when he met Hartley, now called Mary Hartley Fitch in her old age.

Arrowby's relationship with Titus started for all the wrong reasons. Titus was the adoptive son of Hartley, Arrowby's childhood lover and her husband Ben. There was a tense relation between Titus and Ben which was why Titus had initially left, but Hartley wanted him back. Ben disliked Titus since childhood because he suspected Titus being a biological child of his wife and Arrowby. Arrowby wanted to use Titus as an advantage though his desire for a son re-emerged after he learned what Ben thought about Titus. Titus reminded him of what he desired, what wanted to be and what he could not achieve. Titus made Arrowby confront his feelings which he kept running from, that opened the possibility of self-awareness. Titus was a young man in his prime years, whereas Arrowby was in his old age. Titus made him confront the fact that his youth was long gone and that death was nearer. He reminded him of his failure to have a son that he desired for so long. He was forced to understand that it was his own fault and the responsibility for that failure fell on him, just as Rosina reminded him: "You never put yourself in a situation where you could have a real son. Your sons are fantasies . . . when you touch him he'll fade and disappear - you'll see" (Murdoch 306-307). Rosina also let him know that not having a child with her was also a consequence for his action as Rosina expressed that Arrowby had once got her pregnant but she "got rid of the child" (Murdoch 307). She did not birth his child because he had left her by then and moved to a relationship with Lizzie. Thus, Titus was also a reflection of his lost connection, youth and wants. Arrowby had the illusion of Titus being his and Hartley's son and Hartley being his wife. Nevertheless, through the interaction between the mother and son while Hartley was held hostage, he soon came to the realisation that they themselves had little relationship.

Arrowby had come to realise that he could not prevent or control people from forming relationships since he saw Titus forming relations with James, Gilbert, Lizzie etc. Titus's death also made him confront his vain understanding of authenticity. He had come to the sea

to find peace and authenticity and yet, he had one of his biggest tragedies in recent years in the sea. He lost Titus to the sea. It made him realise that believing that a place can provide authenticity is vain, rather it is through understanding of one's inner self, one can gain authenticity.

3.2 Re-encounter of the Past

The relations Arrowby formed in his childhood had great impacts in the relations he formed throughout his life. He came to understand the reason behind his connections with others or the lack thereof much later in life. His perception of himself was also influenced by his perception of others. The people Arrowby could connect with in his childhood were his father Adam and his childhood lover Hartley. Seeing Hartley after so many years in an isolated state reminded him of his failure to form true connections. For the most part of the novel Arrowby claimed that Hartley was the only woman Arrowby had ever truly loved. Existentialists suggest that love is often misunderstood as people who claim to love often are controlled by the other person or they control the other person which leads to being inauthentic to the self. In Arrowby's case, he was both controlling and being controlled in his relationships. For the most part of his relationship with Hartley he tried to control her. Their relationship ended because Hartley was unsatisfied with the relationship. Arrowby tried his hardest to impose the relationship on Hartley even after their break up and continued his insistence when he learned that Hartley left home due to his demands. It was not until after he learned that Hartley had gotten married and was unable to find her address that he let go of the issue. It shows that he was controlling of Hartley even in childhood. However, his love for Hartley also led him to be controlled. The reason Hartley gave him for their break up was that she was afraid that since he had gone away to work in the London theatre, he would not

stay faithful, which to him indicated that he would assume the theatre persona. Hartley also emphasised that he would be unable to stay committed to their relationship:

‘I can’t go on, I can’t go on, I can’t marry you.’ ‘We wouldn’t make each other happy.’
 You wouldn’t stay with me, you’d go away, you wouldn’t be faithful.’ ‘Yes, I love you
 but I can’t trust, I can’t see.’ (Murdoch 91)

Hartley's perception of his inability to commit to anyone controlled him throughout his life since though he had had several romantic relationships, he never gave commitment to anyone and focused on proving Hartley right in his resentment.

Arrowby’s encounter with Hartley and him initiating the memoir brought back his childhood memories including the one where he admired aunt Estelle. Arrowby was often seen in the novel expressing pride about being more successful in life than James. However, he evaluated success with fame and glamour which he initially learned from seeing aunt Estelle’s lifestyle in childhood. Arrowby’s perception was substantially influenced by James’s mother and it led towards him forming an inauthentic identity. This identity was formed through evaluating himself with fame and glamour. In a way, his way of life was controlled by his perception of Aunt Estelle’s way of living. Since his childhood he admired aunt Estelle and aimed to achieve what she had instead of trying to find his own way of life by understanding the self. He could have formed an authentic identity through it, but he rather focused on his aunt’s life in gaining fame and living glamorously like her. James’s death made him re-evaluate his choices and perceptions of life.

James’s death was the most significant event that changed Arrowby’s outlook about life and himself. It helped in re-constructing his identity by allowing him to understand his faults and forcing him to take the responsibility for the failures. Arrowby could never build a good relationship with James because of his own jealousy and vanity. The factual attribute

that James was born into more financially secured parents than him affected him substantially. He was always hyper-aware of James's presence and advantages in life. It made him evaluate himself and his accomplishments in comparison to his cousin. However, losing James brought him grief and reminded him of his own mortality that forced him to look back on his past through the lenses of memory. After James's death he had no-one to blame for their failed connection other than himself. His re-thinking their past also worked as a mirror to make him understand his own responsibility for the failure in their relationship: "I feel regret, remorse, that I never got to know him better . . . I feel now as if something of me went with James's death, like a part of a bridge carried away in a flood" (Murdoch, 474). It shows that Arrowby's grief was not only for James dying but also for the lost opportunities to build a strong bond with him that he acknowledged he lost because of his own envy. Here, he seems to be taking accountability for the consequences of his actions because he acknowledged that he enforced the distance through his jealousy and took part in a competition that James had no idea about.

Another major event that made him change his perception of him was his near death experience in the Shruff End. When Arrowby decided to release Hartley due to the continuous insistence from James, Gilbert, Titus and Peregrine, everybody including Lizzie had decided to have a party of their own before they returned to their places. However, at the party Arrowby was pushed to the sea by drunk Peregrine Arbelow and believed that Ben tried to kill him after losing memory of the incident. When Peregrine confessed and Arrowby confronted him, he realised that his action led Peregrine no longer considering him a friend and having resentment for him. Peregrine told him that it was already bad enough that he snatched the "wife whom I (he) adored" only to please his odd "possessiveness", yet he not only later replaced her with another woman but also expected Peregrine "to tolerate this and to go on liking" him because Arrowby thought "everybody always went on liking" him

despite the “rotten things” he did to people (Murdoch 381). Peregrine made him realise that there were people who did not like him and it was also a consequence for his actions. He had taken away Rosina from her husband and yet expected them to be friends forever. Peregrine showed him that there were consequences for his actions too and Arrowby was bound to take his responsibility for them.

Peregrine also reminded him of the help he received from Clement in establishing his career which forced him to face the past and accept that he was not as self-established as he claimed: “If Clement hadn’t fancied you no one would ever have heard of you, your work wasn’t any bloody good” (Murdoch 382). Throughout the novel, Arrowby had expressed his pride for being able to walk away despite being famous and indicated still being at the peak of his career. But, here Peregrine made him face the fact that he was near the end of his career anyway. He expressed that people “aren’t mesmerized anymore” and reminded him about his loss of power over others saying he would soon no longer “be a monster in anybody’s mind” (Murdoch 382).

His past actions had contaminated his relationships and confronting the past again led him towards understanding of the self. The understanding of his past relations had changed his perception of himself and allowed him to be better and be his true self. He expressed that he had moved by the sea to find peace and authenticity in isolation, but his relations with others indicated that it might not be that he preferred isolation, rather that he was isolated for his inability to connect with others which were mostly consequences of his actions. That was why, when he understood himself clearly he again moved to London, the busy city leaving behind the sea.

To conclude, Arrowby confronting the relationships and the things that he did wrong in those relationships made him realise his misinformation about his identity. He initially

proudly identified as a self-made successful theatre director who truly loved one woman in life and is loved by all his friends. However, his understanding of his relation with others changed this perspective. Through Peregrine he came to confront and accept the fact that he was not self-made because he received assistance in constructing his career and he is not loved by all. Through James he learned that his perception of success was not the only way of succeeding in life and that his perception of it, is also based on other's belief. Titus made him realise that even in his own view about success, he did succeed in all aspects as he could not have a son and meeting Hartley initiated the understanding that she was not what he loved so passionately but it was his youth which he came to grasp in the later part of the novel. This understanding and awareness about himself led him to create his own identity based on his beliefs.

Chapter 4

Deception and Delusion

Taking responsibility to set oneself free is an important element of existentialism which is thoroughly seen in Charles Arrowby's character in the novel as he finally becomes free and finds authenticity after receiving the consequences of his actions and being accountable for his past. Arrowby was seen as a manipulator for the most part of the novel as he played with the feelings of his friends and ex-lovers. He lived in the illusion that everybody loved him despite his wrongdoings which he never once admitted as wrong in his memoir. When he met his ex-lover, Rosina, he knew that she and Peregrine, one of his friends were married. In spite of that, he persuaded her and in the end he left her alone for Lizzie, another young actress in his circle. When Charles broke up with Rosina, for her insistence he had promised her that if he ever got married he would marry her. Due to falling for him, Rosina not only lost her chance to be a mother as she was pregnant once but also damaged her marriage. For this, she despised Arrowby. Ironically, Arrowby later lost Titus to the sea whom he started to consider his son and he never found love in Hartley despite all his insistence and truly believing in the illusion that she too loved him. What he did to Rosina was happening to him, and so it was like he was facing the consequence for his wrongdoing. Arrowby thought Rosina's ex-husband his friend even then, though he ruined his marriage. He later came to realise that he hated him, rightfully so, after Peregrine pushed Arrowby in a drunken state to the sea hoping that he would die. This loss of friendship is also a consequence of his own actions. He was also a bad friend to Lizzie and Gilbert as initially in the novel Arrowby seems to be provoking Lizzie to start a relationship with him. He knew fully well that those two were living together and he never committed to Lizzie. He just wanted to play with their feelings to prove to be the one with utmost importance. This illusion of being the utmost important person was seen many times in the novel as he got

frustrated when he came to learn about Lizzie meeting James after their break up, when he noticed Titus getting along with James, when he started making things about Hartley being in love with him and so on.

This illusion started to break when Peregrine tried to kill him making him realise that not everybody loved him, when Peregrine pointed out that people only learned about him through Clement, and when he realised that Hartley had left with her husband to live in Australia permanently without his knowledge to escape from him and most importantly when he re-encountered his childhood memories about his family. He came to understand the vanity of his love when he figured out that his love for Hartley or aunt Estelle, James's mother, was actually his love for his own youth: "I was in love with my own youth. Aunt Estelle? Not really. Who is one's first love?" (Murdoch 478). His love for aunt Estelle, was also truly his younger self's obsession with the glamorous life she led that he later accomplished through life in the theatre. The deaths of James and Titus affected him in a great way as James was the only family he had. Despite their differences they were always in each other's life and it was James's presence that reminded him of his family and of his connection with aunt Estelle and the vanity of his life. Titus was also the one person he started to see as a family and his death helped him understand his wrongdoings as towards the end of the novel he admitted that perhaps his death was his punishment for the sins he had committed.

There is a relentless causality of sin and in a way Titus died because, all those years ago, I had taken Rosina away from Peregrine. And of course my vanity had killed Titus just as James's vanity had killed the Sherpa. In each case our weakness had destroyed the thing we loved. (Murdoch 450)

It was only after his realisation and taking the responsibility of his wrongdoings and coming to terms with his past that he was able to ensure authenticity in life. Initially, authenticity was

for him to be able to leave theatre life which he did by starting to live in the house near the sea. However, the truth is that his life was full of absurdity as seen in the initial stages of the novel.

The self-deception in Charles Arrowby's character became exceptionally visible when he re-encountered Hartley in Shruff End. From the beginning he deluded himself into thinking that she was in a bad marriage with her husband Ben Fitch. One of the reasons for his strong bias against their marriage was that he did not perceive Hartley through herself but through his childhood memory of her. Seeing her after so long brought him the memories and reminded him of the innocence of their youth. Before Arrowby moved to London with the intention of working in the theatre, he too was an innocent young boy, whereas, when he left London theatre behind to live by the sea he was at an old age of sixty and far from the innocence he once had. Hartley only reminded him of his lost innocence and lost time.

From the beginning Arrowby constantly talked about the memory of his great love in his youth that he could not succeed in. When he reunited with Hartley in his old age, he wanted to succeed in their supposed love. His past memory took him back to their youth and perhaps he thought that in succeeding with their relationship, he could travel back to his youth which was why he only viewed the old Hartley as the young one. Every time Arrowby saw Hartley after their reunion, he reflected on their memories of youth. Sartre admits that memories can get altered by reflections because when reflecting on a past event one re-encounters past from an explicit perspective. In Arrowby's case, he saw Hartley and remembered her through a certain perspective as well. He viewed their childhood relationship as the perfect romantic relation and remembered Hartley as the most beautiful woman. However, their relationship was far from perfect if one can even call it a romantic relationship because they were hardly teenagers at age twelve. It became clear when in a conversation with Hartley after Arrowby kidnapped her, Hartley questioned the maturity to

form such a relation in their past: “We were children. You never became part of my real life.” (Murdoch, 294) They were hardly grown enough to form or maintain romantic relationships as she stated in another conversation that “we were too much like brother and sister and you were so sort of bossy” (Murdoch, 214). Yet Arrowby remembered it being perfect which suggests Sartre’s notion of memory getting altered through reflections. When Arrowby reflected on their past relationship he reflected with a certain bias of his own that made him think that the relationship was more than it truly was. It contributed to Arrowby thinking that Hartley’s relationship with her husband was bad and he became obsessed with the idea of rescuing her. His altered memory of his childhood relationship with Hartley only added to his delusion. Hartley never told him about being unhappy with her husband, but his delusion led him to the conclusion. When he kept reflecting on their meetings after each interaction with Hartley, he again kept encountering the past with certain perceptions. In this case, the perception was his bias against Ben which was why he kept finding or making conclusions about the unhappiness in their marriage and about Ben being abusive to Hartley. He ended up kidnapping Hartley and keeping her at Shruff End against her will till James with Gilbert, Lizzie, Rosina and Titus finally pressured him to release her.

In Arrowby’s case, memory did lead him to become delusional and encouraged in his self-deception, but it also ultimately led him towards personal growth. It especially played a significant role in self-growth after James’s and Titus’s death. Their deaths were the true turning point in Arrowby’s life that changed his perception of life. When James still lived Arrowby saw him as his competition who had more financial advantages than him in life. James also had the opportunity of getting fame from his mother while Arrowby was unfortunate in that aspect yet, he was focused on getting fame. To him, James’s inability to pursue fame meant him being unsuccessful in life. He was happy that he was the successful one from the two. It was only after James’s death when he reflected on his memory of James

that he realised that perhaps James's perception of success had no connection with fame, especially when he realised that James poems were wanted and James was a known figure in the army. After James's death Arrowby kept thinking about James and what James had talked about to him. He did add his bias in remembering the past with James as he thought that James might not be actually dead but had gone on a mission. But his memory of James also reminded him of their conversation about Hartley which helped Arrowby to understand that he did love Hartley but the idea of her. It helped him in letting Hartley go and understanding himself. Near the end of his memoir, Arrowby reminisced a discussion he had with James where he remembered James emphasising that if his love was reenacted, "it would crumble to pieces like something in a fairy tale when the clock strikes twelve" (Murdoch 467). This memory of the discussion led him to wonder whether he would create the same situation with Hartley and Ben that he did with Rosina and Peregrine. He also acknowledged that after Titus's death there was no such possibility left regarding continuing a relationship with Hartley and he stated "that part at least of the cold lesson, the revelation of human vanity, has remained" (Murdoch 467). It made him question whether he was passionately in love even at the beginning too. His memory also took him to the long lived past where the only women in his life other than Hartley were his mother and aunt Estelle. He reminisced about his mother's relation to aunt Estelle and wondered if his mistaking "dullness for goodness" was a reflection of that (Murdoch 467).

Here we can see that his memory of his discussion with James about Hartley, his memory of Rosina and Peregrine, of Titus's death, of his mother and Estelle all led him to question his own actions in the past events that would eventually lead to an understanding of the self. He could come to understand himself when he gradually came to understand the actions he had taken in the past and changed his perspectives. Memory of the past events and people were essential for his self-growth. The notion of reflecting the past was brought upon

to him by the fact that he had met someone (Hartley) who held a significant place in his thoughts and his wish to write a memoir on his life. Therefore, these two events played substantial parts in initiating the changes he acquired in his personality.

Chapter 5

Acceptance of the Imperfection

When Charles Arrowby came to understand his past and relationships through re-encountering the past and through grief and reflecting on the memories of his actions and of people, he also came to understand the self which helped him in gaining authenticity. The major events that led him to proceed towards self-awareness and authenticity were him writing the memoir, reuniting with Hartley, his confrontation with Peregrine and the near death experience, meeting Titus and his death and his cousin James's death. These events forced him to take responsibility for his actions and understand the consequences for it. It became visible that he was gradually taking responsibility for his actions when he wrote regretting never truly knowing James and admitting that it was due to a one sided competition from his side. He learned that his love for Hartley, aunt Estelle and Clement were truly his love for his youth and the glamorous lifestyle. He also came to understand that his glamorous lifestyle was nothing but a vanity as he discovered his inability to maintain any relationship, got reminded of the lost innocence through Titus and became aware of mortality through the deaths of Titus and James. He learned that people did not think of him as high as he thought when he discovered that Peregrine attempted to murder him. And he had to acknowledge his responsibility behind Peregrine's extreme action against him. Then James's death also brought out regrets that he never thought he would contain. Reuniting with Hartley and the extreme events that followed led him to set himself free from his past and his obsessions about youth and glamour. It all contributed to him gradually proceeding towards authenticity

by changing his perception of himself and of life as he came to understand the true self by renouncing vanity. He found vanity and arrogance as vain which is why he was finally able to establish connections that he maintained through efforts. He also learned about himself that unlike he thought about preferring isolation, he preferred to live surrounded by people. He parted from Shruff End, his house by the sea and came to live in James's apartment because he found that unlike he thought earlier, he found content in the busy London city and in being near James memory. There were also implications that his view on success changed as well because he came to understand that James was successful in his own way though away from the fame and glam. He also learned that he too in fact found content being away from the fame which is why he started to regularly go out with others. He mentioned taking his secretary "to *Hamlet*" and that he "enjoyed it" (Murdoch 478). He came to acknowledge that his fame was not as everlasting as he thought which could be seen through him mentioning someone from "BBC quiz" not knowing "who I (he) was" (Murdoch 473). He also learned that he valued enjoying life through travelling as well which was seen through him enthusiastically talking about the "tempting invitation to Japan" (Murdoch 478). It is not like he never thought about Hartley and the events of Shruff End. He is also a human with flaws after all. He did think about them but it never affected him like before. In the end, it could be said that the most important lesson he learned about himself is that he valued living his own life in his own way. He also accepted that there are imperfections in life and people have flaws. He no longer forced corrupt relationships on others and started to be responsible for himself. He was no longer hung on the past and was keeping contact with the people he wanted in the present and visiting them at his choice rather than provoking them like in the beginning. Near the final part of the novel he talked about taking Miss Kaufman, his secretary for an outing and listening "about her aged mother" and then taking another friend Rosemary Ashe for lunch and listening to her story about divorce, children and Sidney and

Maybelle (Murdoch 459). Initially, the relationship among Arrowby and these people seemed one-sided because in the days of staying at Shruff End, it was shown that only they reached out to him through letters. However, the way he expressed about meeting his friends and intently hearing the stories about their life, indicates that he started to reciprocate the effort at keeping relations intact. It shows that he took his responsibility to create and maintain relationships with others. He no longer seemed to disrupt others' relationships for entertainment rather he was trying to maintain proper relationships.

He became understanding of others' choice which was reflected in his acceptance of Rosina and Peregrine's renewed relationship and of Lizzie and Gilbert's relationship. When in the beginning he mocked their choice to live together and thinking he would never visit their home despite invitations he had received, near the end of the novel he came to accept their relationship and visited them at his will: "I saw Lizzie and Gilbert on Friday, at their maisonette in Golden Green . . . We make jokes about this" (Murdoch, 459). It shows that Arrowby no longer lived in such vanity where he found himself to be the most important person, rather he kept up with his friends and he was no longer as condescending as he was initially. He praised Gilbert here whereas, initially in the novel he used to mock him. It reflects his personal growth. He now reached out to people that he thought important to him, not because of their position in their profession but because they were important to the self.

Arrowby also came to accept Hartley's marriage with Ben. He had thought what he would do if they returned to Niblets, their residence near Shruff End and expressed:

But the impulse to do so has gone. I have battered destructively and in vain upon the mystery of someone else's life and must cease at last. I later concluded it really did not matter whether they had gone to Sydney or to Lytham-St-Anne's. And now the idea of such an elaborate hoax for my benefit simply seems absurd. (Murdoch 468)

Here it emphasises his acceptance that he could not be in control of others' life rather he should focus on his life. He had to acknowledge that people are not without flaws. Hartley's marriage was also flawed as she stated "in any marriage there is pain, life is pain" to Arrowby when he considered her marriage to be an unhappy one (Murdoch, 296). He accepted that his cousin might have flaws as well when he recalled the "tulpa tribesman" he saw at James's apartment once but "James was so annoyed" (Murdoch, 465) for Arrowby seeing him.

Arrowby's acceptance of the imperfections in life also led him to cease trying to control others and to focus on understanding his wants and needs. This understanding was also influenced by Titus forming a hard boundary with him when he mentioned forming a unique connection. Titus expressed "why should you bother about me? If you had been my real father, great, though even then . . . but I want to get back to London where the real things happen" (Murdoch, 363). Here he had to understand that he could not force others to form a relationship with him or have any control over his life. As much as he wanted Titus as his son, Titus did not want any special bond with him. He had to acknowledge that others' lives are just as much others' responsibility as his life was his responsibility. As existentialists' suggest, people are free to choose and they are responsible for their choices just as Arrowby was for his. The events of the novel eventually led him to understand this notion and to live as the authentic self.

To conclude, accepting the imperfections of life and learning about the self, took him further towards achieving authenticity in life. It along with his understanding of human relationships helped him to accept accountability and to recognise his own and others' freedom. His memory of the past events also helped him to grow as a person who is able to acknowledge his responsibility.

Chapter 6

6.1 Findings

In Iris Murdoch's novel, Charles Arrowby represents a modern man in his old age. Murdoch expresses the events an old man goes through and shows how those can affect him. In Arrowby's case, those events, especially the grief and loss brought changes to his personality and to his perception of himself. Memory played a vital role in facing the past that eventually led towards authenticity as well. Arrowby was seen reflecting on his past often like any old man in retirement with free time in hand. It often made him dwell in delusions but ultimately influenced him to become self-aware. The novel successfully portrays that when a person comes to recognize his individuality, he makes his way towards an authentic life. Many factors had significance in Arrowby making his way towards individuality like acknowledging the states of relationships with others, coming to terms with past etc that helped him proceed towards an authentic life. Before proceeding towards authenticity, Arrowby's life was filled with vanity and when he gradually moved towards it, he gradually overcame the vanity and vice versa. One overcomes vanity when he comes to comprehend the self and becomes accountable for own actions. For Arrowby, it was seen when he incorporated the understanding of his past relations in his present life like Arrowby coming back to London and investing energy in maintaining the relations he valued. The novel also portrays the importance of authentic human relations in life. In Arrowby's case, when he lived inauthentically, he was deluded that his relations with others were perfect but the reality was far from it and when he proceeded towards authenticity he started maintaining relationships with the people he valued. It shows that an authentic relationship is only possible if one becomes authentic himself. Moreover, Iris Murdoch's moral philosophy plays a vital role in reshaping Charles Arrowby's perception. Through the existential analysis there could be seen an emphasis on recognizing freedom and accountability. The novel portrays

that Arrowby attained goodness when he started to understand the self and reality and when he finally began to unself. He attained self when he understood the reality about his love being for the young version of Heartly, rather than for the person herself and he attained the unselfing when he started paying attention to the surrounding people. Arrowby maintaining relationships with the people he valued and his acceptance towards his friend's relationships that initially he detested like Lizzie and Gilbert's relationship, Peregrine and Rosina's relationship etc are the prime examples of him being successful to unself himself.

6.2 Scope and Limitations

There can be several limitations depicted in exploring the novel, *The Sea, The Sea* with existential philosophies. There could be differences in interpreting the novel, therefore, there cannot be anything definitive regarding the analysis. There is also an issue of unreliability of the narration. The protagonist, Charles Arrowby is often seen as unreliable with his narrations to different events. Moreover, there are several elements in the novel that may not resonate with existentialism but can resonate with other literary theories. So, it is limiting to only analyse the novel through existential lenses.

6.3 Conclusion

Through Charles Arrowby, Iris Murdoch depicts the existential crisis of modern man in his old age. Arrowby had to overcome delusions that were influenced by his vanity. Memory also served his illusions of being of utmost importance which all made his relationships suffer. A person's identity is based upon his understanding of himself. The novel puts an emphasis on it as Arrowby was often expressed as a character who had a false understanding of it. His understanding of himself was influenced by several other people in his life and it caused his individuality to lapse. The novel also explores the significance of

relationships and the effect it has in a person's life. Arrowby's relationship suffered due to his fallacious identity and misunderstanding of the past. Murdoch portrays that though memory can sometimes lead to misconceptions, it plays an important role to understand the past. Throughout the long run of life people often leave things behind and continue living with misbelief but it is essential to re-encounter the past events for better understanding of oneself. Otherwise, it prompts one to have delusions which was the case with Charles Arrowby. A major factor that results in Arrowby re-constructing his initial false identity when he understood his relationships with others. He not only came to accept his own freedom and accountability but also others. The mutual respect for the self and the others paved the way for fruitful relationships. People like him can often be trapped in self-deception because they have a lack of self-awareness. But with the establishment of individuality they can overcome it because it makes them aware of themselves. They are often in need of confrontation with the past to become conscious of the deceptions that can get created by the reflections of memory. Only then a true identity can be formed and the possibility of authentic existence is established.

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