About Iris Murdoch's Novels via Carl Gustav Jung (I)

Eric GILDER

Universitatea „Lucian Blaga" din Sibiu
"Lucian Blaga" University of Sibiu
Personal e-mail: eric.gilder@ulbsibiu.ro

Clementina Mihăilescu's book *Interpersonal Relations in Iris Murdoch's Novels via Kelly and Jung* is closely related to the novelist's endeavour to bring her knowledge as Platonist philosopher to bear on topics regarding the effects of the contingent and accidental nature of life, of the loss of faith (and of their subsequent consequences manifested under the form of the egoistic natural inclinations and of the dark side of the human personality). For this investigation of the hidden side of Murdoch's literary characters to be successful, Mihăilescu has turned towards Carl Jung's psychological model, more precisely his process of individuation, that resembles Murdoch's 'unselfing' and George A. Kelly's Personal Construct Psychology focused on corollaries of 'commonality' and 'sociality'. Together with his vectors of action (through the constructs of 'aggressiveness' and 'hostility' and his vectors of perception, through the constellations 'anxiety/certainty', 'threat/fear' and 'guilt/courage'), all incorporated in a diagram called by her "the metaphor of the iceberg", meant to reveal and illuminate the geometry of the psychological space of Murdoch's characters.

Keywords: contemporary British literature, Iris Murdoch, contemporary novel, Jung and modern literary consciousness.

Kelly's and Jung's Social-Psychological Theories

In reading Clementina Mihăilescu's work, we have seen her approach to a 'Murdoch made complicated' by her inner tensions due to her 'multiple selves' enacted via her social roles as simultaneously a fiction writer and a philosopher (the writer's being classed as an 'emotional' self and the philosopher's being classified as a 'logical' and 'ethical' self) and her propensity as an embodied author to identify herself with her fictional characters. The sequence of ideas proposed by Mihăilescu in her study includes Iris Murdoch's moral philosophy, Kelly's Personal Construct Theory, Jung's psychological archetypal model, a methodology of applied constructs (shown by a methodological analysis of six of Murdoch's novels), Murdoch's reception in Romania as a novelist and philosopher, and Conclusions.

Chapter 1 focused on Iris Murdoch as a philosophical novelist, firstly clarifying the label 'philosophical novelist', which arises from the author's concern with 'ideas', as Rabinovitz has pointed out, and whose position has been shared by most critics. Mihăilescu reacted to Murdoch being labelled a philosophical novelist (by noting the fact that an individual's relationship with the world around him is inevitably of moral significance), illustrates, to her, Murdoch's moral philosophy is important to her role as a novelist.

As concerns Murdoch's ethical theory, depicted in her essays, Mihăilescu points out that it is centred on the concept of good that passes through different stages before reaching a high degree of consciousness.

The concept of 'loving attention' is highlighted by Murdoch as the only way of 'dispelling fragmentation'. It is also clearly stated in the dissertation that Murdoch asserts that only through compassion and complete altruism can one reach eternal truth.

The first part of Murdoch's essay 'The Sovereignty of Good' is focused on her moral doctrine based on goodness, loving attention, transcendence of the ego's selfishness, freedom and the metaphor of vision. The second part, 'On Good and God', reveals the fact that Murdoch had assimilated several traditional concepts of Christianity and, although people's belief in God is declining nowadays, the tradition of prayer and the concept of love are suggested as the only means of unifying the moral world.

The essay 'The Fire and The Sun', expanded upon by Mihăilescu, appears to be focused on the centre of Plato's thought – the connection of the good with real, which has become the core of Murdoch's own moral philosophy subtly and inspiringly dealt with in her novels. Murdoch's ethical theory based on goodness, loving attention, forgiveness is completely different from the behaviourist-existentialist view on man promoted by Stuart Hampshire, claims Mihăilescu. Considering the picture of such a man as lacking something vital, Murdoch favours another sort of person who experiences moral progress through a change in the way he or she sees the world. In order to clarify the appropriateness of the concept of 'change', Mihăilescu has incorporated, in her interpretative grid, Jung and Kelly: Kelly's constructs about change, validated through his 'sociality' and 'commonality' corollaries and Jung's archetype of change.

Chapter 2, entitled George Kelly's Personal Construct Theory, reveals Mihăilescu's ability to expand upon one area of study-sociology-and demonstrates her endeavour to argue reasonably about the valuable ideas present in Kelly's theory of personality. Her dissertation highlights Kelly's basic argument, namely, the fact that there are 'alternative perspectives, we could choose from in our approach to the surrounding world'. Mihăilescu has enlarged her approach to Kelly and has focused on his concern with 'predictive behaviour' and she further mentions the fact that he adopts the metaphor 'man – the – scientist'. Very much like the scientist, the individual tries to foretell, to 'construct anticipatory systems' and to control the consequences of his behaviour. There are two significant concepts related to Kelly's theory - determinism and free will. The former implies that people's behaviour is determined by their construction of reality, while, the latter, that they are free to modify it and to create 'alternative construals of the world'.

Mihăilescu has also closely considered Kelly's basic concept of 'personal construct', regarded as 'a way in which some things are construed as being alike and yet different from others'. Kelly's assumption, that the personal construct system helps us to make sense of the world as it organizes reality so that we could anticipate events, has led to the distinction between core and peripheral constructs (the former are resistant to change, the latter, being subject to change).

As regards Kelly's fundamental postulate and the eleven corollaries, he claims that a person 'anticipates events', that means making suppositions and expectations concerning what will happen if one acts in a particular way. Two corollaries have been identified by Mihăilescu as being relevant as concerns the Murdochian character, namely 'commonality corollary', based on similarity constructions of events, and 'sociality corollary'. The latter implies understanding people so that one may 'play a role in the social process involving another person'. Constructs about change involve both the superordinal (logical) constructs and the core (emotional) constructs.

The assumption that constructs undergo changes on both the intuitive and the logical perceptual planes has led to the concept of 'cognitive awareness'. As analyzed by Mihăilescu, it appears that this concept implies perceived changes either in terms of 'anxiety' or 'certainty' on the logical and emotional plane or in terms of 'threat and 'fear' in one's emotional construct, when one gets engaged in interpreting life events. Besides perceiving changes within one's personality, the individual also undertakes actions within a socially determined 'role'. Therefore, 'aggressiveness' and 'hostility' have also been expanded upon in the theoretical part of Mihăilescu's dissertation. The former implies the imposition of socially validated constructs that have proved to be successful, while, the latter, and the imposition of socially invalidated constructs that have proved themselves a failure.

Mihăilescu's key assumption is that Kelly's constructs about changing his or her identity construction resemble Jung's theory of archetypes, his process of individuation and, by extension, Murdoch's 'unselfing' process.

In chapter 3, 'Jung's Psychological Archetypal Model', Mihăilescu firstly expands upon similarities between Kelly's and Jung's theories, both being retrospective and prospective. Yet, asserts Mihăilescu, Kelly's theory is rather empirical and logical, as the individual puts an interpretation upon an event so that it may become meaningful. It is further revealed the fact Jung's theory is 'meta-rational' taking into account the unconscious side of human personality, that the explanatory model proposed by Jung is based on the concept of 'collective unconscious' and that the contents of the collective unconscious are known under the name of archetypes defined as 'the inborn preconscious and unconscious psychic structure of the individual'. Further expansions upon the formation

of the archetypes have led Mihăilescu to Jung's explanation that archetypes consist of the imprinting, in the unconscious, of the 'fantastic subjective representations' provoked by physical processes.

The necessity to differentiate the archetype from the archetypal image has brought Mihăilescu to Demaris Wehr's approach to this issue. According to Wehr, the archetype appears to be some sort of 'predisposition', possessed by man, to form images. The 'archetypal image' has been identified as an 'effect' of this non-representable, unconscious and pre-existent form being filled 'with the material of conscious experience'. Moreover, the presence within ourselves of certain archetypes has been regarded and interpreted by Mihăilescu as helping us predict our future behaviour. Mihăilescu further enriches her approach to archetypes as behavioural patterns which necessarily demanded on her part the initiation into Jung's archetypal world of animus, anima, shadow, persona, the archetypal child, the maternal archetype, the archetype of the self, of the spirit, of change, of meaning and into Jung's process of individuation, all analysed and commented upon in an extensive and well-informed manner.

Consequently, animus and anima have been dealt with in relation to Jung's perception of the human being as essentially bisexual. The feminine side of man's personality and the masculine side of woman's personality have been attributed by Jung to archetypes (anima – an archetype present with men, animus – an archetype present with women). Jung's considerations on the fact that these two archetypes should be regarded as products of the ancestral experiences of man with woman, and respectively of woman with man have reached a climax in the dissertation with Mihăilescu's statement that both man and woman come to understand each other on the strength of these two archetypes. The fact that they manifest themselves hypertrophically in phantasms and dreams has closely been considered by Mihăilescu while interpreting irrational issues in Murdoch's characters.

Mihăilescu probed into the archetype of the shadow and sided up with Jung's considerations on the fact that it consists of the repressed dark hidden parts of one's personality which can be projected upon those people within one's proximity who are uncertain and weak enough to take over a negative content and on the fact that its negative consequences can be solved in terms of confronting one's dark, hidden side of the personality and of gaining control over it in order to annihilate its coercive force.

Turning to persona, defined by Jung as a 'forged, illusory individuality' which, displayed to the world instead of one's private personality, can direct the individual towards experiencing 'the inflation of persona', Mihăilescu turned to good account this interpretation while approaching the dual personality of various Murdochian characters.

The archetype of the child regarded by Jung as standing for the individual's bent for self-achievement together with the maternal archetype have also been turned into good account by Mihăilescu, while developing her methodological model for interpreting, in an extremely original and well-informed manner, the topic of interpersonal relations in Iris Murdoch' novels.

In support to this literary review regarding the theoretical background of Mihăilescu's doctoral dissertation, which highlights the fact that she turned out to be an engaged researcher seeking a plurality of theories (Plato, Jung, Kelly) in order to build, through the metaphor of the iceberg, an "empathy model" of complex and closely related interdisciplinary perspectives useful for analysing the sampled novels of Iris Murdoch, which Mihăilescu ably performs in the central chapters of her dissertation.

Attending to Evil: Threading the Needle of Consciousness in *Bruno's Dream*

Murdoch's statement that man's life is a dream if it is dominated by the 'inflated self' and her suggestion that only through 'unselfing', which means the death of the self, and, through 'loving attention' directed towards the others, one can grasp reality in a correct manner, has been regarded by the author of the dissertation as the clearest illustration of the novelist's moral philosophy. Moreover, it has inspired her reviewers to infer meaning from the ambivalent mode of paradoxical uncertainty through which a half-comic, half-ironic group of characters question or perceive the greatest cultural archetypes of humanity.

Mihăilescu's psychological Jungian approach to *Bruno's Dream* is based on the assumption that the unconscious charge of the characters' mind can be kept under control only if we give up experiencing the phenomenon of the 'inflation of the persona'. This phenomenon has been analyzed in relation to Nigel who, through his narrative presence, contributes to the conceptual unity of the novel. He is the one who is exquisitely nursing Bruno, the novel's namesake character. In spite of the fact that he is no relative of his and has no family obligations to him, his excellence at looking after Bruno generated subjective interpretations regarding his behaviour, summed up by other various characters in the novel as being within the 'mystical/demonic' constellation. This constellation has provided the author of the dissertation with an axis for understanding and further interpreting Nigel's two intense emotional, mystical experiences displayed in the novel.

The first mystical experience is related to Eastern religious symbolism (interpreted via Jung, who claims

that 'whirling' or 'dancing' symbolically represent the eagerness to acquire completeness through unifying opposed tendencies), the second mystical experience (related to the Christian cultural archetype through Nigel's identification with Christ) have both been interpreted by Mihăilescu in connection with the phenomenon of 'the inflation of persona'.

These two cultural archetypes were further related to Jung's concept of individuation, which consists in the assimilation of various archetypes in order to acquire a complete personality. The archetype of the shadow, which stands for the dark side of his personality, has also been dealt with in direct relation to Kelly's construct of hostility. The imposition of 'invalidated social constructs' on various characters' lives and the consequences of such hostility have been explained via Kelly's vectors of perception associated with the 'fear/threat' constellation, on the emotional plane and the 'certainty/anxiety' constellation, on the logical plane.

The archetype of anima, the feminine part of his soul, has been employed by Mihăilescu in her dissertation to explain Nigel's homosexuality, the hidden and repressed side of his personality, revealed in a letter addressed to Danby, interpreted via Freud's defence mechanism.

The surfacing of these two long repressed tendencies opened for Nigel the door to experiencing individuation through the assimilation of the archetype of meaning associated with the acquisition of superior wisdom and will after intense suffering. His aspiration towards moral completeness has also been explained through the assimilation of the archetype of the self. Once these archetypes have been surfaced and assimilated, through the transcendent function, Nigel is ready to leave for India, the locus of great archetypal aspirations through the assimilation of various eastern energies, Mihăilescu observes.

On the other hand, Kelly's 'guilt/shame' constellation has been turned into account for depicting the psychological space and moral tensions displayed by Bruno. Dreams, as strategies of surviving (Wiston), or as compensatory means (Jung), or as fiction (Adler) have been psychologically exploited to explain Bruno's behavioural issues related to his forthcoming death.

Mihăilescu's argumentation also includes the idea that one's approach to death necessarily implies self-knowledge and a 'conceptual transformation' with an affective basis. Murdoch, as ironist, has provided an interesting alternative for Bruno to acquire sympathy for those around him and the sympathy of his relatives. Moving along this ironic trend, the author of the dissertation has noticed and commented upon the fact that Bruno acquires 'social commonality' only in the last part of the novel when he is forgiven by his son for his affair with Maureen.

Kelly's 'commonality' corollary and his 'sociality' corollary, the latter implying comprehending another person's construal processes, alongside with Jung's process of individuation, based on the assimilation of his shadow, anima and the archetype of meaning (wisdom and will) have thrown light on Bruno's coming to terms with himself and with those people towards whom he formerly felt detached, uninvolved, without sympathy or any other form of empathic comprehension.

The possibility of moral regeneration through loving attention has been focused on Danby and Diana's relation to Bruno in order to reveal how two 'inflated' selves, by giving up selfishness and hedonism and by learning to properly attend to other people can enjoy moral progress and move out of Plato's cave filled up with illusory dreams and artificiality.

Miles, Bruno's son, mainly concerned with his destiny as a poet, has created for himself and for his beloved a selfish pattern where, in turns, Parvatti, his former wife, who died in an accident and then, Lisa, who closely resembles her, were the only imperatives that really mattered. Mihăilescu has further assumed that 'the love-transfigured-by-death' metaphor employed in explaining Miles' relation with Lisa was the expected ordeal meant to stir up his poetic resources. Consequently, it is Danby who can respond to Bruno's forthcoming death with humanity, while Miles continues to be completely concerned with the requirements of writing, instead of properly attending his father.

Kelly's construct of 'certainty' has assisted Mihăilescu in concluding that the logical comprehension of social situations, coupled with Murdoch's 'loving attention', have opened the way to individuation for Nigel, Danby, Diana and Bruno who willingly integrated the conscious and unconscious sides of their personality and accomplished 'a unified ethos'.

We would like to conclude our literary review to Clementina Mihăilescu's interdisciplinary approach to Iris Murdoch's *Bruno's Dream* underlining her conviction in the therapeutic function of Murdoch's concept of "loving attention" embraced by most of the characters from the novel, function which she has repeatedly analysed resorting to Jung and to Kelly's sociality and commonality corollaries. Mihăilescu has proved, in our opinion, the wide validity of this therapeutic function by suggesting that even common people, indulged in reading Murdoch's novels, can accomplish it through will, conscience and their active ethos placed in the service of themselves and of humanity at large. She has repeatedly suggested citing Bachelard that Murdoch's lesson would be to teach us how "to live ethically and aesthetically in the world around us".

Through the Looking-Glass of Social-Psychology: Readings of Murdoch's The Flight to the Enchanter

and The Times of the Angels

The basic assumption, formulated by Mihăilescu in this part of her dissertation, has been that the characters' identity construction changes on both the intuitive and logical perceptual planes and that a character does not only perceive such changes, he/she also performs social actions. Consequently, the proposed methodological model has incorporated both 'vectors of action and of perception'. Vectors of action refer to Kelly's constructs of hostility (imposition of socially invalidated constructs) and of aggressiveness (enactment of socially validated constructs). While performing several actions a character may experience guilt (if his personality is split) or courage (if his personality is well integrated).

So that the interlocking of the classical Aristotelian rhetorical constructs of Logos, Pathos and Ethos could create a 'unified self', Jung's process of individuation (the integration of the conscious and the unconscious sides of their personality) has permanently been analyzed in Murdoch's novels by Mihăilescu. In this section, we will focus upon two of Mihăilescu's embodied examples of sensitive literary analysis, namely on *The Flight from the Enchanter* and *The Time of the Angels* and formulate our stand regarding them.

The Flight from the Enchanter has been approached by Mihăilescu as the narration of a story of social 'fictions', through the fact that it reveals the characters' specific relations with the male protagonist Mischa Fox, the enchanter. Turning to good account well-defined Kellian and Jungian patterns, Mischa Fox' personality is depicted by the author of the dissertation in terms of his incapacity to 'confront his shadow, the dark side of his personality' and his 'adoption of a social mask'. It is not only a social mask but also a psychological one, as the will to wear a mask stands for the will to have another future and another 'look', claims Mihăilescu.

Consequently, Fox is depicted as experiencing the 'inflation of the persona' and as behaving in a hostile manner, by elaborating and enacting unfit social patterns, endangering the life of most of the characters in the novel (Calvin Blick, his associate, Rosa, his former mistress, Annette, an idealistic adolescent, and Nina, the seamstress).

The polarity dissembling/sincerity is investigated by Mihăilescu who asserts that it is best sustained by the immigrant Nina who stands for all the invisible immigrants in the novel. Her life is the expression of patterns of continuity and discontinuity, of 'appropriation and rejection, of received cultural traditions'. Her permanent humiliations, her aspirations to get away from the social context that generated them and to settle in Australia have been interpreted as an intense inner impulse to experience the cultural archetype of the Promised Land.

Kelly's psychological model has been employed to explain her confusion and anxiety. Kelly states that such emotional states are generated by one's incapacity to properly deal with his or her construct system. Her suicide points, on the one hand, to the fact the individual sometimes 'construes the world in terms of predictions' that are not always successful. On the other hand, her suicide has been analyzed by Mihăilescu in terms of Mischa's failure to control the other character's life plans. It also casts a serious intuitive doubt upon Mischa's role of organizing and controlling the other people's lives.

Mischa's own doubts regarding his 'anticipatory sociality' (capacity of prediction) have been explained by Mihăilescu through what Bachelard calls 'an axis of the phenomenology of simulation'. It consists of a well-organized combination of the will of dissembling with the 'fatum' of natural expression. This has made Mihăilescu reach the conclusion that the dialectics of dissembling and sincerity is permanently active. Fox seems to oppose total dissembling, preserving the conscience of his dual personality.

In spite of the obvious 'conversion of values' which, in Mihăilescu's opinion, illustrates his dual split-personality permanently torn between the conscious and the unconscious, Fox still aspires to acquire a sense of continuity and moral stability.

It is further illustrated, in the interdisciplinary analysis of the novel, that he is striving to achieve commonality (spirituality) and that this has made him pass his Eastern cultural heritage to Peter Saward who stands for the archetype of meaning. Regarded by the critics as a prophet-like figure, Peter preaches that people should practise objective detachment based on the requirement that we have to understand other people in an unselfish manner. His message is indirectly passed to Fox and directly to Rosa, Fox's former mistress to whom Peter is very much attached. Rose's endeavours to turn down the enchanter and to surpass the negative consequences of such an action have been analysed and revealed through Mihăilescu's employment of Freud's defence mechanism, known as 'retroactive annulment'.

Mihăilescu wishes to go deeper and inquire as to the foundations of the issue of manipulation and further probes into Rosa's personal life. Stephen Lusiewicz, a "Polish migrant", moves into the house and plays the part of the master, which makes her seek Mischa's assistance to dispose of him. Mihăilescu does not view this as a positive action, but "as part of Mischa's enslaving plot".

Analysing what to be under a spell means, Mihăilescu resorts to one of Murdoch's statements, namely to the one that prove how "some characters want to be manipulated by others, by electing a god in their lives, somebody whose puppet they want to be". Scrutinizing such points of view, Mihăilescu

reaches the valuable conclusion that it actually stands for "a way of avoiding truth, of living safely, without responsibility".

Convinced of the fact that the only way to derive norms, decisions or to detect the truth arises from depicting and analysing the facts inserted in the novel, Mihăilescu, not content with half-truths, further investigates Mischa's capacity of emotionally imprisoning people by focusing on his relation with Annette, the daughter of a diplomat.

Paradoxically, Annette's dreams of "dominating the forces of evil", due to her firm conviction that virtue can conquer everything, has inspiringly been commented by Mihăilescu who resorts to Fry's description of a dehumanised world split between the "ruthless, inscrutable dragon and the sacrificed virtuous victim". Annette keeps misconstruing the situations she confronts herself with, and thus she experiences intense inner turmoil. Murdoch contemplates an "elaborated horizontal move" as concerns Annette who attempts suicide in the presence of some guests, claims Mihăilescu. Her insightful analysis is further enriched with another interesting approach, in the sense that she identifies and comments upon "an elaborated vertical move " related to Annette's being saved by her parents who show up in due course of time and save her from her melancholy by inviting her to travel with them around the world.

In spite of various characters' flight from the enchanter, Mischa Fox himself appears seduced by the need to change experienced in the presence of Peter Saward, already commented upon in this literary review in terms of the emotional, empathetic modes of changing man's mind.

Through Peter Saward, Murdoch is actually activating her potential of separating the world of facts from the world of values. Murdoch's ethical and aesthetic preoccupations have made Mihăilescu place the novelist's need of ethical and aesthetic experience under the sign of the Bachelardian aesthetics of the will and of the joyful ethics of improving oneself. By addressing the readers not through a social tone but, on the contrary, through that tone coloured by imagination and positive thinking which are never defeated by the course reality around us, Murdoch, Mihăilescu claims, liberates all.

Deprivation vs. Responsibility: Soul Killing vs. Soul Redeeming in *The Time of the Angels*

As a Platonist philosopher and novelist, Murdoch was concerned with uncovering the spiritual origins of humanity in terms of the idea of goodness that can morally improve people. Given her conviction that moral truth can be revealed through art rather than through philosophy and the laicization of the concept of original sin, she aesthetically and ethically draws attention to the fact that mankind's present situation should be put in relation with its own individual history where natural attachments are sexual, ambiguous, hard to understand or control and where the belief in God is declining nowadays.

For such a topic to be properly debated, in this chapter of her study, Mihăilescu has closely considered and turned into account Jung's position regarding the relation between man and his views of God and the symbolic character of God's images which can redeem what is conflicting in man. Likewise, Jung's three-dimensional vision, which includes the conscious, unconscious, and collective unconscious, has been exploited in order to identify credible clues to the full truth of the chaos experienced by various Murdochian characters from the novel.

In this part of her dissertation, Kelly's personal construct theory has been used by Mihăilescu as an entry to decoding the hostile attitude of Carel Fisher, a priest who has lost his faith, who disregards the moral law, exercising power over various characters. His lack of courage regarding the possibility of confronting his guilty conscience and regarding the necessity to acquire awareness of the dark side of his personality, have been dealt with through the Kellian construct of hostility and Jung's psychological constructs of self-knowledge and bad conscience. As such, his guilt and moral weakness have been considered as those features that generated his moral decline.

The Jungian model has also been employed by Mihăilescu to deal with Pattie, Carel's black servant and mistress, whose resentment, anxiety, and moral and social estrangement are counteracted by self-criticism, introspection, suffering and self-knowledge. However, it takes Pattie a lot of time to realize that Carel was actually an anti-Christian god. Mihăilescu has widely researched into various sources of literary criticism and has sided with Tomas Jackson Rice who claims that Pattie "has unconsciously taken the dark father for her missing black father". Moreover, from this perspective, Pattie's union with her father "is figuratively incestuous" and she fails to "understand and repress it", Mihăilescu claims, following Rice's approach.

Ample space is given in Mihăilescu's analysis to the contradictory feelings experienced by Pattie vis-à-vis Carel. Firstly, Pattie senses his numinous, frightening character, hardly realizing "the dreadful happiness" which emotionally overwhelms her. The guilt feeling experienced by Pattie has been approached via Kelly who defines it as "the perception of an apparent separation between one's unified ethos and the outside world". Mihăilescu's analysis impresses through the interdisciplinary grid where Kelly is consistently backed up by Jung's insights, as concerns various

keys of interpreting the character. As such, Jung's assumption that "self-experience" is the only way of solving dramatic spiritual issues has been suggested, suggestion which brings about a valid and insightful analysis of the bad conscience experienced by Pattie "as a genuine grace used to get to self-awareness and resentment".

Dreams, regarded by Jung as means of revealing irrational experiences, both multiply and simplify Pattie's split-personality as they underline how her inner darkness acquires self-awareness pushing her towards inner reconstruction, which occurs through the agency of Eugene Peshkov, an exile like herself, as Mihăilescu empathetically posits.

Since only the association of darkness and light suggests 'the double eternity of goodness and evil', Murdoch has created Marcus, Carel's brother, a Platonist concerned with the authority of Good. Decoding the interplay of these two characters, Mihăilescu has focused on the issue, permanently debated by Murdoch in her studies and novels, that moral redemption is not instantaneous, being often prevented by selfishness and the phantom of past memories.

Carel's unconscious, regarded by Schaer (cited by Mihăilescu), as the key "to the knowledge of the nature of the conscious" has been commented upon in terms of Jung's psychoanalytical theory. The naturalistic element of the repressed guilt present in Carel's psyche has been set in relation by the author of the dissertation with intense inner instability, with an intense anxiety experienced on the logical plane, anxiety materialised in his loss of faith and his intense fear.

Following Jung's assumption that "an imitation of Christ" that is characteristic for some modern men is no longer possible for Carel because he has embraced self-conviction and self-experience and, thus, has departs from "a marked unselfish other-centred attitude", has led Mihăilescu to further investigate such issues and to share Rollins' suggestion that self-experience can be interpreted as "man's encounter with evil, his confrontation with his bad conscience", precisely because he has transgressed his own limits.

The only person who can bring about some changes within Carel is Marcus, depicted by Mihăilescu as being "profoundly embedded in the mythological structure of Christianity". Marcus' initial preoccupation was the writing of a book focused on moral issues in a world without God. Unable to reach any reasonable progress in writing the book due to his brother's dissonant and contradictory behaviour, Marcus decides that his book will be about 'love', because his brother has become a 'genuine love object' for him.

Firmly believing that Carel can be cured through love, Marcus makes desperate efforts to turn Carel dependent upon a process of mutual understanding and communication. Such a provocative and fascinating challenge has been approached by Mihăilescu in terms of Kelly's commonality and sociality corollaries. The former implies the identification and the turning to good account of similar constructs of reality with another person. The latter concerns the ability to understand 'the construction system of another person'. Both take place in relation with the life and objects that the respective people are familiar with, within intervals of time of various intensities.

Apparently, the title *The Time of the Angels* suggests a value of dematerialization of the characters' lives, in the sense of experiencing 'a vertical time', claims Mihăilescu, who positions herself in tune with Bachelard; actually, within the novel, the characters' lives are related to contradictory feelings: horror of life and rapture. The former is experienced by most of the characters, while the latter is closely connected with Marcus. These two strong contradictions have been related by Mihăilescu to what Bachelard has called 'an immediate metaphysics'. Marcus has been presented as 'an eligible candidate for individuation' (in Jung's terminology), trying to integrate the conscious and the unconscious sides of his personality, as reflected in the characters of Carel, Pattie and Muriel. His attempt is only partially successful, being often affected by the dualism of personal selfishness and of family duty.

Therefore, the angels stand for the 'irresponsible psychological forces', and also for Marcus' unselfish impulses towards good - 'wanting nothing, expecting no reward or comfort' (82). Only Murdoch's profound psychology can offer the necessary patterns in order to understand the essential moral drama of the modern man, asserts Mihăilescu, after she has carefully and inspiringly probed into the novel's negative psychological issues with a view to proving that what Murdoch has accomplished within this novel is an attempt to save the world through art (because only art produces images that imaginatively and not analytically reflect the mysterious and complex character of our lives).