

特別講演要旨

## How Japan and Iris Murdoch Shaped an Englishwoman's Life

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My keynote lecture focused on the joint influence on my life of Iris Murdoch and of Japan, where my parents and I lived for two years. Illustrating my talk with old photographs from the early 1960s, I recalled my childhood experience of living in Shimomeguro, Tokyo where I learned to speak children's Japanese and to love Japanese food, as well as learning to read. I recounted my teenage discovery of Iris Murdoch's novel *The Unicorn* (1963) and described my university education in English Language and Literature at Hertford College, Oxford, discussing how the teaching of this subject has changed from the 1980s to the twenty-first century. Critical theory is now privileged over the literary text. I outlined the research I undertook, first for an abandoned thesis on symbolism and imagery in Murdoch's fiction at Queen's University, Belfast, and then for my 2010 PhD thesis on remorse in Iris Murdoch's philosophy and fiction under the supervision of Professor Anne Rowe at Kingston University. I discussed the concept of remorse in Japanese as well as English and highlighted the novels *A Word Child* (1975) which is her study of 'chronic' remorse and *The Good Apprentice* (1985) which is her study of 'lucid' remorse. I described the fresh ways in which I have recently been exploring Murdoch's writing and the impact she has on her readers, which has led to my contributing essays to two recent collections, *Reading Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals* edited by Nora Hämäläinen and Gillian Dooley which was launched at the Centenary Iris Murdoch Conferences in Oxford (2019), and *The Murdochian Mind* edited by Silvia Caprioglio Panizza and Mark Hopwood which was launched at the 10<sup>th</sup> Iris Murdoch Conference in the Iris Murdoch research Centre at the University of Chichester (2022). The first of these essays is based on archival research in the Iris Murdoch Collections at Kingston University and the second on reader-response theory, which developed out of my book, *Becoming Iris Murdoch* (2014) and my reading of *How Proust Can Change Your Life* (1997) by Alain de Botton and *What W. H. Auden Can Do for You* (2013) by Alexander McCall Smith. I told the story of my one brief encounter with Iris Murdoch in 1996 and considered the lasting impact of her legacy, which, as Priscilla Martin and Anne Rowe conclude in *Iris Murdoch: A Literary Life* (2010), is to have a moral and emotional influence for good on the lives of her readers. I ended by emphasising the international nature of Murdoch scholarship and the strong links of affection formed with the country and people of Japan in both Iris Murdoch's life and my own.

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