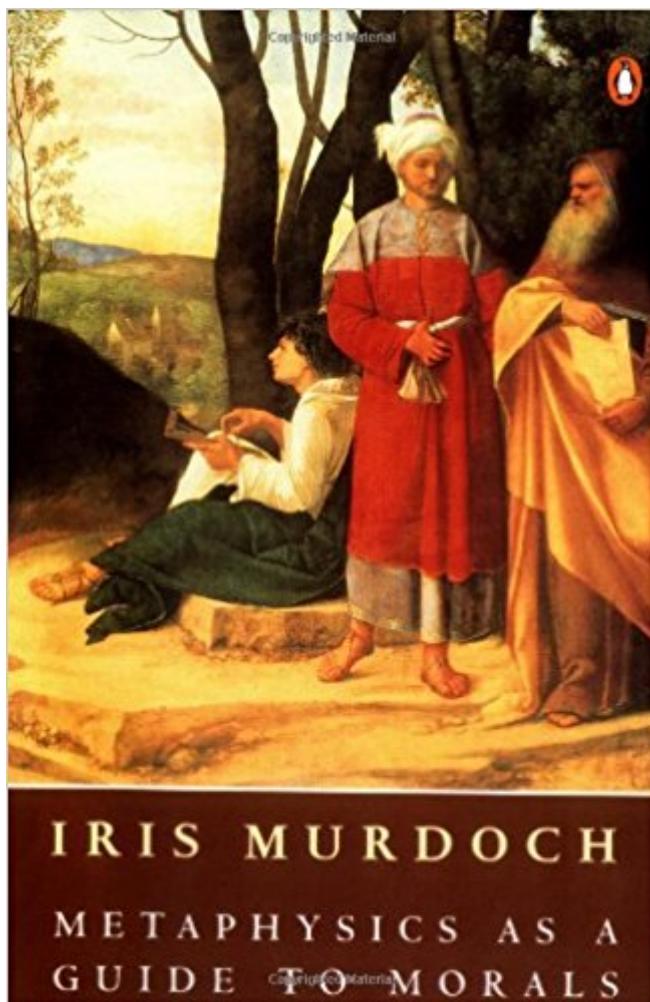


The book was found

Metaphysics As A Guide To Morals (Penguin Philosophy)



Synopsis

The decline of religion and ever increasing influence of science pose acute ethical issues for us all. Can we reject the literal truth of the Gospels yet still retain a Christian morality? Can we defend any 'moral values' against the constant encroachments of technology? Indeed, are we in danger of losing most of the qualities which make us truly human? Here, drawing on a novelist's insight into art, literature and abnormal psychology, Iris Murdoch conducts an ongoing debate with major writers, thinkers and theologians; from Augustine to Wittgenstein, Shakespeare to Sartre, Plato to Derrida; to provide fresh and compelling answers to these crucial questions.

Book Information

Series: Penguin Philosophy

Paperback: 528 pages

Publisher: Penguin Books; Reprint edition (March 1, 1994)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140172327

ISBN-13: 978-0140172324

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 1.1 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #268,983 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #117 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Reference #468 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > Metaphysics #677 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Philosophy > History & Surveys

Customer Reviews

British novelist-philosopher Murdoch's treatise on contemporary morality spans such topics as Shakespearean tragedy, Martin Buber's philosophy and the nature of the imagination. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This book is about the interplay of metaphysical images in art, religion, and especially morals. Morality is fundamental to human nature and is to be understood, according to distinguished novelist and philosophy professor Murdoch, not merely in piecemeal analysis but in the broad synthesis of metaphysical categories that set the order and pattern of our moral experience and our concepts thereof. Moral discernment comes from concentrated attention and appears *ex nihilo* , as

by a kind of grace that leads us from contingent detail toward a perfection that we (allegedly) know intuitively. The work draws significant influence from Plato and Kant and also discusses aspects of Schopenhauer, Wittgenstein, and Buber in detail. Far-ranging and rich with well-chosen examples, this insightful book challenges us to think more clearly about its subject.- Robert Hoffman, York Coll., CUNYCopyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

(The 1st most important work is Whitehead's "Process and Reality;" taken together, the "200" year frame is quite possibly overly conservative.) Murdoch does not present us with a metaphysical "theory." Rather, she presents a comprehensive argument about the nature and purpose of metaphysical **inquiry**. It is impossible to overstate the significance of such a shift in emphasis. Murdoch carefully leads the reader through a study of metaphor, because the deepest metaphysical truths are the sorts of things that cannot be directly articulated. Whitehead is also clear on this point, a fact that many of his interpreters cheerfully disregard. But Murdoch goes well beyond Whitehead's brief defense of speculative philosophy, and argues for the necessity of "spiraling in" (my phrase) to ideas that are real asymptotically, but only ever ideal within the finite limits of human cognition. Hence the need for metaphor to approach which always hovers just over the horizon of what human thought and speech can formulate. Each successive phase of metaphorical expression takes another step in closing in upon a never achieved, "infinitely receding," center of an idea that we feel and sense, but can never quite say. (Plato's "Symposium" exemplifies this procession of metaphors, by the bye.) But what makes Murdoch's work so especially important is that she does not merely argue for this point, she **exemplifies** it in her successive development of metaphors, stories, and analyses. She does not simply tell us that this is how metaphysical inquiry is done, she **SHOWS** us in the very doing of that inquiry. Having mentioned Whitehead already, the example that comes to mind is of mathematicians who present us with the completed results of their inquiry (and Whitehead was, of course, a mathematician as well as a brilliant philosopher) in the form of theorems and proofs, but do not exhibit the full process **OF** that inquiry to we sad fools trying to follow their line of argument. Murdoch -- and to my knowledge, **ONLY** Murdoch -- explicitly peels back the curtain on that process of inquiry. Anyone with even a casual interest in philosophy needs to read this book, in order to understand how to do philosophy well.

'Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals' is as the title suggests. It is metaphysical in spirit and

philosophical in style. The subject is one of many of Iris Murdoch's themes. Mostly she likes to help us find meaning in our lives by elevating our moral sensibility. She does that quite well. However, her style is not for everyone as it is heavy to read. One must decide the topic has relevance or that it has intellectual worthiness to engage in its minute and often ponderous arguments in favor of her thesis. Good people lead spiritually more gratifying lives than, well, the opposite, I guess. That would be those who are not so good. But then there are good people and there are the really 'Good' people. The really good are those who have transcended their contradictory inclinations for the path set out by Murdoch. Murdoch's thesis is that 'Good', is above being, non-personal, non-contingent, not a particular thing among other things'. For Murdoch, moral consciousness and reality testing are synonymous. In a world where pretense is often the sine qua non of one's existence, healing our vision is a lifelong journey. Why not take this fine book along as your guide? I have, and I'm a better person for it. So I imagine!

The book addresses a broad array of themes, such as Wittgenstein, Kant, and Derrida, all from the standpoint of moral inquiry. Like one reviewer says, (I'm paraphrasing) the book is a little scatterbrained, but has a lot of insight condensed within each section. I found one section that provides some potential background for my own dimensional philosophy in this book. It's usually a good sign when a work has real ties to one's own theories, thoughts, and beliefs. To a very discerning standard, this book is on the verge of being disappointing, but significantly passes over the hump by providing considerable thoughtfulness on every subject related to the central theme.

It is dense and not very interesting.

[Download to continue reading...](#)

Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals (Penguin Philosophy) Kant: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy) Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals (Oxford Philosophical Texts) Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: with On a Supposed Right to Lie because of Philanthropic Concerns (Hackett Classics) Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals A Critical Introduction to the Metaphysics of Time (Bloomsbury Critical Introductions to Contemporary Metaphysics) Metaphysics and Its Task: The Search for the Categorical Foundation of Knowledge (SUNY Series in Philosophy) (SUNY Series in Philosophy (Paperback)) Manifesto for Philosophy: Followed by Two Essays: "the (Re)Turn of Philosophy Itself" and "Definition of Philosophy" (Suny Series, Intersections, Philosophy and Critical Theory) The Principles of Morals and Legislation (Great Books in Philosophy) On the Genealogy of Morals (Penguin Classics)

Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction (Routledge Contemporary Introductions to Philosophy) Metaphysics: Contemporary Readings: 2nd Edition (Routledge Contemporary Readings in Philosophy) Metaphysics: The Fundamentals (Fundamentals of Philosophy) Metaphysics: Constructing a World View (Contours of Christian Philosophy) The Tao of Tribute Money (Philosophy-Metaphysics-Religion-Mysticism) Philosophy 101: From Plato and Socrates to Ethics and Metaphysics, an Essential Primer on the History of Thought (Adams 101) The Metaphysics (Great Books in Philosophy) Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics: That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science: With Selections from the Critique of Pure Reason, Revised Edition (Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy) The Penguin Dictionary of Philosophy (Penguin Reference) THE JEFFERSON BIBLE What Thomas Jefferson Selected as the Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth

[Contact Us](#)

[DMCA](#)

[Privacy](#)

[FAQ & Help](#)