

when he feels wounded, as he does by her remarks, he realizes that this is not really so, that "the old self would have been wounded" (p. 283). Something decisive and perhaps rare has happened to Corde, and a new generosity has enabled him to see beyond surfaces and his preoccupations with his own self. At the same time he is mercilessly realistic in his view of himself, admitting that his new attitude may not last forever. For him, "goodness might just be a mood, and love simply an investment that looked good for the moment . . . The intention was to recognize yourself for what you (pitifully, preposterously) were. Then whatever good you found, if any, would also be yours" (p. 289).

Corde would hardly be a Bellow hero unless he had some last-minute second thoughts and reservations to add to whatever new insight and value systems that he develops and acquires. But his love and goodness, such as it is, lasts to the end of the novel, suggesting that they are real enough and that his doubts about himself have no great significance. Above all, he has found a stability within himself which enables him to risk a real emotional commitment without fearing any threat to his own identity and having to keep his options open.

## George Orwell and Iris Murdoch: Patterns of Power

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In *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), Big Brother's henchman declares: "The Party seeks power entirely for its own. We are not interested in the good of others, we are interested solely in power . . . The object of power is power."<sup>1</sup> Emphatic and explicit, the statement underscores the centrality of power as the defining concept for Orwell's novel. Similarly, Iris Murdoch dramatizes in her works man's obsessive passion for power. Her major and minor characters illustrate patterns of master-slave relationships, initiated and controlled by a single domineering figure exercising an uncanny influence over others to achieve selfish goals. Reminiscent of Big Brother, this charismatic power figure may play the role of an enchanter, "god," demon, or saint.

The centrality of power to Orwell and Murdoch does not, however, entail identical treatment of it. While Orwell envisions power from a political and social perspective to expose the tyranny of totalitarian bureaucracies over the people, Murdoch handles power from a moral and philosophical angle within the confines of individuals' treatment of each other. Thus, while social forces and institutions concern Orwell, the individual as a moral (or amoral) entity preoccupies Murdoch. In other words, Orwell, the journalist, social commentator, and partisan fighter, approaches fiction from the world of politics. Murdoch, the disciplined moral philosopher, approaches the genre from the world of ethics. Consequently, Orwell focuses on institutionalized political structures that regulate and restrict the lives

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<sup>1</sup> George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (London: 1949; rpt. Penguin, 1984), p. 27. Subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text.

and destinies of society's members. Murdoch, on the other hand, reveals a keen interest in the very way people manipulate, control, or coerce each other as individuals.

In spite of the divergent routes Orwell and Murdoch take to examine power, no sharp contrast emerges in their understanding and ultimate vision of it. Both portray power as either potentially or essentially evil, and present it in the sense of domination. Orwell condemns totalitarian tyranny, and reveals the damage and dehumanization it inflicts on people; Murdoch shows how power figures, subtly or coercively, control the destinies of those characters who come in close contact with them. Whether a tyrant or a power figure, each is guilty of imposing his own order or pattern of thought on others.

Orwell and Murdoch dramatize the evil essence of power wielders through the employment of eye imagery. Big Brother's unnerving eyes symbolize his omniscience and ubiquity: they penetrate and permanently watch to such a degree that Winston's consciousness of his reality is articulated through a growing awareness of Big Brother's mercilessly piercing eyes. Likewise, the eyes of Mischa Fox, the tantalizing figure in Murdoch's *The Flight from the Enchanter* (1956), represent his most striking feature. With one blue and another brown, Fox's eyes intrigue and disarm his victims, and intensify the deliberate aura of mystery surrounding him, to such a degree that even one of his closest friends ineffectually complains (see, e.g., p. 35 of the 1969 Penguin edition). Even when Winston escapes Big Brother's watchful eyes, he can never escape the equally unnerving eyes of the telescreens that register any movement made, and record any sound or sigh uttered, no matter how ordinary or trivial. Likewise, when Mischa Fox is absent, his henchman Calvin Blick uses an expensive camera to surprise victims in compromising situations; this camera, whose lens Fox's lackey gloatingly describes as "the truthful eye that sees and remembers" (p. 160), serves as an efficient instrument of blackmail. Big Brother and Mischa Fox thus possess the means to see others without being seen, to reach others without being reached. Accordingly, the alert, watchful, and piercing eyes of Mischa and Big Brother symbolize power that can, without revealing its sources or dynamics, intrigue, judge, condemn, and victimize.

Added to the similarities in the portrayal of Mischa Fox and Big Brother is Fox's use of his own brand of Newspeak and doublethink. While he often declares his love for people, he nevertheless enslaves them, and while he declares his sympathies for wounded birds, he does not hesitate to kill them. This inversion of values and meanings certainly parallels Big Brother's declared Party policy whereby war is peace, freedom is slavery, and ignorance is strength.

Like Big Brother, Mischa Fox operates through his lackeys, the chief of whom is Calvin Blick, O'Brien's carbon copy. These two henchmen do the dirty work and carry out their masters' orders, and both become void of their own will and identity.

Perhaps the most striking similarity between *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Murdoch's *The Flight from the Enchanter* concerns the role of the bureaucracy in each novel and the way Big Brother and Mischa relate to it. Whether totalitarian or liberal, the state relies heavily on the bureaucratic machine; under either system, it is revealed as impersonal and inept—with the stark exception being the cruel diligence of the Thought Police. Murdoch's incisive portrayal of the Special European Labour Immigration Board, given the acronym SELIB, shows how it has callously, albeit unintentionally, instilled fear into the lives of those who have to report to it. Whereas fear and strict orders control the Party's bureaucracy, greed and promotion prime the welfare bureaucracy (see pp. 84-85). Lethargic, inefficient, and, at times, even corrupt, the bureaucracy that Murdoch portrays becomes allied

with and identical to power. The strongest condemnation of the bureaucratic machine appears in another Murdoch novel, *The Nice and the Good* (1968), where the progress of the central character, John Ducane, towards moral maturity and "goodness" is illustrated by his resignation from a high and prestigious civil service position. In the major statement of the novel, which occurs after a brush with death, Ducane comes to an awareness of the futility of man's pursuit of power: "All power is sin and all law is frailty. Love is the only justice."<sup>2</sup>

Ducane's reference to love highlights power's conceptual opponent. Love, which according to Murdoch is "a central concept in morals,"<sup>3</sup> is dramatized in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and in Murdoch's fiction as the antidote to power. Moreover, love, to Orwell and Murdoch, functions inseparably from freedom. This umbilical connection between love and freedom fundamentally entails that love be offered and received by free choice, and be founded on truth and on respect for the identity and separateness of the partners. These provisions invalidate, for instance, the crowd's enchantment with Big Brother, an enchantment couched in fear and rooted in submission. By the same token, any infatuation with Mischa Fox of *The Flight from the Enchanter* is not love but merely represents the adulation of a slave to a master. The works of Orwell and Murdoch suggest that when love and freedom permeate social and human relationships, power becomes irrelevant; on the other hand, when power dominates, love and freedom disappear. No wonder then that the Party's "priests of power" prohibit freedom and prevent love, promote hate and practice war. Correspondingly, Murdoch's power figures disregard the wishes of their victims, violate their freedom, and coerce them into surrendering their independence.

The correspondences that emerge in the fiction of Orwell and Murdoch reveal that each writer complements the other. By treating Big Brother as a precursor to Murdoch's power figures, and by probing the analogies and contrasts in the vision and treatment of power, I argue that understanding one author enriches the appreciation of the other. The perception of power of both Orwell and Murdoch is similar, notwithstanding the different angles from which they approach the issue. To Orwell and Murdoch, power is evil because it violates the sanctity of man's right to think, to choose, and to act. Their ultimate vision crystalizes into a Kantian categorical imperative which stipulates that the individual is an end in himself, and should not, in any way, be used as a means. Human beings cannot, therefore, be treated as mere puppets or slaves or be swallowed up in a massive historical calculation.

## A note on Elias Papadimitrakopoulos's *Toothpaste with Chlorophyll* and *Maritime Hot Baths*.

JOHN TAYLOR

Though hardly a prolific author or one whose name is constantly on the lips of the average Greek reader, Elias Papadimitrakopoulos enjoys the greater merit of being esteemed by his peers, by his fellow Greek writers and critics, as a stylistic virtuoso, a sensitive, perspicacious craftsman of the emotions who has given voice

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<sup>2</sup> Iris Murdoch, *The Nice and the Good* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1968), p. 305.

<sup>3</sup> Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: 1970; rpt. New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 2.